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Northumberland National Park Local Plan 2017-2037
Sustainability Appraisal:
Interim Sustainability Statement – Autumn 2017

1. Sustainability Appraisal Purpose & Context

1.1 Northumberland National Park Authority is reviewing its key development plan document, the Local Plan. This will set out the policies that determine where and how much development is necessary to further National Park statutory purposes and duty and to meet identified need for development. When adopted it will be the first consideration when the authority determines planning applications.

1.2 Section 39 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the LPAs/NPAs preparing a Local Plan must do so with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. National Planning Policy Framework (2012) at Paragraph 14 places great emphasis on the presumption in favour of sustainable development. As a matter of law, the Local Plan must be subject to Sustainability Appraisal throughout its evolution, and for the plan to be formally adopted this process must be seen to have been properly conducted and show how it has influenced the final version.

1.3 The core purpose Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is to systematically assess the extent to which the plan contributes to achieving sustainable environmental, economic and social conditions, through implementing its emerging polices and proposals through the Development Management process. In doing so SA can help plan-making authorities to identify the sustainability ‘performance’ of the plan, and importantly, which policy alternative options may lead to more (or less) sustainable outcomes, and to amend accordingly where it is appropriate to do so, prior to the plan’s adoption. Sustainability Appraisal can also help to identify and capitalise on positive sustainability elements of the emerging plan and to secure or optimise those elements as the plan progresses through stages of drafting. The process is statutorily required and is an important part of the overall ‘plan-making’ process. To be most effective in influencing plan content and sustainability performance, Sustainability Appraisal is usually carried out independently\(^1\) to - but closely alongside, plan and policy drafting. Consultation exercises for the plan will (ordinarily) be accompanied by Sustainability Appraisal/SEA outputs.

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\(^1\) The Sustainability Appraisal for the NNPA local Plan Review is being undertaken by The Planning and Environment Studio Ltd.
1.4 The benefits of undertaking Sustainability Appraisal of the emerging Local Plan include:

- Helping to choose between alternative policy options that will determine the character and degree of impact of most new development;
- Explicit consideration of possible socio-economic and environmental consequences of policies and proposals;
- Considering whether additional measures are needed to prevent, reduce or offset adverse effects of the plan;
- Improving the ability of stakeholders to participate in plan-making by showing how socio-economic and environmental issues have been taken into account; and
- Enabling all stakeholders to engage in the process of helping to achieve a plan more in accord with the socio-economic and environmental aims of sustainable development.

1.5 Whilst Sustainability Appraisal is required by UK planning legislation, it is closely linked with requirements of European law in relation to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)\(^2\). This requires emerging ‘plans and programmes’ to be examined against likely environmental implications of their adoption. Sustainability Appraisal in England expands the scope of issues to be examined beyond those required by SEA to include social and economic implications of the plan, reflecting established thinking in respect to what constitutes more holistic ‘sustainable development’. Paragraph 007 of the National Planning Practice Guidance states that “….Sustainability appraisal should meet all of the requirements of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, so a separate strategic environmental assessment should not be required”.

1.6 The SEA Directive and Regulations require that the process must include a number of specific elements or stages, which are also beneficial (but not statutorily prescribed) within the broader Sustainability Appraisal process. The more significant of these include:

- A screening process to determine whether a plan should be subject to SEA (not formally undertaken for the Local Plan Part 2 appraisal as Development Plan Documents in England will always trigger the need for SEA);
- The collation, forecasting and presentation of baseline environmental information;

\(^2\) Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations, 2004
• Scoping of the likely significant environmental (and socio-economic) effects of the plan;

• The opportunity for statutory Consultation Bodies to influence the assessment from an early stage;

• The carrying out of an Environmental (Sustainability) Assessment during the preparation of a plan and before its adoption;

• The publication of an Environmental (Sustainability) Report with the consultation or submission versions of the plan;

• An early and effective opportunity for the public to comment on the Environmental (Sustainability) Report, as well as the plan, before the plan is adopted;

• Taking into account the Environmental Report and the results of consultations in plan-making;

• Provisions for considering the trans-boundary effects of the plan and consultation with those affected (SEA requirement);

• Establishing a monitoring procedure for the plan; and

• Publication of information about the adoption of the plan (final Sustainability Report/Environmental Report).

1.7 It is important to emphasise that Sustainability Appraisal and SEA are processes and that they are closely linked and undertaken simultaneously despite stemming from different legislative origins. Whilst certain elements of the process are identified in law, there is no prescribed method for the assessment process itself for carrying out Sustainability Appraisal/SEA. However regulations and guidance require the certain elements to be integrated within statutory phases of the process outputs, which will accompany the emerging Local Plan in the following months, and build on the early findings of this Interim Sustainability Statement.

1.8 It is important to recognise that Sustainability Appraisal is a process which runs parallel to plan-making, and is iterative in nature, serving to help plan-makers to develop plan policies and proposals with an informed perspective on likely sustainability implications of emerging plan options and alternative approaches. Figure 1 below illustrates the stages and flow of the parallel and inter-linked processes of plan-making and Sustainability Appraisal.
**Figure 1:** Sustainability Appraisal and Local Plan flow diagram.

**Sustainability appraisal process**

**Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope**
1. Identify other relevant policies, plans and programmes, and sustainability objectives
2. Collect baseline information
3. Identify sustainability issues and problems
4. Develop the sustainability appraisal framework
5. Consult the consultation bodies on the scope of the sustainability appraisal report

**Stage B: Developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects**
1. Test the Local Plan objectives against the sustainability appraisal framework
2. Develop the Local Plan options including reasonable alternatives
3. Evaluate the likely effects of the Local Plan and alternatives
4. Consider ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects
5. Propose measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the Local Plan

**Stage C: Prepare the sustainability appraisal report**

**Stage D: Seek representations on the sustainability appraisal report from consultation bodies and the public**

**Stage E: Post adoption reporting and monitoring**
1. Prepare and publish post-adoption statement
2. Monitor significant effects of implementing the Local Plan
3. Respond to adverse effects

**Local Plan preparation**

**Evidence gathering and engagement**

**Consult on Local Plan in preparation (regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012). Consultation may be undertaken more than once if the Local Planning Authority considers necessary.**

**Stage C: Prepare the publication version of the Local Plan**

**Seek representations on the publication Local Plan (regulation 19) from consultation bodies and the public**

**Submit draft Local Plan and supporting documents for independent examination**

**Outcome of examination**
Consider implications for SA/SEA compliance

**Local Plan Adopted**

**Monitoring**
Monitor and report on the implementation of the Local Plan

Source: National Planning Practice Guidance
1.9 Prior to the preparation of this document, Northumberland National Park Authority initiated the overall process by consulting upon a draft ‘Scoping Report’ in 2016 which set the draft scope and terms for the SA process and established a baseline understanding of relevant issues across the National Park, as per ‘Stage A’ in figure 1 above. In spring 2017 a Preliminary Sustainability Statement was prepared in connection with the publication of the NPA’s Local Plan Review initial iteration as an ‘Issues Paper’.

1.10 This document, and particularly the content of Appendix 1, falls between stages ‘A’ and ‘B’ of Figure 1 as a non-statutory output and hence, is another relatively early output in the overall Sustainability Appraisal process of testing and refining the emerging Local Plan for Northumberland National Park for its effect on delivering sustainable development.

*Sustainability Signposting* – What does this document do and show?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>This <em>Interim Sustainability Statement</em> has three functions:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• To present a clear indication that Sustainability Appraisal, as a process, has been integrated within the plan/policy-making process from the outset; and</td>
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<tr>
<td>• To provide an interim <em>signposting</em> of how the emerging draft Policy Options for the Local Plan Review might be expected to perform in relation to principles of <em>sustainable development</em>; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide an overview of the concept of Sustainability Appraisal (and Strategic Environmental Assessment), setting the context for its latter, more formal stages, and highlighting why it is a critical component of the development plan-making process.</td>
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</table>

2.1 This report is an interim stage output in the overall process of Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA). It is not intended to constitute or match the scope and detail that would be expected to be set out within a full Sustainability Report, which will be prepared in relation to later stages of the draft Local Plan’s development. However, it remains an important element in the overall process of preparing the NPA’s replacement Local Plan. It should assist the NPA and stakeholders in terms of shaping emerging policy options in the context of the statutory duty to further the objectives of sustainable development through the spatial planning process and Development Plan Regulations.

Northumberland National Park Local Plan Review: Policy Options Document – Autumn 2017

2.2 Northumberland National Park Authority is the Local Planning Authority for the whole of the national park, operating independently to the County Council’s role outside the national park. One of its statutory functions is to prepare a Local Plan under the provisions of section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended), setting out a vision and a policy framework for the future development of the area, addressing needs and opportunities in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure – as well as a basis for safeguarding its special environment, adapting to climate change and securing high quality design. The Local Plan is also a critical tool in guiding decisions about individual development.
proposals across the National Park. Importantly, in this as well as all other English and Welsh National Parks, local Plans operate within the context of the statutory purposes and duty for National Parks set out in the Environment Act 1995. The NNP Local Plan is also a delivery tool for furthering some of the NNP Management Plan’s (2016) objectives.

2.3 The 2017 Policy Options document to which this paper relates is the second public iteration of emerging spatial policy ‘directions’ for the review of the NNP Local Plan 2017-2037. The document builds upon the Issues Paper of spring 2017 and stakeholder responses from its consultation period. The 2017 Policy Options Paper remains an early stage output in the overall plan-making process. The paper is intended to stimulate discussion about the options for planning policy over the plan period 2017 to 2037. It is not a fully developed iteration of a Local Plan, and as such presents limitations on the extent to which SA/SEA can be usefully applied. Following public consultation on the Policy Options paper, and subsequent consideration of stakeholder contributions, the next version will be a full publication draft Local Plan that will include detailed policies and policy map for further public consultation. A final version of the Plan will then be submitted for examination and scrutinised by a Planning Inspector before being adopted and implemented by the Authority.

2.4 The 2017 Policy Options paper format and scope is as a discussion paper where issues are openly ‘rehearsed’ to trigger debate and opinions on broad proposals rather than worked-up policies being presented. It does not set out detailed spatial criteria consistent within a full draft Local Plan, or a Policies Map indicating spatial extent of some policies. It is however a valid and helpful stimulus for stakeholder engagement.

2.5 The Policy Options paper presents a series of issues and early indications of NPA preferences for the review of the existing 2009 Core Strategy. These are advanced to differing degrees across the document as a whole. For example, specific phrasing and direction for the high-level vision and strategic aims of the plan are well developed, but without substantive examination of alternative options being presented. The central spatial strategy and issue-specific policy areas are set out as a series of topic areas indicating the NPA’s emerging preferences for policy direction and scope, but not as fully worked-up criteria-based policies. Where emerging issue-specific preferences have been set out these vary in respect to the specificity of policy and openly indicate where uncertainty remains.

2.6 A core element of Sustainability Appraisal as a process is the consideration of policy alternatives and the contribution to sustainable development they might deliver in comparison to others. The identification of differing sustainability performance of policy options should be a key determinant of the selection of preferred policies within the later iterations of the Local Plan.
Whilst the paper is titled ‘Policy Options’, the extent to which issue-specific policy alternatives are offered is limited and variable. The paper does not seek to offer clearly distinct alternative approaches to emerging preferred policy direction in most instances. In some matters alternative ‘options’ are not actually clear ‘alternatives’ to policy previously set out as the NPA’s proposed approach in the paper, but are discussion points and questions for possible approaches or supplementary policy development. Discussion of provisional alternative approaches to policy or their drivers to justify alternative directions is not well developed.

2.7 The Options Paper format, with its emerging policy scope and less-defined alternative strategic spatial preferences dictates the extent to which it is possible to systematically appraise potential sustainability outcomes of the proposed approaches and their (potential) alternatives. Accordingly this has influenced the purpose, principles and methodology adopted for this stage of the overall SA/SEA.

Scope and Method of the Interim SA/SEA

2.8 This Interim Sustainability Statement sets out an evolving understanding of how the Local Plan, its key areas of policy revision and potential alternatives (where possible) could influence sustainable development across the National Park. It considers at very strategic levels how policy direction might effect sustainability objectives. In doing so it affords the NPA opportunity to consider if, how and when it might develop its initial full draft plan outputs to improve that sustainability performance – as necessary or expedient.

2.9 This interim statement may also inform stakeholders consideration of the sustainable development issues arising from the Local Plan as it is made available for public consultation, and inform their responses accordingly.

2.10 The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (2016) sets out a formal proposal for the scope and method of appraisal of the emerging Local Plan, in accordance with Regulations and established practice. This will be fully applied in respect to the following ‘full’ iterations of the Local Plan, but for the reasons set out in this section, this paper takes a more strategic or light-touch approach to appraisal of the Options Paper, reflecting its format.

2.11 The Options paper has been assessed across each of its individual component parts as far as they indicate future spatial strategy or policy direction. Consideration has been afforded to the anticipated scope and nature of the effect of its implementation on the constituent elements of sustainable development in the national park, i.e. environmental, economic and social/community sustainability effects. Each of these aspects of sustainable development entails a range of specific sub-issues or assets as indicated within the scoping report’s sustainability framework. Consideration has been afforded to likely significant effects on the national park, including
short, medium and long-term effects, permanent and temporary effects, positive and negative effects, and secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects, although at this stage of plan making, such specificity is not widely feasible.

2.12 As the Options Paper does not present worked-up policy, this Interim Statement cannot usefully apply a matrix-based assessment against the full sustainability framework, individually or in combination. Building on the approach of the ‘Policy Issues’ Preliminary Sustainability Statement (spring 2017) Appendix 1 to this statement therefore sets out a table of those elements of the Policy Options Paper that are likely to shape detailed policy direction, or have been put forward as possible ‘options’\(^3\), alongside baseline conditions and key trends in relation to those areas of spatial policy. Against each element a sustainability signposting commentary of anticipated sustainability implications is set out, which individually and in combination forms a wide-ranging statement of how the Options Paper may affect sustainable development and to inform on-going policy formulation.

2.13 The table can only present a response to emerging policy issues to date. Further issues are likely to be identified within the sustainability appraisal process as more structured policy starts to arise, against which the systematic process of appraisal as proposed within the Scoping Report (the agreed set of sustainability tests established by the scoping process) can occur. For now, this Interim examination is intended to help policy makers consider the range of sustainability outcomes anticipated within the scope of the policy areas presented.

\(^3\) Having regard to findings of paragraph 2.6 of this statement
3. **Findings & Next Steps**

3.1 As set out in the preceding section of this report, the format of the Policy Options Paper has determined the approach to the interim sustainability appraisal process. This has resulted in a broad range of observations being generated in respect to the anticipated implications of the implementation of the Local Plan on the achievement of sustainable development. These observations are necessarily provisional, pending full policy and policy option development. **Appendix 1** sets out the findings of this process.

3.2 The findings should be considered on an issue-by-issue basis. At this stage no policy compatibility assessment has been possible, reflecting the degree of refinement of the Policy Options paper.

3.3 In overview, this process has suggested that across a broad range of issues **mainly positive sustainable development outcomes would be predicted** from the further adaptation of the approaches set out. Sustainable development, whilst covering globally important matters must be defined in the local context also, and in proportion to the likely application and influence of the plan tested. In this respect, having regard to key issues affecting the national park, the emerging policy framework sets out locally responsive solutions/responses which necessarily also operate within the context of statutory purposes and duty for national parks.

3.4 Issues of changing resident age structure, sustainable community profiles and infrastructure provision are recognised as being critical to the wider management and conservation of the landscape and ecosystems within which those communities exist. In doing so, imaginative and some potentially counter-intuitive policy options are proposed which can be seen to facilitate improved community balance, affordability of housing and economic viability, which given appropriate environmental safeguards (in policy) would positively support statutory purposes of conservation of special qualities and enhance opportunities to enjoy those qualities.

3.5 Understanding of the significance of statutory purposes and duty for national parks is critical in being able to define what sustainable development might constitute in these designated landscapes. For example, Inherent conflict can be found in respect to prioritising landscape and wider environmental conservation over the sustainable development benefits of larger-scale renewable energy developments, or more intensive visitor attractions and facilities that would help underpin the local economy and community vitality and viability. Such issues will be identified in more detail as the plan emerges further and full sustainably appraisal techniques can be applied to help maximise those positive influences and mitigate and avoid less sustainable effects.
Next Steps in the Sustainability Appraisal Process.

3.6 Following public consultation of the 2017 Policy Options Paper the NPA will develop its first full draft Local Plan, having regard to stakeholder engagement and all other material influences.

3.7 In developing the issues explored to date to a full draft Local Plan format, it will be important that sustainability appraisal processes have full opportunity to influence the scope and detail of that plan. Primarily this will be in regard to informing the NPA as to the differing sustainability performance of more-defined policy options, such that a clearly preferred, justified policy suite can be presented as a Publication Draft Local Plan. To do this close liaison between the NPA and Sustainability Appraisal consultants will be necessary, and entail significant work across the drafting period. It will be incumbent on the NPA to explore more explicitly alternative policy options as far as the context of statutory purposes and duty allows.

3.8 In undertaking the next phases of sustainability appraisal on the emerging Local plan, a full Sustainability Report (consistent with the requirements of the SEA Regulations) will be prepared to accompany the plan through public consultation. This will incorporate the findings of a full matrix-based assessment of preferred policies (and their alternatives) and provide a transparent and expansive explanation of the plans sustainable development credentials and as appropriate proposals to further refine and or mitigate plan effects.
**APPENDIX 1:**

Sustainability Signposting Table of Northumberland National Park Authority Local Plan 2017 - 2037 Draft Policy Options Paper October 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Option</th>
<th>Sustainability Signpost</th>
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<td>A</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>E</td>
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October 2017
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustainability Issues and Trends</th>
<th>NNPA Local Plan Policy Options Paper, October 2017</th>
<th>Sustainability Signposting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Plan Draft Options 2017: Vision, Aims &amp; Strategic Priorities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Northumberland National Park will be a truly welcoming and distinctive place, easily accessible to all. Its inspiring and changing landscapes, characterised by open spaces, tranquillity, diverse habitats, geology and rich cultural heritage, will be widely recognised and valued. The living, working landscape will contribute positively to the well-being of the thriving and vibrant communities in and around the Park.’</strong></td>
<td>The draft vision sets out a high level aspiration for the future of the National Park. In doing so its intent would clearly underpin sustainable futures across the plan area, acknowledging and supporting conservation and sustainable change within the natural and historic environments whilst supporting community well-being, including its economic viability.</td>
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</table>
| • **Vision Statement as an aspirational objective to be achieved in part through Local Plan policy implementation, driven by National Park Purposes and Duty.** | **Aim 1 – A Welcoming Park:** To put people and their connections with the landscape at the heart of the National Park.  
**Aim 2 – A Distinctive Place:** To manage, conserve and enhance the distinctive natural and cultural qualities of the National Park.  
**Aim 3 – A Living Working Landscape for Now and the Future:** To adapt to change by applying new approaches, together with traditional techniques.  
**Aim 4 – Thriving Communities:** To ensure the thriving and vibrant communities have a strong sense of place and an economy grounded in the natural and cultural qualities of the National Park.  
**Aim 5 – A Valued Asset:** To ensure the National Park is valued as a local, regional and national asset, with influence beyond its boundaries that is worth looking after now and for generations to come. | In combination these strategic aims set a strong aspirational framework of priorities to further sustainable development objectives across the National Park. The framework of Aims’ coverage is likely to set a strong context for the scope of emerging spatial policy directions to robustly address sustainability matters. |
### Sustainability Issues and Trends

- Issues identified partly in response to the National Park Management Plan’s aspirations and evidence base.

### NNPA Local Plan Policy Options Paper, October 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Priority 1</th>
<th>Strategic Priority 2</th>
<th>Strategic Priority 3</th>
<th>Strategic Priority 4</th>
<th>Strategic Priority 5</th>
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<tr>
<td>To support sustainable development and land management that conserves and enhances the National Park’s distinctive natural and cultural qualities and protects its assets.</td>
<td>To support sustainable use of ecosystem products and services thereby enhancing natural capital across the landscape of the National Park, contributing positively to health and wellbeing.</td>
<td>To support and encourage sustainable economic growth to allow our local communities to thrive.</td>
<td>To support the provision of a range of housing that encourages more working age people and families to live in the National Park or one of its gateway settlements.</td>
<td>To support the retention and enhancement of community facilities, infrastructure and rural services in order to sustain our thriving communities.</td>
</tr>
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### Sustainability Signposting

The draft Issues Paper presents 5 priority areas from which more focused Local Plan policy will stem. The priorities stem from evidence-base analysis and consultation with communities and stakeholders of the National Park, and from the National Park Management Plan which itself is the product of community and stakeholder consensus. As such the process of strategic priority identification can be seen to have been accessible and inclusive and reflect the sustainable development principles of community empowerment and inclusivity.

These high level priorities overtly focus on principles of sustainable development, and/or recognise the need to address and support holistic community / settlement futures, a fundamental component of sustainable development. Strategic Principles acknowledge the inter-dependency on environmental, economic and community well-being across the National Park.
### Local Plan Draft Options 2017: **Spatial Objectives**

**Proposed Strategic Spatial Objectives for the Local Plan**

1. Support locally-sustainable development that will improve the National Park as a high quality place to live, work and visit.

2. Support development that will maintain existing services, infrastructure and community facilities or develop new ones for the benefit of local communities.

3. Support sustainable land management that conserves and enhances the National Park’s distinctive natural and cultural qualities and protects its assets.

4. Support the sustainable use of ecosystem products and services.

5. Encourage development that will support a growing, sustainable, diverse and resilient local economy, to help make the National Park (and its gateway settlements) a more attractive option for young adults and people of working age to live and work.

**Sustainability Signposting**

- Sustainable development at the heart of spatial objectives, and in doing so sets sound framework for wider plan sustainability credentials.
- High community and economic sustainability value.
- Helps limit less sustainable travel patterns and behaviour.
- High sustainability value.
- Reflects National Park statutory purposes.
- The approach may have less than optimal economic/viability credentials for land management and productivity.
- High environmental sustainability value.
- High community and economic sustainability value.
### Sustainability Issues and Trends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NNPA Local Plan Policy Options Paper, October 2017</th>
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<tr>
<td>work in.</td>
<td>A statutory requirement of the NPA but one which can inherently influence and facilitate sustainable development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Use the planning system to help deliver the statutory National Park purposes of: conservation and enhancement of natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage; and, the promotion of opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the Special Qualities of the National Park by the public.</td>
<td>The approach may have constraining effect upon optimal economic/viability credentials for development and land management and productivity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Encourage development in locations with the best access to existing services and facilities, and where it will not be vulnerable to the impacts of climate change or will increase resilience to it.</td>
<td>High community and environmental sustainability value. Long term economic benefits of climate change resilience of the built environment, public infrastructure and community assets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Support innovative, high-quality and more sustainable building design that complements the distinctive character of the National Park.</td>
<td>High environmental sustainability value. Increases embedded energy efficiency and sustainable use of building fabric whilst strengthening sense of place and local distinctiveness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Ensure the landscape of the National Park continues to be responsive to change while at the same time conserving and enhancing its character.</td>
<td>High environmental sustainability value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability Issues and Trends</td>
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## Local Plan Draft Options 2017: Spatial Strategy

- Population of fewer than 2,000 (2011 Census)
- NNPA the most sparsely populated of the National Parks, with an average population density of just 0.02 persons per hectare.
- The largest single settlement is Elsdon, with a population of around 240. Other key settlements include Alwinton, Falstone, Greenhaugh, Harbottle, Holystone, Lanehead and Stannersburn, referred to in the current Core Strategy as the 'Local Centres'.
- Larger 'gateway' settlements of Bellingham, Haltwhistle, Rothbury and Wooler - predominantly outside the National Park boundary.

### Issue 1: Settlements

We propose to allow the conversion of buildings to residential use as well as business /employment /tourism use in locations outside of the identified settlements (i.e. local centres and smaller villages). This would however be subject to the requirements of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 55 which states that local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as:

- the essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside.
- where such development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets.
- where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting.
- the exceptional quality or innovative nature of the design of the dwelling.

Such a design should:

- be truly outstanding or innovative, helping to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas
- reflect the highest standards in architecture
- significantly enhance its immediate setting
- be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area

Mixed sustainability implications are likely to arise from the adoption of this approach. The reuses of existing buildings is likely to result in a more sustainable use of existing material assets where these do not lead to pressure for additional new buildings. Traditional buildings are often a positive component of the designated landscape and re-use can support their viability and therefore landscape and cultural heritage maintenance. Opportunity for residential changes of use may serve to improve building conservation viability of traditional buildings which contribute to the National Park’s special character.

Less sustainable implications may arise from domestic use of buildings outside settlements generating longer and more frequent trips and possible landscape implications of insensitive design schemes, domestic paraphernalia and access tracks etc. However, policy proposals seek to introduce restriction on ‘isolated’ dwellings which would reduce such risks. Full policy will need to expand upon definition or thresholds for ‘isolated’ locations before fuller sustainability implications can be anticipated.

Policy closely reflects elements of NPPF.
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<thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Issue 2: Major Development</strong></td>
<td>• We propose to continue the existing approach and revise extant Core Strategy policy 4 to reflect updated national policy and guidance.</td>
<td>National planning policy restricts new major development within National Parks in most circumstances, but also limits potential alternative approaches to local policy. The particular special qualities of Northumberland National Park (particularly remoteness, tranquillity and low levels of development) may be especially vulnerable to the impacts of major development. However national planning policy allows for exceptions to be made to this policy which could over-rule local policy on this matter in certain circumstances, albeit assessed against a rigorous set of considerations. Local Plan policy for major development may therefore be limited in influence in this context. Sustainability implications of updating local definition of major development may have implications for issues such as renewable energy or transport infrastructure proposals, both of which can present complex sustainability scenarios. However these issues will also be addressed by specific policy allowing appropriate balance of sustainability benefits and constraints to be embedded within the plan.</td>
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| **Issue 3: Ageing Population**    | • 51% of the resident population is aged between 45 and 74 years, significantly high compared to the national average (34%).  
  • The number of retired people is higher than the national | Complex, high level sustainability issues may arise in relation to this matter, having regard to potential impacts upon long-term vitality and viability of communities in the National Park, and the implications of the volume and distribution of new built development necessary to accommodate a changing population age-structure on the conservation of the built environment and landscape.  
  Develop an increasing range of housing and support products for older people.  
  We propose to include a specific criteria-based policy in the Plan that deals with elderly people’s accommodation with the objective of facilitating the development of new facilities in suitable locations where appropriate.  
  We also believe that extra care schemes should try to incorporate |
### Sustainability Issues and Trends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NNPA Local Plan Policy Options Paper, October 2017</th>
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<td>community facilities as an integral part of development, so as to both aid the integration of the facility into the local community and to supplement or replace lost or threatened local services. We could explore the potential for the development of appropriately sized properties that would help older residents move into accommodation that would provide a closer match to their needs. We could consider adopting lifetime homes for all new developments to increase the number of homes suitable for older people. Plan for a dwelling-led growth scenario increasing the working-age population of the National Park by 2% over the plan period meaning a potential requirement of approximately 5 net additional new family dwellings per year.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Spatial Strategy Alternative Options:

- Continue the approach set out in extant policies 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 revising them if necessary to reflect updated national policy and guidance.

### Sustainability Signposting

- However, acknowledging and responding to age-structure change within the local community, and seeking to facilitate later life living within home communities is a fundamentally sustainable objective in relation to community vitality and community well being. Site-specific sustainability considerations may arise as the policy evolves and sites for sheltered and age-specific housing come forward. Moreover, facilitating a younger age profile and population growth would have implications on sustainable access to work and education opportunity. A more balanced population profile may present issues in relation to education provision and access, in turn presenting travel and trip generation considerations. The consequences of not responding positively to an ageing population profile may also have longer-term community service demand and viability implications.

- Extant Core Strategy policies have been subject to Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment. Where the NPA proposes retention of selected policies - having regard to monitoring performance and updated evidence base, these would be expected to continue to deliver sustainable outcomes.
### Sustainability Issues and Trends

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<tr>
<td>• Include a criteria-based policy allowing change of use of buildings outside existing settlements to low-intensity use whilst restricting high intensity uses to existing settlements.</td>
<td>Positive sustainability outcomes likely from providing environmentally sensitive re-uses of existing buildings and supporting local economic viability across the National Park. These may have positive heritage and landscape benefits dependent upon criteria for CoU. Some additional trip generation may accrue with negative environmental outcomes even with low intensity uses. Restriction of higher intensity uses to settlements is likely to present positive sustainability outcomes through maximising of public transport potential and underpinning settlement viability and vitality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Include a policy to safeguard the National Park’s statutory purposes by restricting intensive development outside of settlements.</td>
<td>Positive sustainability outcomes generally although this may serve to limit specific economic development or heritage safeguarding opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Include a policy setting out what we consider to be our principles for high quality development including design, transport, human safety, amenity and environmental safeguarding.</td>
<td>Primarily informative, but positive sustainability outcomes likely through delivery of high quality development if sustainability principles are embedded within the policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Plan for a dwelling-led growth scenario to reverse the trend of an ageing population in the National Park.</td>
<td>Positive community outcomes likely with consequent benefit for wider management of the National Park’s special qualities. Breach of environmental capacity of the settlements and landscapes of the National Park to accommodate this approach may lead to negative sustainability outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Continue the approach to major development as set out by extant Policy 4.</td>
<td>Continuation of policy subject to earlier SA/SEA is unlikely to result in significantly differing outcomes. NPPF will</td>
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<tr>
<td>Include policy supporting the provision of new family housing to meet identified needs and plan for enough housing to reverse the trend of a declining population.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delete extant policy 6 – Sequential Approach.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Delete extant policy 2–Climate Change.</td>
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### Local Plan Draft Options 2017: Community Facilities and Infrastructure:

- Local communities have excellent access to natural resources and green infrastructure and opportunities for outdoor recreation, wildlife habitats, rivers, dark night skies, and tranquillity.
- No mains gas - expensive heating fuels.
- 10% of properties are not connected to mains electricity.
- Key services often located in gateway settlements outside the Park or some distance beyond. Long distances to hospitals or higher education.
- Nearest large supermarkets and comparison shops are located outside the National Park.
- Trends of closing community services such as schools, post offices, shops, pubs and churches. The combination of distance to services and very low

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<tr>
<td>Issue 4: Lack of adequate mobile phone coverage and broadband provision within the National Park. We want to support this and any other essential infrastructure wherever possible where it can be accommodated without serious harm to the national Park’s special qualities.</td>
<td>Securing better mobile phone signal and high-speed internet coverage across the National Park would be expected to deliver sustainability benefits in relation to diversifying the local economic base and reducing the need for motorised trips to access some services. However, improving mobile phone signal may be dependent on new visually intrusive infrastructure which could have landscape implications in prominent or sensitive locations. Sustainability balance of these conflicting outcomes will be dependent on the evolution of more specific policy development.</td>
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| population density is challenging for social cohesion.  
• Poor public transport.  
• Lack of broadband coverage a key issue for local businesses and residents.  
• Poor mobile phone coverage. | | |

**Issue 5: Renewable energy provision**

In line with Government guidance, and with the aim of meeting Government climate change targets, the Local Plan will give positive consideration to renewable energy schemes of a size, scale and design and in a location that is appropriate, that is where consistent with conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park. We will need to consider the level of prescription in the policies and propose to be more specific about the approach we will take to particular technologies and also the distinction between small- and large-scale projects.

We propose to identify areas that are clearly unsuitable for some forms of renewable/lower carbon technologies and also conversely, areas where there could be potential opportunities. We could potentially also limit freedoms to install some renewable low-carbon technologies without planning permission whilst identifying some technologies that could potentially be problematic by removing certain permitted development rights.

Renewable energy issues present common sustainability challenges for local plan policy, particularly in designated landscapes. Globally, renewable energy capacity needs to increase to counter causes of climate change. Locally the impacts upon valued characteristics of the National Park, such as landscape, habitats, tranquillity, recreation and heritage interests can be significant where commercial scale generation is proposed. Micro-generation can support domestic sustainability and rural business viability and potentially reduce the need for intrusive or otherwise harmful connecting mains infrastructure. Consideration of different technologies and scales of development to deliver sustainable generation whilst meeting the expectations of the statutory Purposes and Duty will be a clear challenge for local plan policy.
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<td><strong>Issue 6: The maintenance of existing and the provision of new infrastructure and community facilities</strong>&lt;br&gt;We propose that the Local Plan will continue to support new or improved provision of facilities, subject to it being appropriately located to serve the needs of the local community. We want to ensure that any new development would only be permitted if the infrastructure required to service it had adequate capacity. Where additional or enhanced infrastructure would be necessary directly as a result of the proposed development, the applicant would be expected to provide a financial contribution equivalent to the cost of remedying the infrastructure shortfall. This contribution would also be secured through a section 106 legal agreement.&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;We also propose to explore with the County Council the potential for using existing pots of section 106 or CIL money for the provision of infrastructure within the National Park particularly from developments permitted within the gateway settlements and their hinterlands. We propose to resist change of use of a building or development on land, that would result either in the loss of a community facility or the significant erosion of the viability or quality of a community facility. This would not be an outright ban. We recognise that some services could potentially become unviable or require rationalisation. However, we would test such proposals rigorously, and applicants would be expected to make a strong case that there is no longer a demand for the facility or that it would no longer be needed or that alternative provision of equivalent standard had already been secured.</td>
<td>Provision of more robust and accessible community services within the National Park would be an inherently sustainable aspiration, subject to implementation of policy that safeguards the special qualities of the built environment and landscapes of the Park and the ability to enjoy those special qualities by the public. The policy options suggest this would underpin a policy.&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Planning policy challenges and choices as identified are unlikely to present significant sustainability implications at the scale of development and provision across NNP. Exceptions may be where infrastructure or community facility provisions have viability implications that might stifle the delivery of other forms of sustainable development, such as Affordable Housing. Emerging policy is likely to have regard to viability issues however.&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Safeguarding of community open space is likely to have inherent social and community sustainability benefits. Negatives implications could arise in relation to the ability to assemble parcels of land appropriate for other sustainable uses, such as local employment opportunities or affordable housing provision.</td>
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### Sustainability Issues and Trends

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<td>We recognise the dangers in this potentially reactive, case-by-case approach to infrastructure planning. Although we would not be charging a Community Infrastructure Levy on new development, we will be contacting infrastructure providers to assess capacity issues so that we can anticipate where developments, individually or cumulatively, might give rise to the need for improvements. If we become aware of the potential of any serious or recurrent infrastructure shortfalls, we will review our approach to CIL in the National Park.</td>
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Proposals for new or improved infrastructure provision would only be permitted provided they are justified (for instance, essential to improve the quality of life, health and safety of people living, working and visiting the National Park). Proposals would need to demonstrate that they represent the least harmful/intrusive option for provision of that infrastructure, having regard to all foreseeable impacts (visual, ecological, historic environment, amenity and safety) and in light of operational requirements and technical limitations.

We also propose to designate local green space to protect important parcels of community land from future development. We invite suggestions from communities explaining which open spaces are important and why. We would need to ensure that designation was consistent through the use of criteria. We propose that these criteria are that the open space:

- provides a recreational resource for the local community, or
- allows important public views into or from within a settlement, or
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<td><strong>is of historical significance in contributing to an understanding of the development of the settlement or is recognised as an important archaeological resource, or contributes to the setting of important buildings or the appreciation of their historical interest, or</strong></td>
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<td><strong>is important to the character or setting of the locality.</strong></td>
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**Community Facilities and Infrastructure Alternative Options:**

- **Revise extant Policy 8 to reflect latest national policy and guidance.**
  - The Local Plan must comply with NPPF and therefore sustainability implications are limited.
  - Likely to present positive environmental and community sustainability outcomes.
  - This is proposed within preferred policy direction (above) and is therefore unlikely to present differing sustainability outcomes.
  - Positive sustainability outcomes likely, although not likely to be significant in overall sustainability performance of the plan. Primarily a procedural/ facilitating policy.
  - Likely positive sustainability performance through further facilitating sustainable energy generation and energy efficiency within resident populations within the wider capacity of the National Park’s special qualities and

- **Add a new policy to cover the potential designation of Local Green Space in appropriate locations.**

- **Include a policy to support and facilitate the provision of new and improved infrastructure (including mobile phone and broadband).**

- **Include a policy that would require development proposals to demonstrate that there would be adequate infrastructure in place to support the delivery of the development. This would be either provided as part of the development or secured through a financial contribution via section 106 agreement.**

- **Revise renewable energy policy to include provision for innovative energy provision solutions including on-site storage, PICO-hydro and electric vehicle charging points (where appropriate). This policy would continue to support small-scale renewables whilst restricting large-scale renewables.**

- **Interim Sustainability Paper**

October 2017
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<tr>
<td>• Include a policy relating to schemes generating energy from renewable sources where these are of a location, scale and design appropriate to the locality and which contribute towards meeting domestic, community or business energy needs within the National Park.</td>
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<td>Likely positive sustainability outcomes, subject to safeguarding of National park special qualities and recreational importance.</td>
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NNPA Local Plan Review  
Policy Options Paper  
Interim Sustainability Paper
### Local Plan Draft Options 2017: Housing and Employment

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<tr>
<td>• Deeply rural plan area with very low population density and dispersed settlement pattern.</td>
<td>Issue 7 &amp; 8: Meeting our future housing and employment needs.</td>
<td>The key sustainability considerations in relation to housing provision is securing delivery of a managed, balanced supply, which allows communities (and all needs of that community) to maintain viability and vitality, within environmental capacity to do so.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• NNP has a small ‘working age’ population but rate of economic activity (76%) is higher than the English National Park.</td>
<td>Rural Exceptions Sites</td>
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<tr>
<td>• While the number of retired people is higher than the national average and the number of young people is in decline.</td>
<td>We propose to allow rural exceptions sites in (or on the edge of) local centres as they are the most appropriate sustainable locations with existing infrastructure to absorb development whilst also providing access to facilities for new households. However, small exception sites in smaller villages could also potentially be acceptable. Evidence of need would come from a housing needs survey or some more recent survey or evidence endorsed by the National Park Authority. The unavailability of alternative sites would not be regarded as outweighing the potential harm that an unsuitable exceptions site might cause.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Households in NNP are smaller than the English average and the proportion of children is also below the national average.</td>
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<td>• Housing is expensive in relation to average household incomes.</td>
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<td>• NNP is in the top quarter most deprived areas in England in terms of access to housing (high price) and services (relative isolation).</td>
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Emerging policy for rural exceptions sites sets a pragmatic approach to meeting those community needs such that community vitality and balance will be facilitated. Edge of settlement sites for new housing are usually likely to result...
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<tr>
<td>• There are pockets of second and holiday homes which affect seasonal vitality of some settlements.</td>
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<td>in some degree of landscape intrusion, which may or may not affect the National Park's special qualities, and this constitutes an inherent risk to its environmental sustainability. Policy would need to carefully consider statutory purposes and duty, in their widest sense recognising viable communities may be necessary to support maintaining natural beauty and special qualities. Exceptions sites in settlements with few or no local services would result in trip generation, almost wholly reliant on private vehicles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There were approximately 140 businesses operating from 155 establishments in NNP in 2012. This has fallen by around 9% since 2009. All local businesses and establishments have fewer than 50 employees and the majority has fewer than ten employees. These local businesses provided employment for 420 people in 2012.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sustainability issues may be clouded in respect to maintaining community viability and landscape condition if only local needs housing is permitted such that population size and structure does not result in balanced, economically productive communities which support local services and maintain special qualities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local employment fell by approximately 14% between 2009 and 2012, which has resulted in the average size of local businesses falling to three people in 2012.</td>
<td></td>
<td>The emerging suite of policy options for housing to support locally generated need but also that supporting a viable local economy suggest a sustainable outcome would be predicted in respect of achieving such a balance.</td>
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**Housing required for business operations and rural workers’ housing**

We also propose an approach whereby tied affordable residential accommodation for local workers (within close proximity to agricultural or forestry enterprises), including temporary workers, would be permitted in the countryside as an exception provided:

A focus in policy for facilitating carefully justified housing for workers and or home/work units is likely to deliver positive sustainability outcomes in respect to community vitality and viability, and consequently wider landscape condition. Where such developments utilise traditional buildings these may further add to landscape and
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| - it is essential for the workers to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside  
- it is in keeping with the local context, and does not adversely affect National Park Purposes  
- is retained in perpetuity as accommodation for local agricultural and forestry workers, and  
- other residential properties on the farm or economic unit have not been sold or redeveloped for other uses within the recent past.  |  | settlement character and condition. In turn biodiversity, recreation and ecosystem services may benefit from indirect effects.  |
<p>| In addition to the approach described above, the Local Plan could limit the size of such accommodation for agricultural or forestry workers. The allowance of additional affordable residential accommodation for local workers could be restricted to instances where there has been no sale of another residential property on the estate.  |  | In all cases of new development outside local centres implications for landscape, historic environment, biodiversity and recreational opportunity will be important considerations and the hierarchy of National Park purposes and duty suggest that tight criteria for the allowance of new buildings in the open countryside will be necessary. However it is important that the rural economy and traditional land based sectors are supported such that their positive influence environmental condition and management can be maintained or enhanced. Policy in this area will be required to set carefully balanced criteria.  |
| We propose to support new-build live/work units within existing local centres and smaller villages. The conversion of buildings to live/work uses would also be considered in relation to the wider encouraging the conversion of redundant or disused farm buildings.  |  | Longer term control on occupancy and defining appropriate thresholds of need for such dwellings will serve to provide long-term environmental sustainability by restricting the need for continuous or un-managed supply of such dwellings.  |
| New houses for rural based enterprises could potentially be located within or adjacent to the farmstead or other existing group of buildings, but would not be located in isolated locations. Approval of new agricultural dwellings could potentially lead to the sale of existing farm houses and create further pressure for additional housing. Conditions could, therefore, be attached that  |  |  |</p>
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<td>would restrict the occupancy of existing houses on the same agricultural unit, unless there were material mitigating circumstances that could be demonstrated. There is also the potential for the occupancy to be established in perpetuity through a section 106 legal agreement.</td>
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<td>Such conditions would not be relaxed in response to subsequent changes in the circumstances of the occupier of the farm, unless it could be demonstrated that the current and anticipated future need for agricultural workers’ dwellings in the locality would be otherwise adequately met. Other types of rural enterprise dwellings potentially permitted would also be subject to precise occupancy restrictions through planning conditions or legal agreement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>We propose to allow housing where it is demonstrated that it would be essential for someone to live at their place of work. Gamekeepers and managers of larger established visitor accommodation could potentially fall within the definition of essential rural-based enterprises, although dwellings for additional farm workers would likely make up the majority of potential applications. National policy requires that the need for new housing in isolated locations should be based on the nature and demands of the enterprise. The size of the new dwelling would need to be justified in relation to the reasonable operational needs of the enterprise. The objective would be to provide for the needs of rural enterprises including future occupiers in addition to initial occupiers.</td>
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## Sustainability Issues and Trends

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<tr>
<td><strong>Self-build and custom house building</strong>&lt;br&gt; We would welcome proposals for self-build and custom-built housing. Whilst there is very little brownfield land in the National Park it is anticipated that there could be potential demand for self-build schemes on the small sites below six units. Self-build could be a good opportunity to create a home tailored to a household’s individual requirement. It could also be a good way to provide cheaper housing by avoiding the cost of developer profit. Self-build would be subject to a Section 106 occupancy restriction thereby ensuring it is targeted locally and making it cheaper to re-sell.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Affordable Housing</strong>&lt;br&gt;We propose to set out a proportion for affordable housing provision of all residential development proposals, subject to confirmation that this level is achievable from the Viability Assessment. Affordable homes would normally be required to be built on-site, unless it could be demonstrated to be unsuitable, where a financial contribution would be required. The housing provided would need to remain available as affordable housing for people with a local connection in perpetuity.</td>
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<td>Sustainability Issues and Trends</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>We propose to include a ‘local connections’ policy for the provision of affordable housing within parishes and settlements in the National Park, with local connection being defined as those households unable to access the open housing market and having a residential, employment, family or primary carer connection within first the local parish (whether wholly or only partly within the National Park).</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>We also propose to explore with the local housing authority the potential of spending a proportion of existing section 106 money set aside for affordable housing provision in the National Park, particularly where this money has been paid from developments within the gateway settlements and/or parishes split by the National Park boundary.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business development</strong></td>
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<td>We would support flexibility for development by permitting new or expanded small-scale business development in or on the edge of local centres and smaller villages, having regard to environmental capacity, road capacity and amenity safeguards.</td>
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<td>The Local Plan would also potentially contain employment planning policies with the objective of being more supportive of business. They could provide greater flexibility in terms of the mixture of business uses permissible on a site and could support the appropriate diversification of the rural economy, particularly the opportunities presented within farmsteads and rural estates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implications for a relaxation of, or change in spatial control of employment space policy may give rise to issues similar to those for housing. i.e. can a the positive community and economic benefits of a more robust and viable employment sector across the Park be accommodated within landscape and built heritage capacity and constraints, If insufficient sites can be identified and growth curtailed, negative socio-economic implications may arise. Policy which delivers mitigation measures may allow ‘win-win’ sustainability outcomes to be secured in respect to employment and business use proposals.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Should consideration be given to relaxing local occupancy criteria to support community viability and population structure, potential landscape and settlement capacity impacts of a consequent increase in eligibility of need for new build housing should be embedded within the policy suite and decision making process.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sustainability Issues and Trends</td>
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<td>We also propose to keep existing suitable buildings and parcels of land in employment use.</td>
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<td>We propose the application of an advertising procedure that would be applicable to proposals that would lead to the significant and permanent loss of local business uses and jobs. The objective would be to test whether the site or use still has demand for its continued economically beneficial operation either in its current form or some equivalent use. The details of the marketing test would need to ensure that they were effective and reasonable. The approach would need to be proportionate to the scale of employment or business use affected to ensure that it would not unnecessarily hindering the ebb and flow of small business operations.</td>
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**Housing & Employment Alternative Options:**

- Continue to focus housing provision in existing settlements as per extant Policy 5.
- Include a policy supporting the provision of community-led housing, self-build and custom house

Positive sustainability strategy in relation to community vitality and viability, public transport accessibility and reducing trip generation.

As proposed within proposed option (above).
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<td>building in suitable locations where appropriate.</td>
<td>• Include a more detailed criteria-based policy to provide affordable housing in suitable locations where appropriate and where viable (for example on rural exceptions sites potentially on the edge of existing identified settlements).</td>
<td>Such policy would have limited further sustainability implications and primarily seeks to add clarity and guidance to strategy and principles established under other policy/spatial strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Include a criteria-based policy to:</td>
<td>Policy issues addressed within proposed options of this paper, or present insufficient detail to allow sustainability assessments.</td>
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<td>• support the provision of rural workers’ housing in suitable locations where appropriate.</td>
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<td>• Include a criteria-based policy to support the provision of live/work units in suitable locations where appropriate.</td>
<td>Sustainability implications dependent upon greater detail (not presented) rather than simple issue description. Any policy evolution which effectively increases the population eligible to qualify as locally in need of housing in the national park would potentially raise implications of environmental capacity but also settlement and service viability.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>• allow the replacement of residential dwellings where appropriate.</td>
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<td>• support the provision of elderly accommodation where appropriate in order to meet the identified need.</td>
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<td>• Revise the local needs housing criteria to include the rest of parishes split by the National Park boundary and in exceptional circumstances gateway settlements.</td>
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<td>• Revise/replace extant policy 13 to reflect updated national policy and guidance on the provision of suitable accommodation to meet the identified needs of gypsies and travellers.</td>
<td>Sustainability implications dependent upon extent of need identified. Provision of appropriate sites for gypsies and travellers should presents societal benefits but potentially negative landscape and environmental issues.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Include a criteria-based policy to safeguard existing employment uses to prevent their loss to another use.</td>
<td>Policy issues addressed within proposed options of this paper.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Continue to support a sustainable local economy as set out in extant policy 14.</td>
<td>Inherently sustainable outcomes would be expected.</td>
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Local Plan Draft Options 2017: Transport and Access

Issue 9 & 10: Access and Transport
We propose that the Local Plan continues to support improved access to the National Park by means other than the private car (including walking and cycling).

We propose to support the provision of a more widely available public transport service.

We propose to support the upgrading and maintenance of existing tracks to improve public access where feasible and appropriate.

Transport and access matters relate closely with considerations for Spatial Strategy policy and the sustainability implications arising.

Support for more environmentally friendly modes of transport, either for residents, work or leisure purposes are likely to be inherently sustainable than car-based options.

Long-term protection of infrastructure which may lead to future improved non-car access and transport would be likely to present sustainability benefits.

Restriction on car-based visitor numbers may however present negative economic implications because of a realistic lack of convenient or attractive alternatives.

Regardless of the degree of need, policy which helps protect the PRoW network is likely to support sustainable tourism, aid community health and personal well-being and therefore be considered as positive sustainability outcome.
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<td>opened in 2014.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The ‘ease of use’ of rights of way declined to 55% in 2014/15. comparing very poorly to other National Parks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Most visitors use a car to get to the National Park (88%).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• One strategic road the A68 cuts through the National Park.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• There limited public transport service available.</td>
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**Transport & Access Alternative Options:**

- Continue to the approach as set out in extant policy 12 revising if necessary to reflect updated national policy and guidance.

Policy 12 of the Core Strategy was subject to SA/SEA prior to adoption. Policy provides for positive sustainability outcomes in relation to facilitating and prioritising sustainable modes of transport and movement.
Farming (and forestry) is the dominant economic sector.
Employing over twice as many residents as any other industry in the National Park. 68% of businesses within the National Park are in the agricultural and forestry sector and account for 55% of employment. This dominance is emphasised when comparing to the average for other English National Parks’ (6%) and the national average for England (1%).
All of the agricultural land within the National Park (approx. 77,250 hectares) is managed under some form of agri-environment scheme.
More than 75% of the Park area is farmed. It is characterised by farmsteads surrounded by enclosed, fertile fields, giving way to open rough grazing or moorland. Farming is mainly

### Issue 11: Sustainable land management
We propose to permit the development of new agricultural buildings, structures and shooting tracks where they are justified by the scale of farm operation or are essential for sustainable land management, subject to criteria protecting the environment of the National Park.

### Issue 12: Sustainable rural economic growth
We propose to support the further diversification of rural, land-based enterprises by permitting the conversion of suitable buildings (including to residential uses under the review of...
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<tr>
<td>sheep and cattle production.</td>
<td>traditional farm buildings) and the development of land at a scale where there is environmental capacity to accommodate it. This would be subject to tying the new use to the existing, rural land-based enterprise to prevent it from being sold separately (without consideration of the material planning implications).</td>
<td>where they contribute to distinctive and valued built components of the National Park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Farmers are very vulnerable to market shifts, including commodity prices and the value of their produce.</td>
<td></td>
<td>However such changes of use can have implications for traffic and access, noise, disturbance and demand for ancillary or additional development which may be prominent in the landscape. Such effects can lead to negative sustainability implications and hamper achievement of statutory purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There are 256 farms within, or partly within NNP. These tend to be larger than the national average for hill farms, but the size does vary considerably with the terrain. In the Cheviots the average farm size is approximately 1,205 hectares, while the average size of the Hadrian’s Wall farms is approx. 293 hectares.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• 50% of the National Park’s agricultural land is owned by four owners: Northumberland Estates, the Ministry of Defence, Lilburn Estates and College Valley Estates. There are also a number of smaller estates that work agricultural land within the Park.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The vast majority of practical conservation work is undertaken by farmers and landowners, including work supported through subsidised agri-</td>
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</table>
### Sustainability Issues and Trends

- Many farms are worked by tenants. Often these tenancies have passed down through families for many generations. Many of these tenanted farms also include a “hefted” flock. This requires very intensive shepherding which is becoming increasingly difficult due to dwindling number of shepherds. A hefted flock is very important to the maintenance of the landscape of the Park.
- A proportion of the NNP’s uplands (heather moorland) are managed for grouse shooting, which is an important part of the Park’s economy and the management of the uplands.

### Farming & Estates Alternative Options:

- Include a criteria-based policy to promote the provision of land-based rural enterprises in suitable locations where appropriate.

### Sustainability Signposting

[Table with entries and cells filled with text]
### Sustainability Issues and Trends

- Continue to assess proposals in terms of their potential impact on landscape character as per extant policy 20.
- Continue to support farm diversification as per extant policy 21.
- Continue approach set out in extant policy 22 in relation to maximising the opportunities provided by forestry whilst protecting the National Park’s natural and cultural assets revising them if necessary to reflect updated national policy and guidance.

### NNPA Local Plan Policy Options Paper, October 2017

### Sustainability Signposting

- Strong safeguards affording sustainable development benefits in the National Park context.
- Positive economic facilitation with strong safeguards affording sustainable development benefits in the National Park context.
- Policy 22 of the Core Strategy was subject to SA/SEA prior to adoption. Updated policy likely to continue positive sustainability effects, dependent upon detailed criteria.
### Local Plan Draft Options 2017: Natural Environment

- Important river catchments provide good quality water courses under the WFD with 65% being classified as good/high.
- Catchments are major sources of run-off to vulnerable settlements downstream.
- There are a number of known high flood risk areas, both fluvial, and increasingly surface water runoff.
- The area has excellent access to natural resources and green infrastructure.
- The predominance of farming creates challenges in the control of livestock effluent run off and the control of fertilizers and other substances;
- NNP enjoys high levels of tranquillity, including good air and water quality, being generally peaceful with dark night skies.
- 12% of the NNP (12,453 ha) is

### Issue 13: Protecting the Natural Environment

We propose to maintain the current levels of protection for international, national and locally designated habitats and species, proportionate to their importance.

We propose to map ecological habitat and species networks across the National Park in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework but do not expect this to be a constraint to most forms of new development.

We propose to introduce a simple schedule of biodiversity enhancement measures that is affordable and proportionate to the scale of most new development permitted.

We propose to include a criteria-based policy which ensures the conservation, management and enhancement of the National Park’s landscape, supported by sector, issue and/or area specific policies.

In addition to adopting the criteria-based policy above which seeks the conservation, management and enhancement of the landscape, the Local Plan could also include a policy to restrict development in areas which are considered – through an objective assessment of landscape sensitivity – to be especially sensitive to change.

Policy which supports conservation and enhancement of natural processes, air, water and soil quality, biodiversity, ecosystem goods and services, dark skies and tranquillity through appropriate control of development can clearly be seen as positive sustainability measures.

Many international and national designations will provide significant higher-level protection to biodiversity assets over that afforded by planning policy, contributing to high levels of environmental sustainability.

Policy which ensures that non-designated assets, as well as those protected by designations, are properly conserved within the context of new development will be considered as highly positive sustainable measures. Roll-out of policy integration to deliver positive measures in new development to facilitate biodiversity and habitat connectivity, going beyond protection of existing assets would present high sustainability benefits. High sustainability performance would be characterised by a policy suite for the natural environment which takes positive measures to support particularly distinctive or threatened local landscapes, habitats or species which define the uniqueness of NNP.
### Sustainability Issues and Trends

covered by Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSI) designations. This is below the average for all English National Parks of 24%. 29% of the SSSI area is in ‘favourable’ condition which compares positively to the average for all English National Parks of 25% (and 20% for upland National Parks with similar habitats). The five priority habitats of upland heathland, blanket bog, ancient woodland, upland hay meadows, and rivers and burns cover 31% of the National Park and are all considered to be in improving condition.

- 31% (32,758 ha) of NNP is comprised of priority habitats nationally and internationally scarce.
- About 33% (8,873 ha) of priority habitats are protected by SSSI designation but the remaining 64% have no special protection. Many priority habitats managed under Higher Level Stewardship agri-

### NNPA Local Plan Policy Options Paper, October 2017

**Issue 14: Flood Risk**

We propose that all developments should be expected to demonstrate that they would minimise and reduce the rate of surface water run-off. This would include incorporating measures to attenuate run-off in accordance with a drainage hierarchy for rainwater in order of priority as follows:

- continuing natural discharge processes;
- storing for later use;
- infiltration techniques in areas of poor porosity;
- storing water in open water features for gradual release to a watercourse;
- storing water in sealed water features for gradual release to a watercourse;
- discharging direct to a watercourse;
- discharging direct to a surface water drain;
- discharging direct to a combined sewer.

Using the hierarchy, we propose that developments on previously developed land will generally be expected to incorporate a reduction in surface water run-off rates while development on greenfield sites will be expected to result in no net increase in surface water run-off, unless not technically feasible or viable.

Where development takes place on a site that is known to hold water, or over which water flows in times of flood, we propose that compensatory provision, as well as a net increase in the available area, should be secured elsewhere. We intend to identify strategically important areas of flood water retention so that they can be protected from development and will support proposals to improve their retaining qualities wherever possible.

### Sustainability Signposting

Planning policy which supports the reduction in flooding causes and the consequent frequency of flooding events through run-off management and attenuation, and which minimises risk to people, livestock and property within and outwith the National Park will be considered to be positive sustainability measures.

On occasion proposals for flood management (and other water management/treatment infrastructure) could have landscape and biodiversity implications and sustainable outcomes will be those where both priorities can be accommodated whilst meeting statutory purposes.

Where flood management infrastructure is supported, positive environmental measures, such as supporting natural flood plain attenuation, habitat creation and connectivity can enhance the sustainability of such development.
### Sustainability Issues and Trends

- Environment schemes leaving just over 2,000 ha without enhanced management practices.
- 36% of NNPA is un-improved or semi-improved grassland with some important for bird species and fungi, whilst in other areas they also provide the best opportunities for re-creation and expansion of priority habitats.
- Conifer plantations cover 20% of NNPA. An important refuge for England’s remaining native red squirrel population. Their overall landscape and biodiversity impact is negative compared to native habitats. There are only small fragments of ancient woodland covering 704 hectares (0.7%).

### Natural Environment Alternative Options:

- Continue the approach set out in extant policies 1, 3, 17, 19, 20, 22, 24 and 27 revising them if necessary to reflect updated national policy and guidance.

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Extant Core Strategy policies have been subject to Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment. Where the NPA proposes retention of selected policies - having regard to monitoring performance and updated evidence base, these would be
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<td>• Include a policy to require developments to include proportionate bio-diversity enhancement measures where appropriate.</td>
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<td>expected to continue to deliver sustainable outcomes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Introduce a criteria-based policy to protect wildlife, species and habitat networks where appropriate.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Likely positive sustainability effects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Include a new policy to support and promote the use of natural capital assets in the National Park and make the most of the associated ecosystem services benefits to the benefit of all who live in, work in and visit to the National Park.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Likely positive sustainability effects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Revise/Replace extant Policy 25 with a criteria-based policy that reflects updated national policy and guidance (including sustainable rural drainage systems). Include a policy to protect the International Dark Sky Park designation from inappropriate development.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Likely positive sustainability effects.</td>
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### Sustainability Issues and Trends

#### NNPA Local Plan Policy Options Paper, October 2017

#### Sustainability Signposting

### Local Plan Draft Options 2017: Historic Environment

- The Historic Environment Record for the National Park contains references and descriptions of over 4000 historic sites, finds and features. This includes nationally designated historic features: 229 listed buildings; 425 Scheduled Monuments; and, 1 Registered Parks and Gardens. Part of 2 Registered Battlefields – Homildon Hill and Otterburn.
- The National Park contains one designated Conservation Area.
- The well-preserved and popular central section of the World Heritage Site: Hadrian’s Wall.
- Currently 49 Scheduled

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<th>Issue 15: Heritage Assets (including those at risk) &amp; Issue 17: Listed Buildings &amp; Conservation Areas</th>
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<tr>
<td>We propose to outline the approach of the National Park Authority and its partners in relation to heritage at risk, that is monitor the condition of designated heritage assets, identify those already at risk or vulnerable, exploit opportunities to secure their repair and enhancement, including the use of the community infrastructure levy, and take a proactive role in addressing heritage at risk, working with partners and communities and seeking external funding as necessary.</td>
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All development proposals that affect a heritage asset will be informed by an assessment of its significance and the impact of the proposal upon that significance. Applications will not be determined until all reasonable efforts have been made to understand and respond to significance.

There are occasions where the public interest urges that, if a heritage asset is ‘at risk’, its conservation could be secured through a planning permission that would not otherwise be in accordance with policy. This is referred to as enabling development. It might involve permitting the conversion of an ‘at risk’ building, or permitting a related development, the revenue from which could cross-subsidise conservation works to the building at risk.

The historic environment, in all its forms, is an important component of the National Park’s special qualities and as such is covered by the NPA’s statutory duty to conserve and enhance. Planning policy which affords appropriate protection to the historic environment and its components parts – including those not protected by designations but contribute to sense of place, local distinctiveness and cultural heritage, including settings and built contexts, would be considered as strongly sustainable measures.

Sustainability challenges will arise where securing economic viability of a heritage asset in order to retain or repair it could mean compromising other sustainability (or planning policy) aspirations, such as isolated or prominent buildings and rebuilding, or enabling development. Sustainability appraisal itself cannot present optimal solutions for infinite combinations of possible outcomes, but high sustainability performance would be characterised by policy which can secure heritage assets in the long-term, with minimal harm to other contributors to sustainable development, through positive mitigation or compensation for example.

Development or uses which facilitate wider appreciation,
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<td>Monuments and 29 Listed Buildings on the Heritage At Risk Register.</td>
<td>Enabling development needs to be carefully assessed to weigh the disadvantages of departing from policy with the benefits of conserving heritage assets. All cases are individual, and Historic England has published detailed policy and principles. We don’t therefore believe there would be much benefit in attempting to provide any further interpretation in the Local Plan, other than to say we will consider proposals on their merits in the light of Historic England’s approach. Any development affecting designated or undesignated heritage assets or their settings will be expected to conserve or enhance its significance. Any harm to or loss of significance of a heritage asset will be required to demonstrate that there is no alternative solution that would have a lesser impact and demonstrate public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss. The protection offered to heritage assets will be hierarchical in accordance with the level of significance of the asset. We propose that there should be scope for undesignated assets to be afforded equivalent protection to those that are designated, if they can be shown to be of equivalent significance. Where a proposal involving any level of harm to or loss of a heritage asset is permitted, development shall not proceed until agreed mitigation, or appropriate recording, has taken place.</td>
<td>understanding and enjoyment of the historic environment and landscape would be considered to offer strong community sustainability benefits. Policy which secures conservation and economic benefits form heritage focused proposals would normally be seen as sustainable if access and transport effect can be minimised and then mitigated.</td>
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### Sustainability Issues and Trends

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<td><strong>Issue 16: Design</strong></td>
<td>We propose to introduce a policy to ensure that the design of new developments would be informed by, and respond positively to the site, its surrounding context and landscape setting, so that the scale, height, proportions, massing, form, materials and appearance of buildings and structures would be both sympathetic and complementary. We also propose that the policy would ensure that the design of new development would conserve or enhance the archaeological, architectural and historical character and appearance of the site and its setting; be of high quality, having visual interest that reinforces local distinctiveness; ensures that the proposed development would be environmentally sustainable, minimises the consumption of resources, and be long lasting and adaptable; maintains or enhances the ecological, geological and geomorphological value of the site; and would be accessible for all users including those with a range of mobility needs. We propose to review the existing policy on signs and advertisements and take a positive approach to signage where it is reasonably necessary to advertise a business or direct visitors to it. In considering the number, size, materials, colour and location of new signs, we will have regard to their impact on the character of the building, its surroundings and public safety.</td>
<td>Sustainability in design can cover many considerations, including: sustainable design and construction; energy efficiency and embedded energy generation; visual appearance and architectural form and detailing; vernacular considerations which contribute to sense of place; accessibility; embedded biodiversity opportunity; usability and adaptability, particularly to climate change. Within the National Park where statutory purposes require conservation and enhancement of the Park’s special qualities, maintaining, developing and improving distinctive local character will be a constant element, whilst the other matters noted should be integrated into new development. Issues such as sourcing of traditional building materials can give present wider sustainability issues such as generating need for minerals operations in sensitive locations.</td>
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### Historic Environment Alternative Options:

- Include a specific criteria-based policy to protect both designated and non-designated heritage assets.
- Include a specific criteria-based policy to enable the re-development and re-use of heritage assets (including listed buildings) where appropriate.

Likely strong sustainability implications for the listed possible inclusions and or expansions of strategic policy for the conservation of the historic environment.
### Sustainability Issues and Trends

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- The Local Plan could include a policy which encourages the re-use of buildings at risk with a more flexible approach to new uses.

- The Local Plan could adopt a more permissive policy approach to new uses, including residential, which allows for greater variety of proposed uses.

- The Local Plan could include a policy seeking to secure the optimum viable use for historic/traditional farm buildings that is consistent with, or least harmful to, the character and appearance of the buildings affected and their wider setting.

- The Local Plan could include a policy to permit and encourage work to improve the energy performance of heritage assets consistent with their character and appearance and that of their wider setting.

- The Local Plan could encourage the consolidation of the existing local lists and add new entries within conservation areas identified according to established criteria as part of the Conservation Area Appraisal process. Heritage assets of strong merit will be afforded consideration under the determination process.

- Use the guidance set out by English Heritage when assessing any proposals for enabling development. The use of enabling development would be exceptional in the National Park.

Pragmatic approach to safeguarding of irreplaceable assets offers strong sustainability benefits. Potential for less sustainable outcomes in relation to effects of energy efficiency measures on the historic integrity of the building and implications in respect to meeting national guidance and law pertaining to designated assets.

Procedural measure with limited additional sustainability implication.

Pragmatic approach to safeguarding of irreplaceable assets offers strong sustainability benefits. Potential for less sustainable outcomes in relation to spatial implications when sites are isolated.

Addressed within proposed policy of this paper.

Pragmatic approach to safeguarding of irreplaceable assets offers strong sustainability benefits. Potential for less sustainable outcomes in relation to spatial implications when sites are isolated.

Procedural measure with limited additional sustainability implication.
Sustainability Issues and Trends | NNPA Local Plan Policy Options Paper, October 2017 | Sustainability Signposting

| Local Plan Draft Options 2017: Leisure & Tourism |

- The special qualities of the National Park make it attractive for recreational challenge events such as fell races, charity walks, cycling challenges, triathlon, motor vehicle rallies, trials etc. Some of these events attract hundreds of competitors and supporters.
- In 2014, 1.69 million people visited the National Park and the surrounding ‘Action Areas’
- Of the 1.69m visitors to the wider ‘Action Areas’ most (1.42m) visited the National Park, but the majority stayed and spent money outside of the National Park in the gateway settlements.
- Visitor numbers to the main ‘pay entry’ visitor attractions in the Hadrian’s Wall corridor fell by 10% from 586,000 in 2007 to 529,000 in 2011 (Information not currently available beyond 2011).

**Issue 18: Recreation and sport facilities**

We propose to support recreational opportunities in the National Park particularly the rights of way network, access to open country, other quiet and active recreation based on the National Park’s special qualities.

We propose to encourage a high quality visitor experience within the National Park through a diverse range of recreation, tourism and environmental education activities.

**Issue 19: Holiday accommodation, visitor facilities and sustainable tourism**

A more flexible approach to the development of visitor facilities could help support a more rounded quality experience that will help keep visitors returning to the area throughout the year (e.g. dark skies activities) and in all weathers to enjoy the primary special qualities of the National Park and importantly, maintain spending in the local economy.

The Local Plan policies will need to provide a safeguard against inappropriate development. The most sensitive areas of the National Park and other areas where tranquility is a particular quality – could be specifically excluded by the policy.

It is proposed that a marketing test be added to the Local Plan to check that there is no reasonable market demand for the continued operation of a key visitor facility or important form of visitor accommodation that contributes to National Park purposes, Policy facilitation of community focused sport and recreation facilities will be a positive sustainable measure where these can be accommodated within the capacity of the landscape and built environment to do so. Such facilities can help foster community healthy and social coherence.

Recreation and sport facility proposals focused towards visitors to the National Park must comply with the Sandford Principle, such that if there is a conflict between the twin statutory purposes of conservation and enhancement and understanding and enjoyment of the Park’s special qualities, it is the former which should prevail. The latter stages sustainability appraisal will have regard to such prioritisation. However, many activities do not require specific operational development and may fall outside the influence of the planning system.

Nevertheless, promotion of understanding and enjoyment of the National Park by all is a statutory purposes and is important to the local economy and subsequently can enhance community vitality. Sustainable development in this context will therefore help facilitate wider accessibility, enjoyment and understanding to the National Park’s special qualities by all who wish to do so, whilst not

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**Sustainability Issues and Trends**

- In 2014 55% of visitors were from the North-East region (59% in 2011) and 6% were from overseas (8% in 2011). There has been an increase in the proportion of visitors from elsewhere in the United Kingdom between 2011 and 2014.
- First-time and overseas visitors tend to go to the Hadrian’s Wall area whilst the Cheviots tends to attract regular repeat visitors from within the North East region.
- In 2014 around half of visitors were ‘day visitors’ whilst a further 43% were ‘overnight visitors’ staying in the North East region. This represents a significant increase in the proportion of staying visitors and more visitors are staying in or close to the National Park as opposed to elsewhere in the North East region since 2011.
- The levels of employment in accommodation and food services (16.3%) compared to the average for National Parks.

**NNPA Local Plan Policy Options Paper, October 2017**

before considering its change of use to something else.

The proposed approach is to encourage the development of visitor facilities and attractions that will enhance understanding, enjoyment and improve access to the special qualities of the National Park but in ways that will avoid conflict with its natural beauty, wildlife or cultural heritage.

A new policy could also introduce flexibility for other visitor-orientated development that does not directly relate to the special qualities. Such a policy would not automatically rule out the development of indoor or artificial outdoor facilities and attractions that will support use of the National Park by a wide range of groups over a longer visitor season. Careful siting, quality design, management methods, planning conditions and legal agreements should ensure that this development would not erode the natural or special qualities that attract visitors to the area in the first place.

**Sustainability Signposting**

undermining those qualities for which the Park was primarily designated. This should include the safeguarding of existing facilities which contribute the second statutory purpose.

Consideration should be afforded in policy to the negative implications of more significantly scaled or spatially concentrated recreational facilities on local communities as well as environmental capacity. On-street car parking and traffic generation, change of use of local service to focus on visitor income can present negative sustainability outcomes.

Sustainable development for recreation and tourism should recognise and adapt to the needs of minority groups or those with particular mobility needs.

Increasing participation in adventure activities can present strong community health and well-being benefits, and also supplement traditional visitor economic income. Such activities should be facilitated within the capacity of the natural and historic environment to do so, recognising that the National Park may have areas of differing levels of environmental sensitivity to do so.

The dark skies of Northumberland National Park are particularly distinctive special quality, and particularly sensitive certain types of development which cause light pollution. Sustainable development will be facilitated by...
Sustainability Issues and Trends

(14.7%) and England (6.4%) indicate the importance of tourism to the local economy. 2014 estimates for tourism for the ‘Action Areas’ (including the National Park and gateway settlements) indicate that tourism contributes £158 million to the local economy and supports over 3,113 jobs.

Leisure & Tourism Alternative Options:

- Continue to support a sustainable tourism and recreation as per extant policy
- Include a criteria based policy to allow camping in suitable locations where appropriate.
- Include criteria based policies to allow the provision of new indoor and outdoor visitor facilities in suitable locations where appropriate.
- Include a criteria-based policy to allow the provision of new sustainable self-catering visitor accommodation in suitable locations where appropriate.
- Include a criteria-based policy to allow the conversion of under-used or redundant buildings to holiday accommodation in suitable locations where appropriate (particularly in relation to dark skies tourism).

Policy which recognises the need to preserve and enhance this recreational and educational asset and contributor to tranquillity.

For many, particularly visitors from outside the immediate area, access to the National Park for recreational opportunity is challenging by means other than private car. Policy which positively facilitates alternative access opportunity would be likely to deliver sustainability benefits, but the wider value of enhancing access, realistically by car, should also be recognised.

Extant Core Strategy policies have been subject to SA/SEA. No effective policy change presenting differing sustainability outcomes.

Limited sustainability implications although landscape impacts may arise.

Effectively addressed under proposed policy in this paper.

Positive sustainability benefits to economy and recreation opportunity where in compliance with the spatial strategy.

Addressed under proposed policy in this paper. Low sustainability implications apart from trip generation issues. Positive recreation and education benefits likely.
## Local Plan Draft Options 2017: Minerals & Waste

- There is one crushed rock quarry (Harden) within the National Park with estimated permitted reserves of approximately 1,500,000 tonnes. The current planning permission for the Harden Quarry site allows for extraction until 2029 with an anticipated output of up to 150,000 tonnes per annum. The Joint LAA recommends that generally future provision for the extraction of crushed rock should be made outside the National Park where practical, recognising the resource that is available outside of this area with a large level of permitted reserves.
- There are currently no sand and gravel quarries in Northumberland National Park. The JLAA recommends that provision of sand and gravel should be made outside of the National Park in line with national planning policy. It also

### Issue 20: Ensuring a sustainable supply of minerals

We propose to define Mineral Safeguarding Areas on the Local Plan policies map and also introduce a minerals safeguarding policy in the draft Plan. Mineral extraction would only be permitted in Northumberland National Park where it would have no significant environmental effects and where it is of a scale appropriate solely to meet and identified need for local building stone, such as the provision of materials for repairs to local historic buildings, and where the need for stone cannot be met elsewhere outside the National Park.

- Sustainability issues in relation to minerals operations in the National Park will differ according to the purpose of the extraction and opportunities for extraction from outside the Park.
- Extraction of the Park’s minerals resources for non-dimensional aggregates or sand and gravel for market purpose and uses outside the park is likely to represent a fundamentally unsustainable position. The physical profile and topography of the National Park is (in human the context) irreplaceable, and minerals workings potentially present major threat to landscape, natural processes, biodiversity and heritage assets across the short, medium and longer term.
- The built heritage of the National Park, and the continuing sensitive evolution of settlement and other development will be likely to depend in part upon sources of traditional materials, which historically may have been extracted locally. Consideration of the conservation benefits of small scale dimensional stone extraction, positive restoration and after use of sites and local economic benefits will be valid sustainability considerations. Moreover it will be more sustainable to extract dimensional stone for local use so as to reduce travel distance from source to use point.
Sustainability Issues and Trends

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**Sustainability Issues and Trends**

- The County Council disposed of an average of 1.5m tonnes of waste from residents and businesses during 2014/15. If these figures are assumed for each household resident in the National Park, then this would equate to about 1,635 tonnes of waste arising in the National Park each year. In addition to that the amounts of industrial and specialist waste will be very low. Farm waste, such as slurry, is mostly treated and disposed within the farm holding.

**Issue 21: Sustainable waste management**

We do not think it would be suitable to allow non-inert waste to be disposed of within the National Park. This is a continuation of the approach taken by our current policies and we have no evidence to suggest that the modest waste arising from within the National Park are not capable of being processed and disposed of outside the National Park. We will, however, keep this position under review pending the outcome of the sub-regional waste study.

We will only support proposals for recycling sites where they meet the needs of local communities and would not have detrimental impacts.

We will only permit the disposal of inert waste produced within the National Park, where it can be demonstrated that the material cannot reasonably be re-used or recycled, where proposals are small in scale and otherwise where it will not have detrimental impacts.

We are less certain about what the response to proposals for processing/disposal of organic waste should be. This sector

**Minerals extraction activity is also a potential source for local employment and in some aspects represents a traditional primary industry of the area which can foster traditional skills such as stone masonry. Loss of employment opportunity and traditional crafts can present negative sustainability effects.**

Sustainability priorities for waste should always be towards reduction in the generation of waste, reusing waste positively and recycling where possible. The role of spatial policies in this regard may be limited.

The volume of waste generated by communities, business, agriculture and minerals operations across the Park may be comparatively low, but widely dispersed and as such gives rise to consideration of the collection and transport implications of waste management, against managing and processing waste locally and the implications of that on the natural and historic environment. Economies of scale may be important constraints on the ability to provide more sustainable local waste management opportunities.

Waste generation within the National Park is likely to be an issue where achieving less unsustainable practice remains the only realistic aspiration where prioritisation is afforded to conservation localised special qualities.

**Consideration of organic waste generation and disposal**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustainability Issues and Trends</th>
<th>NNPA Local Plan Policy Options Paper, October 2017</th>
<th>Sustainability Signposting</th>
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<td>continues to evolve and, in the context of this National Park, farm effluent is likely to be a particular contributor. Our initial thinking is that we would like to encourage these proposals where the waste has been produced from within the National Park or areas immediately adjacent to the boundary. We would also like to encourage cooperatives so that several farms can benefit from a single waste-processing site. We do, however, need to expand our understanding of this area so we would welcome any feedback from consultees about this subject.</td>
<td>locally or a centralised facility may give rise to sustainability issues pertaining to natural processes, land contamination, visual prominence of waste infrastructure, transport, air quality and residential amenity.</td>
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**Minerals & Waste Alternative Options:**

- Include a criteria-based policy to allow for new quarries or the extension of existing quarries for the extraction of crushed rock or aggregates in suitable locations where appropriate.

- Include a policy to safeguard future mineral supplies by restricting development in appropriate locations so that the land is not sterilised by other potential development.

Potential for significant negative environmental sustainability effects and potentially contrary to policy for major development within the National Park. Wider sustainability benefits including local economic and employment effects and national security of minerals supply may accrue but likely to be incompatible with statutory purposes.

Long-term sustainability benefits potentially accrue through efficient use of non-renewable resources. Shorter term negative sustainability effects may arise where safeguarding policy curtails otherwise sustainable development proposals.