Local Plan 2017-2037

Core Strategy and Development Management Policies

Preferred Options Draft Plan

July 2018
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Foreword

Last year we asked you to give us your opinions on what you thought the planning issues were for the future of the National Park as well as how best to address these through our planning policies. Your positive and constructive responses have helped us understand how local communities see Northumberland National Park developing over the next 20 years.

In the Preferred Options Draft Plan, we set out our vision, strategic priorities, spatial objectives and detailed policy options which will direct where new homes, workplaces, services and facilities to places where they are needed across the National Park in accordance with our statutory duty to foster the social and economic wellbeing of local communities.

The plan will allow us to meet the needs of our elderly residents given the ageing population in the National Park. It will also allow us to plan for sustainable rural growth and attract more young people, families and workers to live in the National Park in order to sustain our local communities and services whilst at the same time ensuring that the special qualities of the National Park are not harmed in accordance with our statutory purposes and duty.

There are a lot of detailed policies in the plan affecting the National Park, its settlements and communities. We wish to get your views again so please have a look at our proposals and make some comments, steps on how to get involved are provided inside this document.

Thank you for taking the time to read this Preferred Options Draft Plan, we look forward to working with you and your community to help shape the future of the National Park for the benefit of all who, live, work and visit this unique part of northern England.

Glen Sanderson,
Chairman, Northumberland National Park Authority.
1. Introduction

What is the Local Plan?

1.1 The Local Plan contains policies, proposals and supporting text that sets out what type of development is and isn’t acceptable in the National Park. It also sets out a vision and strategies to aim to achieve over a specific period of time. The Local Plan is our first consideration when we make a decision on a planning application and its policies are likely to affect you, your community, the businesses you use and land in your local area. Local Plans consist of development planning documents prepared by Local Planning Authorities and neighbourhood plans prepared by local communities. Together they form the statutory framework for future development of land and buildings.

1.2 The current Local Plan for Northumberland National Park comprises the Core Strategy and Development Policies document (2009), which is supported in its implementation by the Building Design Guide SPD (2011), Landscape Strategy SPD (2011) and Otterburn Camp SPD (2007) [collectively these documents set a spatial planning strategy, policies and guidance for Northumberland National Park for the current plan period (up to 2024).]

1.3 All local planning authorities are required to have an up to date Local Plan. Consequently, the Authority is currently undertaking a review of the current plan with the aim of producing and adopting a new Local Plan by December 2019. The new Local Plan will contain planning policies guiding future development and the determination of planning applications for a twenty year period from 2017 to 2037. The Northumberland National Park Local Plan (2017-2037) will, when adopted:
- Set the strategic planning policies for the National Park, taking account of key factors like population trends, economic growth, climate change, resources and environmental character;
- Direct the scale and distribution of new development (such as housing and employment) which is required to meet the National Park’s identified need to 2037;
- Provide the planning principles, including detailed ‘development management’ policies to guide decisions on planning applications;
- Show key environmental designations and include site specific proposals for the conservation and enhancement of historic and natural assets.

1.4 Planning law stipulates that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Therefore, the policies within the Northumberland Local Plan, together with those in neighbourhood plans, will be the starting point for the assessment of all planning applications. The Local Plan must comply with the Government’s National Planning Policy Framework (or ‘NPPF’) and associated Government legislation. It also sits underneath frameworks and strategies produced regionally and sub-regionally, including the Strategic Economic Plan for the North East prepared by the North East Local Economic Partnership (or ‘NELEP’).

Duty to cooperate

1.5 A ‘Duty to Cooperate’ was introduced through the 2011 Localism Act and it is incorporated into the NPPF. It places a legal duty on local planning authorities and public bodies to cooperate on strategic planning issues that cross administrative boundaries. Local planning authorities must demonstrate how they have complied
with the duty at the Independent Examination of their Local Plans. The Duty requires
the Authority to:

- Work with neighbouring authorities on a joint approach to sustainable
development or use of land, where there would be a significant impact on
both/all of the local planning areas concerned;
- Set out planning policies to address such issues;
- Work with a range of public bodies to set out agreements on how strategic
issues will be dealt with through the plans of each;
- Consider joint approaches to plan-making.

1.6 Following the recent agreements on the North of Tyne Devolution Deal (with
Newcastle City Council and North Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council) and
the Borderlands Growth Deal (with local authorities either side of the
England/Scotland border), the Authority will be working increasingly closely with
these neighbouring authorities.

1.7 The Duty also covers key statutory or representative bodies such as Homes
England, the Water Authority, Natural England, Historic England and the
Environment Agency. From time to time ‘position statements’ and/or ‘statements of
common ground’ will prepared and agreed between the Authority and these various
parties as necessary.

Linkages to other policies, plans and programmes

1.8 The government published its 8-point plan for National Parks in England in 2016.
This set out the government’s ambition and strategic priorities for England’s
National Parks and a framework for their delivery which was intended to feed into
the government’s then anticipated 25 Year Environment Plan. This was published
on 11 January 2018 and set out government action to help the natural world
regain and retain good health. It aims to deliver cleaner air and water in our cities
and rural landscapes, protect threatened species and provide richer wildlife
habitats. It calls for an approach to agriculture, forestry, land use and fishing that
puts the environment first.

1.9 The National Park Local Plan is broadly aligned with both of these overarching
strategies. It is also aligned with the vision, strategic aims, outcomes and
objectives contained within the Northumberland National Park Management Plan
(2016-2021) a proportion of which have been taken forward and incorporated
within the vision, strategic priorities and spatial objectives contained within the
Preferred Options Draft Plan.

How to get involved

1.10 Consultation on the current document is taking place over an 8-week period
between 30th July and the 24th September 2018. The representations received
during this stage in the consultation process will be considered by the Authority
and a summary of the consultation responses will be published. The responses,
together with further updates to evidence where required, will inform the content
of the at the next key stage in the process (regulation 19) in 2019, prior to it
being formally submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination.

1 See figure 3
1.11 The consultation documents can be viewed on our website at: www.nnp.org.uk/localplanconsultation. Hard copies of the consultation documents can also be viewed at NNPA headquarters and some County libraries.

1.12 During the consultation period, a number of drop-in sessions have been arranged to allow people to find out more about the Preferred Options Draft Local Plan and how to respond to the consultation. Details of the dates, times and venues for these sessions are also available to view on our website at: www.nnp.org.uk/localplanconsultation

2. Spatial Portrait

2.1 Northumberland National Park is deeply rural in its nature. With a resident population of fewer than 2,000 spread over 1,049 square kilometres, its population density is the lowest in England at 2 persons per square kilometre (ONS).

2.2 The largest single settlement is Elsdon, located in the east of the National Park, with a population of around 240 (2011 Census). Other key settlements include Alwinton, Falstone, Greenhaugh, Harbottle, Holystone, Lanehead and Stannersburn, referred to in the current Core Strategy as the ‘Local Centres’. The larger ‘gateway’ settlements, including Bellingham, Haltwhistle, Rothbury and Wooler are more populous, however these settlements are located outside of the National Park boundary meaning that only a fraction of their parish populations are resident within the Park.

2.3 Much of the National Park’s population resides in the Local Centres, smaller villages and small nucleated hamlets, as well as isolated houses and farmsteads. Examples of these smaller settlements include Charlton, Ingram, Kirknewton, Rochester and Stonehaugh.

2.4 This Local Plan covers the whole of the National Park area. The purpose of the Local Plan is to provide consistency and clarity for local development decision-making, in the determination of planning applications. Local plans are also important in the delivery of sustainable development.

2.5 The Local Plan review follows the work already done in 2015-16 on the review of the National Park Management Plan. The Management Plan (2016-2021), adopted in March 2016, is a partnership document setting out how the statutory National Park purposes and the Northumberland National Park Authority’s socio-economic duty will be delivered. It was prepared by representatives of local business, landowners, local communities and delivery agencies, and translates the local issues facing the National Park into 40 specific objectives for the Authority and its partners to deliver. The Local Plan is a delivery mechanism for some of the Management Plan objectives, as well as a mechanism to deliver the wider requirements of the planning system as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework².

Figure 1: Northumberland National Park Location

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Current planning challenges facing Northumberland National Park

2.6 The National Park is facing a variety of challenges that can be at least partly addressed through planning policy. For instance, the population of the National Park increased by 2.9% between 2001 and 2011 to 1,993 people which is stronger growth than the average for National Parks’ (2.1%) but lower than the national average (7.9%). When compared to Northumberland as a whole, the National Park is estimated to have experienced a small decline in its population since 2011, following a low level of growth between 2001 and 2011.5

2.7 Further, over the 2001–2014 period, the profile of the National Park’s population has aged, with the proportion being in the older age groups (65+ years) increasing relative to those in the younger age groups with the proportion of the population aged 65+ living within the Park increasing from 16% to 24% Between 2001 and 20146. Evidence also indicates that there is a clear need for affordable housing in the National Park. Analysis of affordable housing requirements evidenced an overall imbalance (shortfall) of 40 affordable dwellings over the Plan Period 2017-2037 and an imbalance (shortfall) of 2 dwellings each year, with most of this need 61.8% for 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings and 38.2% for 3 or more bedroom dwellings. However, this is not a target for delivery but expresses the overall need from the Housing Register compared with current supply of affordable housing. This indicates a clear need for family housing, elderly accommodation and housing for working-age residents.

2.8 Inter-Department Business Register (IDBR) data indicates that within the National Park boundary the number of businesses fell by 9% between 2009 and 2012 but recovered slightly in 2012. It also indicates that local employment fell by 14% in the period. The latest Census data suggest that the Northumberland National Park has a very small ‘working age’ population of less than 1,600 people with a particularly high proportion of whom are employed in skilled trade occupations (26%). There are also a relatively high proportion of people with elementary occupations and relatively few people with administrative, sales, customer service, caring, leisure and other service occupations compared to both the National Park and national averages. Northumberland National Park also has the highest concentration of agricultural businesses of all English National Parks8. However, the percentage of residents employed in farming and forestry has declined from 28% in 2001 to 22% in 20115.

2.9 More recent evidence suggests that employment in the National Park declined by 37% between 2006 and 2016 – this is in stark contrast to the growth in jobs recorded at the national and regional level over the same period. Connectivity as a key challenge for the local economy at present. Road connectivity and public transport access is relatively poor, with a number of local businesses viewing this as a cause of recruitment difficulties10.

2.10 Local wages are also low in relation to house prices. Despite relatively low unemployment, there is still a need to widen out the range of jobs and business opportunities to improve quality of life and maintain people and services in the area. If farming continues to decline as a local employer, the Local Plan will need to help identify more opportunities for agricultural diversification that makes use of the assets available.

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4 State of the National Park Report 2015
5 Northumberland National Park Demographic Forecasts 2016
6 Northumberland National Park Demographic Forecasts 2016
7 Northumberland National Park Demographic Forecasts 2016
8 Northumberland National Park Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2017)
9 Valuing England’s National Parks (National Parks England 2013)
10 State of the National Park Report 2015
11 NNP economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (2018)
2.11 In common with other sparsely populated rural areas, the National Park continues to lose its community facilities. Increased centralisation of health services, education, jobs and retail provision is having detrimental consequences for local communities and the wider attractiveness of the area for new families to move into. The Local Plan, therefore, needs to encourage the development of new services and protect existing ones.

2.12 Reliance on broadband communication becomes even more important when other services are declining, yet high-speed broadband and mobile phone coverage is patchy (at-best) across much of the National Park. The Local Plan will need to support the provision of new broadband and mobile telecommunication infrastructure where it can be accommodated without serious harm to the national Park’s special qualities.

2.13 There are no properties within the National Park that are connected to the national gas grid with approximately 10% of properties not being connected to mains electricity. The National Park’s housing stock is older, frequently under-occupied and inefficient in energy use. The expense of adequately heating homes in the National Park has a negative impact on quality of life for households. Newer, smaller, modern, efficient homes are needed together with affordable energy solutions that will improve the performance of the existing stock.

2.14 The National Park needs to remain attractive and relevant to future visitors to support the local economy. This means encouraging existing visitors to keep returning, and attracting new visitors by offering accommodation and facilities that meet their needs.

2.15 Fundamental changes to the climate continue to be predicted during this century. The local planning system has a role to play by steering development into locations that support existing infrastructure and communities without consuming excessive non-renewable resources. Another role of planning is to steer development away from flood risk areas and to try to slow rainfall run-off and reduce downstream flooding. Planning decisions should also attempt to improve the resilience of new and existing development to extreme weather event risks such as flooding, wild-fires and the effects of climate change.

2.16 A lack of public and private finance to support new development and infrastructure is rebalancing the expectations of landowners and making financial viability a more important planning consideration than it used to be. On the one hand, the Local Plan should try to ensure that new development will make a fair contribution to local infrastructure. On the other, it must avoid making it so expensive that it doesn’t happen at all.

2.17 The long-term challenge of maintaining and enhancing the area’s wildlife and the conservation of its historic assets will continue. There is a potential opportunity in this Plan to change planning policy to increase the reuse of buildings, which could support conservation and produce social and economic benefits. This Plan could also provide a potential opportunity to do more to enhance biodiversity and maximise the benefits provided by natural capital and its associated ecosystem services. How can the Local Plan help meet these challenges? The Plan could respond to the above challenges above by:

- allocating new sites for development,
- supporting the development of appropriate non-allocated land,
- encouraging the re-use of brownfield land and existing buildings and,
- supporting and promoting the provision of new community facilities and infrastructure.
such as improved telecommunications.

- protecting existing infrastructure, community facilities and rural services.

2.18 The new Local Plan will be specific about its aims and objectives but less rigid than the previous Plan about the means of achieving them. It will attempt to do this by adopting policies that allow more flexibility for applicants and decision-makers to decide how the desired outcomes will be reached rather than prescribing negatively-worded policies that depend on restrictive criteria to minimise harm.

2.19 This could mean accepting more development risk than has previously been the case in policy making, even though approval rates for planning applications are currently very high in the National Park. The new policies will still have to be based on evidence as they will be scrutinised by a planning inspector before they can be adopted. The Plan must also deliver consistent decisions and be seen to be fair by all users of the planning system. It must continue to deliver development that will not prejudice National Park purposes and will take opportunities where possible to enhance its landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage.

2.20 The new Local Plan will set out the planning strategy for the National Park over the next 20 years. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets clear expectations as to how a Local Plan must be developed in order to be justified, effective, consistent with national policy and positively prepared to deliver sustainable development that meets local needs and national priorities. The most appropriate approach to positively planning for development in the National Park will differ from that taken in areas with a larger, more certain, demand. Demand in the Park is generally small in scale and unpredictable, therefore it is considered unsuitable for the Local Plan to allocate land for specific uses. Consequently, rather than planning ahead for a specific quantum of development, the emerging Local Plan will need to incorporate sufficient flexibility to facilitate ‘windfall’ development opportunity as and when needs arise, while protecting other public interests such as landscape character, neighbouring amenity, public safety and ecological value.

Environmental assessment

2.21 Local Plans are required to be tested by strategic environmental assessment. The purpose is to test the likely environmental impact of alternative policy options. Assessment is a continuous process that informs the Plan up until it being presented to a planning Inspector for formal examination. The Plan is also subjected to appropriate assessment at an early stage. This is a statutory requirement of the European Habitats Directive to determine whether the Plan might have a significant effect on internationally-designated habitats. At this early stage it seems unlikely that there will be policy options likely to have any significant impact on designated sites. This Strategic Environmental Assessment process has been incorporated into the more holistic Sustainability Appraisal (SA) exercise\textsuperscript{11} undertaken in accordance with section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. This draft plan has also been informed by previous appraisals undertaken for both the Issues Paper (spring 2017) and the Policy Options Paper (autumn 2017) public consultations which are available to view on the National Park Authority’s website.

\textsuperscript{11} The process of weighing and assessing policies for their global, national and local sustainability implications in relation to the environment, the economy and society, incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to comply with EU Directive 2001/42/EC.
Figure 2: Local Plan Structure

- Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)
- Local Development Scheme (LDS)
- Development Plan
- Neighbourhood Development Plans
- Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)
- Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

Figure 3: Stages of Plan Preparation

1. Development of evidence base and stakeholder involvement
2. Public participation in the preparation of the Local Plan (Regulation 18)
3. Publication and submission of the Local Plan to the secretary of state (Regulation 19, 20, and 22)
4. Examination of the plan by a Planning Inspector (Regulation 24)
5. Publication of the inspector’s recommendations (Regulation 25)
6. Adoption of the Plan by the Authority (Regulation 26)

(current stage)
3. Vision, Strategic Priorities and Spatial Objectives

3.1 In March 2016 a new National Park Management Plan was adopted following 11 months of public consultation and discussion. The Plan was prepared by a steering group partnership of 14 organisations representing landowners, local representatives and public bodies. Its aim is to deliver actions that will keep the National Park a thriving place to live and work in and to visit. We think that it makes sense to include the same 20 year vision in the Local Plan. The Local Plan is one of the key delivery mechanisms for achieving the objectives set out in the Management Plan.

Our Vision

‘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.’

3.2 The Management Plan (2016-2021) outlines five strategic aims to achieve this vision, these are:

**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.

3.3 These aims have been translated into strategic priorities and spatial objectives for the Local Plan.

Strategic Priorities

3.4 The strategic priorities for the Local Plan were set out in the Issues Paper as follows:

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12 Northumberland National Park Management Plan 2016 - 2021. A partnership document that sets out how the statutory National Park purposes and social economic duty will be delivered.
Strategic Priority 1: To support sustainable development and land management that conserves and enhances the National Park’s distinctive natural and cultural qualities and protects its assets.

Strategic Priority 2: 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.

Strategic Priority 3: To support and encourage sustainable economic growth to allow our local communities to thrive.

Strategic Priority 4: 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.

Strategic Priority 5: To support the retention and enhancement of community facilities, infrastructure and rural services in order to sustain our thriving communities.

3.5 The above strategic priorities were broadly supported by public consultation already undertaken (spring 2017 and autumn 2017) and have formed the basis (alongside the vision and Management Plan aims) of a set of spatial objectives for the Local Plan.

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 services and natural capital.
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 in.
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.
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.
8. Support innovative, high-quality and more sustainable building design that complements the distinctive character of the National Park.
9. Ensure the landscape of the National Park continues to be responsive to change while at the same time conserving and enhancing its character.
4. Preferred Policy Options

Spatial Strategy

4.1 An important part of Plan making is determining where future development will go. This is referred to as the ‘spatial strategy’. The intention is to deliver development in places that are more sustainable than the alternatives would be. Typically this means encouraging development in the locations that already have existing infrastructure capacity like public transport, community facilities and public services such as waste collection, health services and schooling. Spatial strategies typically try to minimise the loss of greenfield land because of its long term, alternative potential for food production, biodiversity, landscape value or recreational use.

4.2 Local Plans are required to comply with government policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The framework includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development\textsuperscript{13}. For plan-making this means that:

- Local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area;
- Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless:
  - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or
  - specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.

4.3 The UK government guiding principles for sustainable development include living within environmental limits; ensuring a strong, healthy and just society and achieving a sustainable economy. In national planning policy terms sustainable development is regarded as ‘positive growth’ i.e. delivering economic, environmental and social progress for current and future generations. The National Planning Policy Framework regards the fundamental purpose of the planning system as making development as sustainable as possible.

4.4 In the context of the Northumberland National Park, development will be sustainable where it achieves the three dimensions and helps keep people living and working in the area with a good quality of life. In doing so, however, it should not erode the Special Qualities of the Park, which are its unique assets that lie at the heart of developing a stronger and more sustainable local economy.

4.5 There is also a further element to sustainability within the context of this Local Plan. Northumberland National Park was designated in 1956 to benefit the whole nation. Its particular purposes are set out in Section 61 of the Environment Act 1995:

- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural heritage of the national parks;
- to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities [of the national parks] by the public\textsuperscript{14}.

4.6 In addition to the two National Park purposes the Authority also has a duty to ‘seek to foster the socio-economic wellbeing of local communities within the National Park’.

\textsuperscript{13} NPPF paragraph 14

\textsuperscript{14} If there is a conflict between the two, then the ‘conservation’ purpose takes precedence – this is known as the ‘Sandford’ principle. More detailed government guidance about the implementation of National Park purposes including aspects of planning policy, are set out in the 2010 Circular ‘English National Parks and The Broads’.
Consequently, as well as delivering sustainable development, the Local Plan should also aim to avoid outcomes that would prejudice the purposes for which the National Park was designated. Conversely, new development will be particularly welcome if it actually contributes to the delivery of National Park purposes.

**National Park Purposes**

4.7 The Northumberland National Park is a part of the cultural and natural heritage of the nation. It is a working landscape; its natural beauty influenced by centuries of farming and other human activity. It contains important heritage assets, wildlife species, habitats and geological diversity, many of which are recognised as being of national or international importance, and are protected by law.

4.8 National policy gives great weight to the protection of the Special Qualities of the National Park, such as its landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage. Planning decisions can also support the viability of related businesses, such as upland livestock farming that help to maintain many of the Special Qualities. The second purpose of ‘understanding and enjoyment’ is less likely to be influenced through the planning system although policies that support visitor related accommodation and facilities will contribute.

4.9 The second purpose is also relevant to conservation because it aims to promote the ‘Special Qualities’ which attract people to the National Park in the first place. It follows that if the Special Qualities are damaged, for example by insensitive development, then that will obstruct their enjoyment by the public. The assumption therefore is that the Special Qualities are a subset of the landscape, wildlife, cultural heritage and the enjoyment of being in the Park.

4.10 Where a development proposal would create conflict between the two statutory purposes, the purpose of conservation is given preference. This is a long-standing presumption known as the ‘Sandford Principle’, which has been repeated most recently in Government Circular advice on National Parks published in 2010. Experience indicates that ‘Sandford’ conflicts tend to be very rare in the Northumberland National Park. Where they have been encountered, it has usually been possible to resolve the conflict through negotiation and the use of conditions or management agreements attached to a planning permission.

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Our preferred approach:

### Policy 1: Sustainable Development

Northumberland National Park Authority will presume in favour of development that is sustainable. Sustainable development in the Local Plan area is development that either achieves or does not prejudice the achievement of the following:

a) makes the National Park a high quality place to live and work – including: improving and supporting the use and retention of existing services, infrastructure and facilities, including the housing stock and workplaces;

b) reduces the need to travel;

c) contributes positively to the built environment by having regard to the site context and conforms to the National Park Design Guide SPD;

d) conserves or enhances the landscape character\(^\text{16}\) of the National Park through use of high quality design, appropriate landscaping, and removal of unsightly development;

e) improves biodiversity by enhancing existing priority habitats and species or creates new priority habitat;

f) improves public access to, and enjoyment of, the National Park’s special qualities\(^\text{17}\);

g) reduces waste and greenhouse gas emissions through improved energy efficiency and making full use of small-scale renewable energy;

h) avoids areas at risk of flooding and is resilient and responsive to the impacts of climate change;

i) conserves or enhances the historic environment and helps secure a sustainable future for the assets at risk; and,

j) furthers the statutory National Park purposes.

**Development will be deemed to be unsustainable if it would harm:**

- the health and well-being of local communities;

- the diversity, quality and local distinctiveness of the natural and cultural landscape, wildlife, historic environment or other special qualities of the National Park;

- the strength, diversity or vitality of the local economy;

- the supply of housing to meet local needs;

- access to local services and community facilities; and,

- the National Park statutory purposes.

**Development will be permitted that furthers the statutory National Park purposes of:**

- conserving and enhancing natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage;

- promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.

Development that harms these purposes will not be permitted although an exception may be made where development can demonstrate an overriding need and the harm can be mitigated or, as a last resort, compensatory measures can be agreed.

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\(^\text{16}\) Landscape character assessment and NCA profiles

\(^\text{17}\) As set out in NNP Management Plan 2016-2021
Justification of our preferred approach

4.11 Energy efficiency is an important aspect of sustainability in the National Park, particularly in relation to the social and economic impacts of fuel poverty. The Local Plan does not contain a policy that prescribes a set level of energy efficiency in new buildings, or that requires consequential improvements to existing buildings. This is because the national Building Regulations promote energy efficiency and are already seeking staged improvements towards a zero carbon standard for many new buildings. Also, flexibility is preferred over prescription; especially given the number of traditionally constructed buildings, where more bespoke energy efficiency measures may need to be considered.

4.12 The National Park is a part of the cultural and natural heritage of the nation. It is a working landscape; its natural beauty influenced by centuries of farming and other human activity. It contains important heritage assets, wildlife species, habitats and geological diversity, many of which are recognised as being of national or international importance, and are protected by law. The statutory purposes of national parks are set out in paragraph 4.5 and repeated in the policy.

4.13 The majority of development proposals in the Park are modest in scale. Through negotiation on aspects of design and mitigation, it is usually possible to ensure that they do not have a negative impact on the statutory purposes. By the same token, a number of policies in the Plan seek to realise positive effects on statutory purposes, for example by securing the re-use of traditional buildings and opportunities for people to visit and stay in the National Park.

Policy Options Paper (2017) Sustainability Appraisal conclusions

4.14 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.

Policy Options Paper (2017) public consultation outcomes

4.15 A small number of comments were made in relation to the need to ensure this reflects national policy whilst some expressed concerns that it did not refer to environmental criteria directly.

Consideration of alternative options

4.16 Include a definition of sustainable development in the plan (as set out in Policy Options Paper 2017) instead of a more generic policy. This option was discounted after consultation responses expressed concerns that it did not refer to environmental criteria directly. Consequently it was considered that a criteria based ‘sustainable development’ policy would be the most appropriate way forward.
General Development Principles

4.17 It is important that new development is to a high standard of design and quality, so that it can serve many generations to come. Most development has a visual impact but some forms of development also have a long-term impact on the intensity of use in an area, for example in terms of vehicle movements or use of services such as shops, waste collection or water supply. If new development is of a high quality it will add to the high quality of the National Park environment and will tend to encourage spending, create employment and maintain quality of life for residents.

4.18 Design is a key aspect of sustainable development. It goes to the heart of most planning proposals. Attitudes to design, especially in an area with such a strong vernacular built tradition, are shaped by what has gone before but will also need to adapt to suit changing technologies, materials, climate, building styles and expectations.

4.19 Northumberland National Park has a distinctive built heritage that is recognised as one of its most cherished qualities. The use of local stone and vernacular design with little architectural detail is characteristic of the area. The challenge lies in managing change in a sympathetic way to ensure that new buildings respond to modern needs yet sit in harmony with the historic structures in the surrounding area. This needs to start with a clear appreciation of context, so that proposals can be designed to 'fit in', without slavishly reproducing designs from the past. With larger scale development it will require an understanding of how the site relates to the wider landscape.

4.20 The rural nature of the National Park clearly requires different solutions from an urban environment. National Park designation also brings with it a requirement for planning decisions to conserve and enhance the cultural heritage, wildlife and natural beauty of the area. The consequence is that development solutions will tend to be more restrictive and require greater sensitivity to their context. The National Park Authority nevertheless encourages innovation in architecture, materials and technology for new buildings but will normally require more traditional methods for changes to historic buildings.

4.21 To help designers and developers respond to these challenges the Authority has an extant Design Guide SPD that provides advice about, and examples of, the quality expected. The Authority uses it to influence proposals and to negotiate on schemes during pre-application discussion and to support decisions on planning applications. The Design Guide SPD will be updated as part of the Local Plan review.
Our preferred approach

Policy 2: General Development Principles

All new development, activities, and uses of land within Northumberland National Park must uphold and promote the principles of sustainable development; new development will be permitted when:

a. The special qualities of the National Park will be conserved or enhanced;

b. The proposal demonstrates high quality sustainable design and construction, which protects and enhances local character and distinctiveness through careful integration with the existing built form. This includes but is not restricted to ensuring:
   - the design is informed by, and responds 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 are sympathetic and complementary;
   - it conserves or enhances the archaeological, architectural and historical character and appearance of the site and its setting;
   - the design is high quality, has visual interest and reinforces local distinctiveness;
   - the design ensures a development that is environmentally sustainable, minimises the consumption of resources, and is long lasting and adaptable;
   - it maintains or enhances the ecological, geological and geomorphological value of the site;
   - it will be accessible for all users including those with a range of mobility needs;

c. The proposal supports the wellbeing of local communities by ensuring:
   - amenity is not adversely affected in terms of visual impact, pollution, noise and waste;
   - the creation of a safe and secure environment that would not be vulnerable to crime;
   - the provision of appropriate and proportionate community facilities to meet the needs of the development;
   - that appropriate services and infrastructure are capable of being provided without compromising the quality of the landscape;
   - it does not prejudice highway safety or cause unacceptable levels of traffic that would harm the environment or capacity of the local road network;
   - it will not obstruct, damage or lead to an unacceptable use of a public right of way unless an agreed alternative route has been provided;
   - it is located in an area identified as being at the lowest risk of flooding unless it satisfies relevant sequential and exception tests and it can be demonstrated that the development will remain safe for users without increasing the risk of flooding elsewhere;
   - that if it is located near to land known or suspected of being contaminated or unstable, a full assessment demonstrates that it will not give rise to unacceptable risks to human health or the environment. This may require suitable remedial works to be carried out in advance of development;
   - it respects the residential amenity of neighbours and the adequate level of amenity for its future occupants in relation to nearby uses; and,
   - it will be served by appropriate and adequate storage, waste management and other infrastructure;

d. It will not give rise to unacceptable, adverse impacts in terms of any of the following:
   - the quality or quantity or flow of surface or ground water;
   - the quality of the air, land or soil;
   - the level of noise and dust/particulates, vibration or natural light;
   - the darkness of the night sky; and,
   - important public views.
Justification of our preferred approach

4.22 This policy applies to all development proposals. It aims to address some of the fundamental planning issues such as visual appearance, human safety, environmental protection and impact on local amenity. Having a single list of detailed criteria reduces repetition elsewhere in the Local Plan.

4.23 This policy also deals with a wide range of human safety and environmental protection issues such as land instability, flooding and pollution of natural resources. In some areas aquifers provide a supply of water where no mains alternative is available. This policy therefore embraces water quality and the ecological status of water bodies, which are affected by a broad range of factors such as land management and historic mineral working. The Water Framework Directive is a key piece of legislation governing protection of the water environment while River Basin Management Plans set out the measures and actions required to achieve an improvement in the ecological status of water bodies. As such, these will be material considerations in planning decisions. Water quality is affected by a range of activities beyond development. In the context of the National Park, harmful run off from farming practices can be an issue, the response to which falls within the remit of other strategies, most notably the National Park Management Plan.

Policy Options Paper (2017) Sustainability Appraisal conclusions

4.24 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.

Policy Options Paper (2017) public consultation outcomes

4.25 Broad support for this policy approach (potential options 1 and 4).

Consideration of alternative options

4.26 Given the broad public support, evidence and positive sustainability appraisal conclusion it was considered that the preferred approach was the most appropriate option to take forward.

Major Development

4.27 It has been national planning policy since the late 1940s to try to avoid very large-scale development from taking place within national parks. The assumption is that there are less sensitive landscapes elsewhere or alternative solutions to the siting of major scale development in a National Park. Paragraph 116 of the NPPF requires major development to avoid national park locations except in the most unusual circumstances where it is in the clear public interest to do so.

4.28 Other than some limited post-war quarrying, forestry, military training operations and the recently opened Sill: National Landscape Discovery centre the Northumberland National Park has largely avoided major development. This is partly because it is bypassed by the main communication and infrastructure corridors but also because it does not contain any large settlements.
4.29 The Otterburn Training Area (OTA) is the second largest military training area in the UK after Salisbury Plain and is used to provide live firing and other training facilities for The Ministry of Defence. The Training Area covers approximately 23,000 hectares, the majority of which is hill and moorland used for upland hill grazing. It is acknowledged that military operations at the OTA make a major contribution to the country's defence capability, and provide essential facilities which could not be easily replicated elsewhere contributing to the local economic and social well-being of Park communities. However, it is the role of the Local Plan to ensure that these operations or any potential future expansion of the operating base do not harm the National Park's special qualities, particularly the landscape.

4.30 Within Northumberland National Park development is classed as major when its characteristics and specific impacts are likely to have a significant impact on the special qualities of the National Park.

**Our preferred approach:**

**Policy 3: Major Development**

Planning permission will only be granted for major development in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated to be in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of all of the following:

a. The need for the development, including any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy and local communities;

b. The cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the area or, meeting the need for it in some other way;

c. Any detrimental effects on: the special qualities of the National Park; the ability for the public to understand and enjoy the special qualities; the setting of historic assets; natural resources; and the transport network and the extent to which these could be mitigated;

d. Any positive effects on: the special qualities of the National Park; the ability for the public to understand and enjoy the special qualities; natural resources; and the transport network;

e. The cumulative impact of the development when viewed with other proposals;

f. The extent to which the proposal is designed and sited to respect the character of the landscape; and where appropriate, the settlement in which it lies; and

g. The scope for adequate restoration of the land once the use has ceased.

**Justification of our preferred approach**

4.31 National planning policy presumes against major new development in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty because of the likely harm it would cause to the nation's long term interest of conserving these places. Major development is defined here as development of more than local significance, which will also have a long-term impact on the landscape, wildlife or cultural heritage of a National Park because of its scale and form. Examples from other National Parks include reservoirs, power stations, large housing estates, dual carriageways, military firing ranges and high voltage overhead power lines.

4.32 This scale of development has a significant impact on the qualities of a National Park whether it is located inside or adjacent to its boundary. Major development is, therefore, only permitted inside National Parks in exceptional circumstances. Proposals are subject to the
most rigorous examination and have to demonstrate that they are genuinely in the nation’s interest if they are to proceed.

**Policy Options Paper (2017) Sustainability Appraisal conclusions**

4.33 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.

4.34 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.

**Policy Options Paper (2017) public consultation outcomes**

4.35 At Issues paper stage, the current approach to Major Development in the National Park was generally considered appropriate, with some support for a more restrictive approach. Overall the general feedback response from both consultations to the option of continuing the approach to major development, (as set out by extant policy 4), was mixed. Further consultation is required to test extent of agreement with a more detailed proposal of a revised extant policy 4.

**Consideration of alternative options**

4.36 Given the broad public support (potential option 1) and positive sustainability appraisal conclusion it was considered that the preferred approach was the most appropriate option to take forward. No alternatives were considered.

**Settlements**

4.37 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development that includes supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities by providing the type of development that reflects the community’s needs and supports its health, and social and cultural well-being.\(^\text{18}\)

4.38 Plans should take account of the different roles and character of areas and in promoting sustainable development in rural areas, locate development, such as housing, where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. This includes recognising that groups of smaller settlements may share and support services within and between their communities.

4.39 The settlement hierarchy will help to ensure that National Park settlements are socially cohesive and equitable by maintaining and creating balanced and mixed

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Identifying settlements where new development is considered to be acceptable, provides opportunities for development to be in closer proximity to services and jobs and helps to maintain social networks. The social sustainability of communities should not be underestimated in dispersed rural areas and allowing for new development provides opportunities for friends and families to live in close proximity and support each other. In small communities even a relatively low number of affordable homes can enhance their long term sustainability and have a positive outcome for those who live and work there. The spatial strategy therefore aims to address the local need for affordable housing, provide opportunities for the diversification of the National Park’s economy and maintain a range of local services and facilities.

Settlement Hierarchy

Our preferred approach

Policy 4: Settlement Hierarchy

1. The Local Centres of Alwinton, Elsdon, Falstone, Greenhaugh, Harbottle, Holystone, Lanehead and Stannersburn will be the focus for new development within the National Park.
2. Development will take place within the Smaller Villages and hamlets of Charlton, Ingram, Kirknewton, Rochester, and Stonehaugh where it contributes to the provision or protection of village services.
3. Proposals for development within or on the edge of these settlements should be at a scale that is appropriate to the character and function of the settlement.
4. Proposals for development that are not located within or adjacent to one of these settlements in will need to demonstrate that:
   a) the location is necessary for a land based function, or;
   b) the location is necessary for the provision of public utilities or infrastructure, or;
   c) the development is ancillary to an existing use at the site, or;
   d) the location is appropriate in relation to other local plan policies.
5. In the Open Countryside development will be limited to the reuse of existing buildings. New buildings will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:
   a. The development cannot take place in an identified Local Centre, Smaller Village, or through the reuse of an existing building; and
      i. it will conserve or enhance the special qualities of the National Park; and
      ii. it will provide opportunities for the public to understand and enjoy the special qualities, whilst not negatively impacting on them; or
   b. It is replacing an existing building and the new building is not materially larger than the building it replaces. If the building is to be rebuilt for residential use then evidence will be required to demonstrate that residential use was the lawful use of the building immediately prior to its demolition.

Justification of our preferred approach

4.40 The best location for most development is in or on the edge of settlements that already have a range of services and infrastructure, and that are more likely to offer access to public transport. The objective is to improve the long-term viability of local communities by supporting existing services through new development whilst protecting open countryside from development that does not need to be located there. Development will be permitted outside settlements where it supports farms and rural enterprises that derive their primary
inputs from the land or where it provides public infrastructure, or would otherwise comply with specific policies in the Local Plan.

4.41 Policy 4 identifies where new development will be focussed, and what type of development is permitted, in principle, within the named settlements. The overall aim is to ensure that these communities are sustained over the longer term through appropriate development of a scale that is proportionate to its location and the socio-economic needs of local communities, within the context of the highly valued landscape of the National Park. Outside of these settlements, the area is defined as the ‘open countryside’ and includes farmsteads, isolated dwellings and hamlets.

4.42 It should be noted however that the definition of the categories of settlement included in the hierarchy will be subject to further work that will be undertaken in order to gather evidence on the merits for the potential inclusion or exclusion of particular locations within the various settlement categories. This evidence will be used to inform the Publication Draft Local Plan which will be completed in May 2019.

Policy Options Paper (2017) Sustainability Appraisal conclusions

4.43 Mixed sustainability implications are likely to arise from the adoption of this approach.

Policy Options Paper (2017) public consultation outcomes

4.44 Respondents broadly thought that new development should still be focused towards existing settlements that are served by community facilities and public transport. In relation to farm steadings being defined as a settlement, most survey respondents did not have an opinion on this. However there was also support for more flexibility in relation to new development outside of settlements.

Consideration of alternative options

4.45 Given the broad public support it was considered that the preferred approach was the most appropriate option to take forward.

Conversion and Enhancement of Buildings outside settlements

4.46 Buildings form an important part of the architectural and historic fabric of the National Park, and reveal much about its social, cultural and economic history. Changing circumstances mean many buildings have outlived their original purpose. It is important that the planning system facilitates change of use where this helps to conserve the interest of these buildings. Care is however needed to ensure new uses and their impacts do not undermine what makes these buildings valuable, and that they are permitted in locations that have capacity for the new use.
Our preferred approach

Policy 5: Conversion of Buildings outside Settlements

1. The change of use of existing buildings outside identified settlements to employment use (including tourism) will be supported where:
   a) The building is capable of conversion;
   b) The building is of sufficient size to accommodate the proposed use without the need for significant alterations or extensions which would detract from its character and appearance and that of the wider landscape.

2. In the open countryside the change of use of a redundant or disused non-residential building(s) to a dwelling(s) will be supported where:
   a) there is an enhancement to its setting.
   b) in the case of extended family accommodation\(^{19}\), the building is located in a farmstead within an existing group of buildings, in close association with an existing dwelling and the proposal otherwise accords with the extended family dwellings criteria;
   c) in the case of a rural worker, the building is well related to existing buildings on the holding. The occupancy of a rural worker dwelling will be limited to a person(s) able to demonstrate a proven essential need for the accommodation in accordance with Policy 14 (Rural Workers’ Housing).

3. In the case of buildings within an existing agricultural or other primary business responsible for land management, a change of use will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the agricultural use of the existing building(s) to be reused is redundant.

4. Where permission is granted a condition will be attached removing permitted development rights in respect of extensions.

Extended family dwellings criteria:

The extended family dwelling will closely associated with an existing dwelling and will be located:
   a) in settlements within the curtilage of an existing dwelling; or
   b) a farmstead within an existing group of buildings.

Extended Family dwellings will be occupied by a person(s) (and their dependents) who can demonstrate that:
   a) the occupier of the associated existing dwelling or the new dwelling has a minimum period of 3 years or more in the last 10 years permanent and continuous residence in the parish or an adjoining parish; and,
   b) they are immediate family by virtue of being a direct descendent or antecedent of the permanent occupier of the associated existing dwelling; or,
   c) exceptionally, they are a dependent relative who has an essential need to live close to another person, the need arising from age, family or medical reasons.

\(^{19}\) The provision of homes for close family members through the conversion of existing buildings either on farmsteads or within the curtilage of existing dwellings in the named settlements. Either the occupants of the existing dwelling or those of the new Extended Family dwelling should have a 3 year local connection.
A planning obligation will be secured to ensure that the intended occupants meet the requirements of the Extended Family occupation in this policy and to tie the dwelling(s) to the main house to ensure that they are not sold off separately.

The variation of a planning obligation which restricts the occupancy of an Extended Family dwelling as set out above will only be permitted where the occupancy of the dwelling would be limited to local connection occupancy.

Where permission is granted a condition will be attached removing permitted development rights.

Justification of our preferred approach

4.47 The preferred approach could potentially lead to a widening of conversion opportunities (including residential), perhaps linked to an assessment of the character and location of individual buildings. This will add more managed flexibility for the location of new development during the Plan period.

Policy Options Paper (2017) Sustainability Appraisal conclusions

4.48 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.

4.49 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.

Policy Options Paper (2017) public consultation outcomes

4.50 There was broad support for more flexibility for developing existing buildings outside of settlements provided there is sufficient infrastructure in place to support this. There was broad support from respondents for greater flexibility in allowing the conversion of redundant farm buildings to more viable uses.

Consideration of alternative options

4.51 The option of continuing the current approach of restricting the change of use of buildings outside of settlements was considered, however given the support for more flexibility around this issue and the need for more housing in the National Park it was considered that the preferred approach was the most appropriate option to pursue.
Community Facilities and Infrastructure

4.52 Community facilities are important for maintaining the social fabric and well-being of the National Park’s communities. They include buildings and spaces that provide places to congregate and socialise (village halls, pubs), learn and develop (schools, nurseries), worship (churches, chapels), and businesses and public facilities that provide for the basic day-to-day needs of communities (post offices). Broadband and mobile phone services in the National Park are generally very poor so, in support of wider social and economic goals and in conjunction with funding schemes from national government, it is vital that this infrastructure is improved.

4.53 Despite their importance, community facilities come under threat from time to time. In such a rural area, they often rely on public subsidy, voluntary effort but perhaps above all, adequate use. There is a risk that short to medium term changes in circumstance, whether the withdrawal of a grant for a local sports facility or a reduction in the number of children attending a primary school, could result in the loss of a community facility forever. The planning system needs to guard against this. By the same token, as community needs change and evolve, there is a need for the planning system to keep pace, supporting new or improved facilities as and when they are required.

4.54 We don’t propose formally to define what is or is not a community facility\(^{20}\), or to identify them on the policies map. We feel it is best to maintain flexibility so that future policy could respond flexibly to the particular circumstances of individual communities and the facilities they rely on. The exception to this will be local green space.

4.55 National planning policy stipulates that there should also be an opportunity for communities to suggest specific green spaces for protection against development in the Local Plan\(^ {21}\). These spaces should hold a particular local significance, be close to the community they serve and should not be extensive tracts of land. We invite suggestions from communities explaining which open spaces are important and why. A call-out for sites to be considered for assessment as local green space has already been undertaken alongside the public consultation on the Policy Options Paper in autumn 2017.

4.56 It should also be noted that national policy gives Local Green Spaces equivalent status to urban greenbelt; however in doing so it affords a potential opportunity to accommodate agricultural buildings and infill development. In a nationally protected landscape like the National Park, the degree of protection afforded by a Local Green Space designation should be higher than Green Belt, so a more cautionary approach may be required.

4.57 Infrastructure can cover a wide range of developments including everyday utilities (water, gas, telecommunications, electricity) in addition to transport infrastructure (such as roads, car parks and public transport facilities), flood mitigation/adaptation, and community facilities (including sports, recreation, health, schools and other services). It is possible to use the ‘Community Infrastructure Levy’ (CIL) to establish a standard charging schedule for new infrastructure, so that developers are required to pay for new infrastructure required as a result of the development they are proposing. The levy is payable at set rates for specific

\(^{20}\) Communities have the option of nominating land or buildings as ‘assets of community value’ under Chapter 3 of the Localism Act 2011. The fact that any land or building is not included on this register shall not be taken to mean it is not capable of being defined as a community facility for the purposes of this paper.

\(^{21}\) National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 76
development types, usually per square metre permitted. This money can be pooled so that the infrastructure can be planned strategically over time.

4.58 Due to the very modest scale and volume of development in the National Park, it isn’t feasible for the Authority to charge developers in this standardised way. It is generally expected that most development will not give rise to the need for additional infrastructure, but it is, however, possible that for some larger, unplanned developments or developments where infrastructure is at or near capacity, it will be necessary for the applicant to secure necessary improvements to infrastructure before development can proceed. This will depend on the location of the development and the type of infrastructure required. For example, for some infrastructure there are legal duties to accommodate additional demand where as for others, such as surface water drainage, it is necessary to explore more bespoke solutions.

Community Facilities

Our preferred approach

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<th>Policy 6: Community Facilities</th>
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<tr>
<td>Development that would result in the loss of, or have an unacceptable adverse effect on, an existing community facility, will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that:</td>
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<tr>
<td>a) the current use is no longer needed or a suitably located replacement facility of at least equivalent standard has been secured; and,</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) the land or building could not fulfil, or is not needed for, an alternative community use.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applications must be supported by appropriate and proportionate independent evidence, including appropriate financial, business planning, options appraisals, marketing and community engagement evidence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development of new, or improvements to existing, community facilities, will be supported where it would be in accordance with other relevant local plan policies.</td>
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Justification of our preferred approach

4.59 Community facilities aid social cohesion, reinforce local identity and enable essential services to be provided as locally as possible. The presumption is that they should be retained or replaced with something of equivalent standard. Where development would lead to the loss of a facility or reduce its viability, applicants will need to provide very strong justification based, first and foremost, on there no longer being a need for it. This will require community engagement to assess current and historical use, and to identify barriers to, and opportunities, for continued community use.

4.60 The policy particularly seeks to guard against short-termism. The case for losing a facility must not revolve around the needs of the current owner/tenant, their chosen business model, or narrow consideration of operational models. Applicants will need to look at a full range of potential uses or ways of operating a business or facility, in order to demonstrate that it is not workable in the long term. The Authority will expect applicants to commission independent assessments of the facility in both its current and alternative roles, to assess the potential for continued or alternative uses. Short term marketing assessments will not be sufficient in their own right. By the same token, testing of such proposals will need to be
done in a proportionate way where, for example, a premises is clearly only suited to a very narrow range of community uses.

**Policy Options paper (2017) sustainability appraisal outcomes**

**4.61** 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. 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.

**Policy Options Paper (2017) public consultation outcomes**

**4.62** Support for the provision of better community facilities, whilst ensuring the avoidance of any serious harm to the National Park’s special qualities.

**Consideration of alternative options**

**4.63** Given the broad public support and positive sustainability appraisal conclusion it was considered that the preferred approach was the most appropriate option to take forward. No alternatives were considered.

**Local Green Space**

**4.64** National planning policy says there should be an opportunity for communities to suggest specific green spaces for protection against development in the Local Plan\(^2\). These spaces should hold a particular local significance, be close to the community they serve and should not be extensive tracts of land. We invite suggestions from communities explaining which open spaces are important and why. A call-out for sites to be considered for assessment as local green space has already been undertaken alongside the public consultation on the Policy Options Paper (autumn 2017). Areas of Local Green Space will be identified on the policies map during the next stage of plan preparation.

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\(^2\) National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 76
Our preferred approach

Policy 7: Local Green Space

Areas of Local Green Space will be designated to protect important parcels of community land from future development provided that it:
1) provides a recreational resource for the local community, or
2) allows important public views into or from within a settlement, or
3) 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
4) is important to the character or setting of the settlement.

Justification of our preferred approach

4.65 The whole National Park is the subject of a degree of development constraint because it is a nationally protected landscape. In order to give clarity to decision makers, developers and local communities, it is important that a more specific designation is identified, to remove some of the doubt surrounding whether a particular site or plot is suited to development. It is important that the designation is used selectively and proportionately.

Policy Options Paper (2017) Sustainability Appraisal outcomes

4.66 Likely to present positive environmental and community sustainability outcomes. 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.

Public consultation outcomes

4.67 Generated a mixed response with the majority of respondents.

Consideration of alternative options

4.68 No alternative options were considered as the Local Green Space policy has been included in the plan in compliance with national policy and guidance.

Infrastructure

4.69 We want to ensure that any new development is only permitted if the infrastructure required to service it has adequate capacity. Where additional or enhanced infrastructure is necessary directly as a result of the proposed development, the applicant should be expected to provide a financial contribution equivalent to the cost of remedying the infrastructure shortfall. This contribution would be secured through a legal agreement under Section 106 of the Town & Country Planning Act.

4.70 We recognise the dangers in this reactive, case-by-case approach to infrastructure planning. Although we won’t 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 the Community Infrastructure Levy in the National Park.

**New and improved infrastructure**

4.71 Existing infrastructure will inevitably need to be replaced or upgraded over time. The Authority recognises that it is essential for meeting the day-to-day needs of communities, so will respond positively to any proposals while ensuring that they represent the optimal solution for communities and the special qualities of the National Park.

4.72 Broadband and mobile phone services in the National Park are generally very poor so, in support of wider social and economic goals and in conjunction with funding schemes from national government, it is vital that this infrastructure is improved. We want to support this and any other essential infrastructure wherever possible where it can be accommodated without serious harm to special qualities.

**Our preferred approach**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Policy 8: New and improved infrastructure</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposals for new or improved infrastructure providing services and facilities will be permitted where their siting and appearance:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) minimises the impact on visual amenity, including the character and appearance of the locality and wider landscape character;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) will not result in unacceptable impacts upon features of ecological, archaeological, architectural or historic interest; and,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicants should demonstrate that the proposal represents the least environmentally harmful option available having regard to the operational requirements and technical limitations that are applicable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All infrastructure shall be removed and the site restored to its former condition when no longer required for its approved purpose.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Justification of our preferred approach**

4.73 Supporting the development of new infrastructure will increase the quality of life for those living, working or visiting the National Park, whilst protecting the area’s special qualities.

4.74 Infrastructure provision will be key to the delivery of sustainable development, including economic growth and meeting the development needs of the National Park. As such, the Authority will support new infrastructure that addresses current shortfalls or enhances provision, subject to its associated impacts being acceptable.

4.75 The remoteness and terrain of the National Park imposes limitations and costs on infrastructure, which mean deficiencies, continue to exist. These are usually to the detriment of local communities and business. Although there needs to be an element of realism in the level of infrastructure that can be achieved, improvements are still potentially realisable in some of the most basic services.
Improving broadband and mobile telecommunications services is an important objective in the National Park Management Plan. Such services are now an integral part of modern lifestyles and business operations, and an essential pre-requisite for attracting the sort of business with the scope for sustainable growth in the National Park. They are also vital in remote rural areas to provide on-line access to services that are otherwise physically located many miles away.

Better broadband and mobile services will not only benefit residents and businesses but also the millions of people who visit the National Park each year. The policy facilitates this expansion of broadband and mobile infrastructure for the benefit of all, whilst at the same time minimising any environmental impacts.

Policy Options Paper (2017) sustainability appraisal outcome

Provision of more infrastructure 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. 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.

Public consultation outcome

The feedback received during both consultations was particularly supportive of the provision of new and improved infrastructure, including for better mobile phone and broadband coverage across the National Park.

Consideration of alternative options

Given the broad public support and positive sustainability appraisal conclusion it was considered that the preferred approach was the most appropriate option to take forward.

Green Infrastructure

National policy encourages local plan policies to set out a strategic approach for the creation of green infrastructure networks that contribute towards the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment and the wider aims and benefits of green infrastructure relating to landscape, biodiversity, design, open space, recreation, health and well-being, and climate change mitigation and adaptation. National Parks are recognised as providing some of the best quality green infrastructure that helps create a healthy environment for people, communities and businesses, and improves air and water quality.

Green infrastructure networks encompass a wide range of high quality natural, semi-natural, and amenity green spaces and other environmental features. Green infrastructure is

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planned, or already exists as a multifunctional resource that can deliver a range of benefits that helps underpin sustainable communities. Although green infrastructure is predominantly planned and designed in an urban context, it also has a role in rural areas where land may provide a range of functions and ecosystem services such as: linkages between habitats, biodiversity benefits, carbon storage, flood protection, water purification, and areas for recreation and enjoyment\textsuperscript{24}. National Parks provide the highest quality green infrastructure on a broad landscape scale that includes extensive habitats, major landscape features, and public access land/rights of way\textsuperscript{25}.

4.84  Blue infrastructure refers to the water environment which is significant in terms of the important role it has for biodiversity, recreation, flood mitigation and climate change adaptation. Blue infrastructure is usually incorporated within the terminology ‘green infrastructure’ but can be specifically identified as a tool to improve climate change resilience.

4.85  The multi-functional role of green infrastructure can strengthen climate change mitigation and adaptation measures. In terms of helping to reduce flood risk, strategic land management programmes can have a significant impact on making space for water, reducing peak flows and helping to lessen the impact of potential flood risk, and conserving water. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), which deal with surface water, are designed to mimic natural drainage as closely as possible in a built environment context. They provide an example of green infrastructure and an illustration of the achievement of multiple benefits from the management of land together with opportunities to provide public open space. Green infrastructure, including open space, can act as the ‘green lungs’ of a settlement and will generally contribute to improving air quality and reducing noise pollution.

Our preferred approach

**Policy 9: Provision of Green Infrastructure**

1. Development proposals should include measures that will enhance green infrastructure provision and create opportunities for wildlife in the National Park commensurate with the scale of the proposal and intensity of activity expected.

2. Green infrastructure proposals should:
   a) protect and enhance existing natural and historic environments;
   b) strengthen connectivity and resilience of ecological networks;
   c) be locally distinctive through reflecting and enhancing landscape character;
   d) maximise opportunities to mitigate and adapt to climate change; or
   e) improve quality of life through provision of benefits for health and wellbeing, including opportunities to access open space and enjoyment of the National Park and its special qualities.

3. Proposals will be encouraged where a range of green infrastructure benefits can be achieved.

\textsuperscript{25} Natural England (2009) Green Infrastructure Guidance
Justification of preferred approach

4.86 It is important that green infrastructure is planned around existing assets. The preferred approach would ensure that development proposals would make specific provision for green infrastructure including for wildlife that may also help to support biodiversity adaptation to climate change. This will help to ensure that green infrastructure will reinforce the sense of place whilst contributing to the delivery of sustainable land management e.g. through agri-environment schemes. Green infrastructure can also provide opportunities to enhance the historic environment.

4.87 This policy aims to deliver green infrastructure enhancements, such as habitat provision for wildlife, within the National Park. Advice is available from officers at the National Park Authority to help applicants provide the most suitable enhancement in relation to the scale and type of development and the surrounding habitat. Incorporating elements of green infrastructure within developments will contribute towards wider outcomes and benefits for the green infrastructure and ecological networks across the National Park.

4.88 The policy also encourages the provision of green infrastructure as an essential component of new development that also incorporates benefits for biodiversity on a scale that is commensurate with the nature, scale and activity of any development proposal. It would also ensure that green infrastructure provision would be considered at the earliest stage of preparing development proposals.

Housing and Employment

Housing Provision

4.89 Planning authorities must quantify their ‘objectively assessed need’ for housing, and if necessary set out an annual target for housing delivery in their Local Plan that will support projected household growth together with any other specific housing requirements. It also requires local planning authorities to maintain a rolling housing land supply during the first 5 years of the plan period. However, it is expected that no such figure will be applied to the Local Plan given the likelihood that specific sites for housing development will not be allocated. Instead it is expected that unplanned windfall sites will make up a proportion of future housing supply alongside the provision of housing in settlements and sustainable locations just outside the Park boundary, for example in gateway settlements such as Wooler. Going forward, the emerging Local Plan and its housing evidence will allow the Authority to have a clear view on where its housing supply is likely to come from.

Northumberland National Park is an area with a high proportion of vacant homes (including retirement and holiday homes) which currently stands at 20% of existing housing stock and as such is an area (alongside rural parts of the rest of Northumberland County) where there is a need to provide a wider range of housing choice. In addition approximately 98% of dwellings within the National Park are houses or bungalows with 60% of these being detached, 24% being semi-detached, 14% terraced, 2.1% flats and 0.3% being caravan or mobile accommodation. Further, approximately 6.2% of all the 871 households in the National Park live in affordable housing mainly renting from a social housing landlord with the Northumberland Housing register indicating that there are approximately 29 households.

26 DCLG (2016) Planning Practice Guidance - Paragraph: 028 Reference ID: 8-028-20160211 - Why is green infrastructure important to delivering sustainable development?
27 NPPF Paragraph 47
in the National Park area that are classed as being ‘in-need’. The gateway settlements also provide an important source of housing for workers within the Park, although the perception amongst consultees was that there has been limited development in recent years. In areas such as Rothbury, where new house building has occurred, consultees indicated that these units have typically been high value homes attractive to new residents, with fewer affordable options available for existing local residents.

4.90 The population of the National Park is ageing with the number of residents aged 65 or over being projected to increase by approximately 63% by 2037 (to 1,023 persons). This presents a major strategic challenge to provide appropriate housing and enable adequate adaptation of current stock to support these residents. Evidence suggests that the key drivers in determining the tenure and type of future housing within the National Park are:

- The need to continue development to reflect the housing choices of residents, taking into account the changing demographic profile of Northumberland National Park;
- Developing an increasing range of housing and support products for older people;
- Delivering additional affordable housing to help offset the identified net shortfalls; and diversifying the range of affordable options by developing Intermediate tenure dwellings and products;
- The economic viability of delivering affordable housing on sites across Northumberland National Park.

4.91 National planning policy also requires planning authorities to identify sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches where there is evidence of need. If there is no evidence of need then authorities are required to set out an exceptions policy, similar to that applied to affordable housing. The purpose is to provide criteria that will guide development, should a need become apparent during the Plan period.

4.92 National planning policy protects National Parks from development that would be harmful to their Special Qualities. The National Park Circular states that these areas are not suitable locations for unrestricted housing, and that the focus should be upon providing for local housing need. The Local Plan is not, therefore, expected to release inappropriate amounts of land in response to all types of demand. Instead, it is expected to prioritise locally derived housing needs, by releasing a supply of sites that would support the social and economic needs of communities that live and work in the area.

4.93 The Special Qualities of Northumberland National Park make it a particularly desirable place to live, but its rural character and openness also make it vulnerable to new residential development. National planning policy strictly controls house building outside towns and villages for reasons of sustainability and to protect the character of the countryside. Paragraph 55 of the NPPF states that in order to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities and that new isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided unless there are special circumstances.

4.94 In accordance with national policy, the need (both affordable need and market demand) for housing in the Northumberland National Park has been objectively assessed. The 2017 Northumberland National Park Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) provides evidence to underpin planning for the delivery of housing in the area over the Plan period.

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29 NNP Economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (2018)
30 Northumberland National Park Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2017)
period. The objectively assessed housing need (OAHN) for Northumberland National Park is for up to approximately 160 units over the plan period (2017-2037).\textsuperscript{32}

4.95 Delivering on all the objectives and aspirations for housing provision within the National Park will be challenging. There is a limited amount of stock to begin with and until at least the medium term, there will be very limited sums of public subsidy available. Given such finite resources, there are tensions inherent in trying to address the needs of young people and families whilst at the same time meeting the housing needs of older people. Accordingly, it will be essential that the Local Plan develops a very clear understanding of how we are going to deliver and manage these competing priorities.

4.96 Further, national policy states that if adverse impacts would outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF or where specific policies indicate development should be restricted, such as within a National Park, objectively assessed housing need should not be met\textsuperscript{33}. The National Parks and the Broads Vision and Circular states that National Parks are not suitable locations for unrestricted housing and general housing targets are not provided\textsuperscript{34}. The National Park Authority has taken account of statutory National Park purposes, the local socio-economic duty to National Park communities and constraints which indicate that development should be restricted and that the ability to meet the full need (demand) for housing over the Plan period is constrained.

4.97 The approach to housing delivery in this Plan is therefore to provide positively for housing, working with estimates of housing provision through a rural exceptions approach and without a target to deliver locally needed affordable housing up to the point at which the National Park would be harmed. The indicative figure of affordable housing units needed in the National Park 2017-2037 for this Local Plan is approximately 40 units\textsuperscript{35}.

4.98 Applying the ‘exceptions’ approach - that local need affordable housing may be permitted, where new housing would not normally be allowed - has the effect of reducing the value of land and buildings to a more reasonable level so that local communities and housing providers can acquire sites and buildings for affordable housing. Within the terms of the local needs housing policies, affordability is judged on a household-by-household basis. Those in need of affordable housing will be households who cannot afford to rent or buy a home on the open market.

4.99 This approach is considered appropriate in a remote rural area, given the small size of Northumberland National Park’s settlements, landscape sensitivity/capacity, anticipated SHLAA supply and that it is consistent with National Park purposes, the duty to local communities and national policy and guidance.

\textsuperscript{32} Northumberland National Park Strategic Housing market Assessment (SHMA) (2017)
\textsuperscript{35} Northumberland National Park Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (2017)
Our preferred approach

Policy 10: Providing a range and choice of housing

1. Having regard to the existing housing stock in the locality, all new residential development will contribute towards the creation of sustainable, balanced and inclusive communities by ensuring a mix of dwellings (in terms of size, type and tenure), that will meet the needs of present and future generations.

2. New housing will offer a good standard of accommodation by being constructed to be neither too large nor too small.

3. All new build housing developments will be encouraged to be constructed in accordance with Building Regulations Requirement M4(2)\(^{36}\) for accessible and adaptable dwellings.

4. A range of good quality homes will be provided to deliver a balanced mix of tenures and housing types and sizes. Development proposals will be assessed according to how well they meet the needs and aspirations of those living in and seeking to move to Northumberland National Park, as identified in the most recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

5. Community-led housing, including individual and group self-build and custom-housebuilding, will be supported, particularly where this will contribute to meeting local housing needs. These will remain, available for people with a local connection\(^ {37}\), at an affordable cost. A Section 106 legal agreement will be required to ensure the restriction of the occupancy in perpetuity.

Justification of our preferred approach

4.100 The housing stock as a whole should provide a range of accommodation sizes, types and tenures to meet the needs of all sections of the local community. The National Park’s existing housing stock has a higher than average proportion of larger and detached dwellings\(^ {38}\). To create more balanced communities and address the needs of existing and future households, there is a need for smaller and more affordable dwellings, and for tenures of new housing that are aligned to identified needs. Smaller dwellings are also likely to take up less land – an important consideration given the scarcity of suitable housing land in the National Park’s settlements.

4.101 Evidence indicates a clear need for housing to meet the needs of elderly residents\(^ {39}\) it also acknowledges that the ageing population may increase demand for residential care facilities. However, it also notes that a number of facilities are located within the gateway settlements and that this, coupled with the relatively low levels of overall population growth anticipated in the National Park would perhaps suggest that this could be accommodated within existing facilities, or through an expansion of home care services\(^ {40}\). This makes it unlikely that any extra care accommodation would be provided within the National Park.

\(^{36}\) Or relevant successor regulations.
\(^{37}\) In accordance with defined local connection occupancy criteria.
\(^{38}\) NNP Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2017) and Housing Needs Survey (2016)
\(^{39}\) NNP Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2017)
\(^{40}\) NNP Economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (2018)
4.102 The development of additional housing both within and on the outskirts of the National Park has also been identified as being essential in supporting the growth of the tourism sector through the attraction and retention of a larger workforce with stakeholders also noting the need for greater flexibility for housebuilding within the Park to enable retiring/new agricultural workers to remain within the local area and to enable the re-use of derelict agricultural buildings for residential or commercial use.

4.103 This plan necessarily focuses on new development - which is a small part of the National Park’s existing housing stock. Policy 9, aims to ensure, in terms of size, type and tenure that new housing permitted in the National Park will result in a better mix of dwellings and that it contributes to that which is needed locally by giving those in housing need, including young people, the opportunity to stay in their community and contribute to the viability of important services such as schools.

4.104 New housing development will be encouraged to be designed to enable it to meet the Building Regulation requirement for accessible and adaptable dwellings to help address the needs of people over their lifetime. This should improve the suitability of new housing so that as their needs change, people can remain in their own homes for longer.

4.105 The fundamental objective under these housing policies is to ensure that new dwellings remain more affordable to meet the community's needs in perpetuity. Where there is evidence of need for custom/self-build housing and/or accessible and adaptable housing, the National Park Authority, in discussion with the relevant housing authority, will seek to ensure that it is provided for through proposals, either as part of the affordable local needs housing itself (including custom/self-build plots) or where it is proven to be required to deliver the affordable housing as Principal Residence housing.

4.106 There is also growing interest in the potential for community land trusts to initiate community-led or other affordable housing schemes and this approach may be able to achieve mixed schemes with, for example, rented affordable housing, potentially managed by Registered Providers, local need custom/self-build housing and/or housing for first time buyers to address the range of needs within a community. Opportunities to bring forward this type of housing will be explored with housing delivery partners such as the County Council and Communities CAN.

Sustainability appraisal outcomes

4.107 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. Ultimately, where such a balance is successful it should be expected to help maintain the positive human influence of a living and working landscape and harmonious built environment.

Public consultation outcome

4.108 The highest proportion of comments (17%) received through the Policy Options consultation related to the policy theme of Housing and Employment. This was also well responded to during the Issues Paper consultation (18% of comments). Overall respondents indicated that the level of need for housing in the National Park would need to be reviewed in

41 NNP Economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (2018)
further detail. However, the majority of them were supportive of a policy approach that would help to provide more affordable housing in suitable locations (60% of survey respondents in agreement). However, one respondent disagreed with this policy option citing concerns over affordable housing viability. Respondents also broadly supported the provision of community-led and self-build/self-custom housing, family housing, rural workers’ housing, and housing to meet the needs of the elderly population.

Consideration of alternative options

4.109 Given the public support, evidence and sustainability appraisal conclusion it was considered that the preferred approach would be the most appropriate option to take forward.

Residential Extensions

4.110 Changes to permitted development rights have meant that the rules concerning extensions, improvements and alterations a householder can make to their house without the need for a planning application have been altered. Some dwellings may also have permitted development rights withdrawn. Further information can be found on the Planning Portal. To avoid doubt, given the variations for permitted development rights within National Parks, applicants are advised to contact the National Park Authority in the first instance.

Our preferred approach

Policy 11: Residential Extensions

Proposals for residential extensions will be permitted where they:

a) accord with the principles set out in Policy 2 (General Development Principles);

b) ensure there is sufficient space within the existing curtilage to accommodate the extension without resulting in overdevelopment of the site or adversely impacting on residential amenity space; and,

c) ensure the maintenance or replacement of any bat and barn owl roosts that may be present.

2. Residential extensions will not be permitted for temporary dwellings.

3. Extensions to residential curtilages will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that it will not adversely affect visual amenity, the setting of the residential building, the surrounding landscape, biodiversity and/or character of the area.

Justification of our preferred approach

4.111 The role of this policy is to provide reasonable flexibility for dwellings to be updated and extended whilst ensuring that the impacts of extensions are acceptable and to retain a mix of dwelling sizes that will help to sustain balanced communities across the National Park. The overall size and design of extensions should not be excessive to ensure that the

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44 Article 2(3) land – land within a National Park, the Broads, an area of outstanding natural beauty, an area designated as a conservation area, and land within World Heritage Sites. As defined by: Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.
4.112 Extensions for dwellings that are subject to local occupancy tie to ensure they meet the local community’s need for affordable (or more affordable housing) will be very carefully considered. The need for an extension will be considered taking account of Nationally Described Space Standards and the effect on the affordability of the dwelling in the longer term. This is because such homes have been permitted to provide an opportunity for local people to own their own home, who would otherwise be unable to afford to buy a home on the open market. Together with the local need occupancy tie, the size of these dwellings ensures that they remain more affordable for local people in perpetuity.

4.113 Temporary dwellings, such as those considered to be essential to support a rural land-based business and granted permission for a period of three years, will not be permitted to extend.

4.114 Proposals to extend the residential curtilage of a property, will be carefully considered in terms of the impact the change of use of the land to a residential use (e.g. from agricultural grazing land) may have on the surrounding area in terms of its visual appearance in the wider landscape, its impact on landscape and/or settlement character. Proposals should particularly have regard to the settlement form and the use of traditional boundary treatments that reflect the historic character of the area.

**Affordable housing**

4.115 In delivering affordable homes, housing providers have to consider a variety and range of needs for different sizes, types and tenure of home (such as those for local workers, accessible and adaptable housing, housing for those with care needs, and single people or young families). This is an important part of assessing need and housing providers and developers of two or more affordable homes, will need to show that they have taken into account the housing needs of the community. Single properties will tend to be from private developers or self-builders aiming to satisfy a particular individual (though proven) need. Following a rural exceptions site approach, the need for the mix of dwellings and the viability of a proposal, will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

4.116 Any market (Principal Residence) housing to deliver affordable housing will also need to reflect the needs of the area for sizes and types of homes to help create a more balanced housing stock.

**Our preferred approach**

**Policy 12: Affordable Housing**

On housing sites of 11 or more dwellings, 50% must be affordable housing.

On housing sites of between 6 and 10 dwellings, the Authority will require the payment of a commuted sum in lieu of the delivery of the relevant proportion of affordable housing above.

On housing sites of up to 5 dwellings, new housing will be restricted to principal residency.

If it is demonstrated that the site cannot deliver the mix of housing required, then the
Authority will consider an alternative mix of housing on the basis of an independent site viability study.

The size, type and tenure of affordable housing required by this policy will be informed by the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment and any other evidence of need in the locality.

All dwellings will be, and will remain, available for people with a local connection, at an affordable cost. A Section 106 legal agreement will be required to ensure the restriction of the occupancy in perpetuity.

**Justification of our preferred approach**

**4.117** The SHMA indicates that there is a clear need for affordable housing in the National Park. Analysis of affordable housing requirements evidenced an overall imbalance (shortfall) of 40 affordable dwellings over the Plan Period 2017-2037 and an imbalance (shortfall) of 2 dwellings each year, with most of this need 61.8% for 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings and 38.2% for 3 or more bedroom dwellings. However, this is not a target for delivery but expresses the overall need from the Housing Register compared with current supply of affordable housing.

**Sustainability appraisal outcomes**

**4.118** Where the evidence-based need for affordable housing is acute, pressure for the approval of market properties which serve to deliver an affordable housing proportion or contribution will present inherent sustainability challenges. The balance of wider landscape, environmental and heritage capacity of a site or its recreational value to accommodate a higher number of units will need to be considered against the value and importance of affordable housing provision. New development will ordinarily have some degree of landscape change and for policy to deliver sustainable development the degree of change should be within acceptable thresholds for harm.

**4.119** Sustainability performance may reduce if the quanta or type or affordability of housing to meet community needs and the residential capacity to accommodate workers who deliver appropriate land management across the National Park is not achieved. Similarly over-provision, inappropriate locations and non-responsive size and type of housing would be likely to result in sub-optimal impacts upon the special environmental qualities of the National Park.

**Policy Options Paper (2017) public consultation outcome**

**4.120** Majority of respondents were supportive of a policy approach that would help to provide more affordable housing in suitable locations. A potential criteria-based policy to provide affordable housing in suitable locations where appropriate and viable was largely endorsed.

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45 In accordance with defined local connection occupancy criteria.

46 NNP Strategic Housing market Assessment (SHMA) (2017)
Consideration of alternative options

4.121 A continuation of the approach set out in extant Policy 11 was considered, however the approach has been revised to reflect the latest evidence\(^{47}\), national policy and guidance. Given the evidence, broad public support and positive sustainability appraisal conclusion it was considered that the preferred approach was the most appropriate option to take forward.

Rural exceptions sites

4.122 National planning policy strictly controls house building outside towns and villages for reasons of sustainability and to protect the character of the countryside. The Special Qualities of Northumberland National Park make it a particularly desirable place to live, but its rural character and openness also make it vulnerable to new residential development. Preventing sporadic, isolated new house building in open countryside is a counterpoint to the Authority’s strategy widening the range of housing inside or on the edge of settlements.

4.123 Where it is demonstrated that it is essential for someone to live at their place of work an exception to the spatial strategy for housing may be permissible. The Authority has acknowledged that gamekeepers and managers of larger established visitor accommodation may fall within the definition of essential rural-based enterprises, although dwellings for additional farm workers usually make up the majority of applications. National policy requires that the need for new housing in isolated locations should be based on the nature and demands of the enterprise.

4.124 The identified settlements are the most appropriate locations for exceptions sites because they have the best infrastructure to absorb development and will provide immediate access to facilities for new households. However, small exception sites in smaller settlements have not been ruled out.

4.125 The initiative for a rural exceptions scheme is likely to come from the Parish Council or the local housing authority working in partnership with a Registered Provider. Evidence of need will come from the latest housing needs survey or other evidence endorsed by the local housing authority. Proposals would need to demonstrate that there is no available alternative suitable housing site. The unavailability of alternative sites will not be regarded as outweighing the potential harm that an unsuitable exceptions site might cause.

Our preferred approach

**Policy 13: Rural Exceptions Sites**

As an exception to other policies, small-scale affordable housing will be permitted on land, adjacent to the identified settlements, provided all the following criteria are met:

a) it is demonstrated that there is a proven local need for affordable housing and an alternative site is not available within an identified settlement;

b) all dwellings will be, and will remain, available for people with a local connection\(^{48}\), at an affordable cost. A Section 106 legal agreement will be required to ensure the restriction of the occupancy in perpetuity;

c) all proposals satisfy the requirements of other relevant plan policies\(^{49}\).

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\(^{47}\) Northumberland National Park Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (May 2017)

\(^{48}\) In accordance with defined local connection occupancy criteria.

\(^{49}\) Including a potential new policy on the provision of self and custom-built housing.
Local connection occupancy criteria:

1. New local need affordable housing will be occupied by a person(s) (and their dependents) with a proven housing need who cannot afford (to rent or buy) accommodation in the locality and who meets one or more of the following definitions:
   a) has a minimum period of 3 years’ permanent residence in the parish (or another part of a parish split by the Park boundary) and who is forming an independent household or is currently homeless or living in otherwise unsatisfactory accommodation;
   b) has a minimum period of a total of 3 years’ permanent residence within parishes within the National Park and who can demonstrate a clear link with a parish or (another part of a parish split by the Park boundary) and is forming an independent household or is currently homeless or living in otherwise unsatisfactory accommodation;
   c) not now resident in the parish (or another part of a parish split by the Park boundary) but with a local connection with the parish including a period of permanent residence of 3 years or more within the last 10 years;
   d) has an essential need to live close to another person who has a minimum of 3 years permanent and continuous residence in the parish or another part of a parish split by the Park boundary, the essential need arising from proven age or medical reasons; or
   e) i) carries out paid work which is of value to the National Park and its communities; and
      ii) needs to live in the parish (or another part of a parish split by the Park boundary) in order to carry out that work effectively.

2. A planning obligation will be secured to ensure that occupancy of the dwelling(s) is confined to persons in local affordable housing need in perpetuity.

3. The definition of local affordable need shall initially be based on criterion 1 above. Where there are no local people meeting criterion 1 and properties are vacant, a cascade approach will apply and the planning obligation will allow the dwelling to be occupied by:
   a) other local persons with a minimum period of 2 years permanent and continuous residence in the parish or another part of the parish split by the Park boundary;
   b) where there is no-one meeting the 2-year residency qualification, other local persons with strong local ties living in the parish (or another part of the parish split by the Park boundary) of the National Park; and

4. For privately owned dwellings, the planning obligation will ensure that the occupancy cascade will not go wider than the National Park area unless for those subsequent occupants who qualify under clauses 1(c), 1(d) or 1(e) above; or

5. For dwelling(s) owned or controlled by a registered provider (including housing associations) the planning obligation will ensure that the dwelling may be occupied by other local persons with strong local ties to the remaining Parish area outside the National Park.

Justification of our preferred approach

4.126 There are a low number of brownfield sites suitable for new housing within the National Park. If the few remaining suitable housing sites and traditional buildings within settlements are not used to provide local needs housing, then it will put pressure on other sites outside settlements that have the potential to harm the landscape. The approach of providing housing to meet local needs through the Local Plan has to be based upon the ‘exceptions’ approach - to grant planning permission where general open market housing
would not be permitted. Sites will not be allocated, including because of the need to maintain land at 'rural exceptions site' values in order to maximise delivery of local needs affordable housing. Instead they will be released on an individually, based upon the needs evidence.

**Sustainability appraisal outcomes**

4.127 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 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.

4.128 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.

4.129 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.

**Public consultation outcome**

4.130 The principle of using rural exceptions sites to provide affordable housing was broadly supported.

**Consideration of alternative options**

4.131 Given the broad public support and sustainability appraisal conclusion it was considered that the preferred approach was the most appropriate option to take forward.

**Rural Workers’ Housing**

4.132 New houses for rural based enterprises should normally be located within or adjacent to the farmstead or other existing group of buildings, and should not be located in isolated positions.

4.133 Approval of new agricultural dwellings can lead to the sale of existing farm houses and create further pressure for additional housing. Conditions will, therefore, be attached that restrict the occupancy of existing houses on the same agricultural unit, unless there are material mitigating circumstances that can be demonstrated. Such conditions will not be permitted to be relaxed in response to subsequent changes in the circumstances of the occupier of the farm, unless it can be demonstrated that the current and anticipated future need for agricultural workers’ dwellings in the locality are otherwise adequately met. Other types of rural enterprise dwellings permitted under this Policy will also be subject to precise occupancy restrictions through planning conditions or legal agreement.
4.134 The size of the new dwelling should be justified in relation to the reasonable operational needs of the enterprise. The objective is to provide for the needs of rural enterprises including future as well as initial occupiers.

Our preferred approach

Policy 14: Rural Workers’ Housing

1. Outside the settlements identified by Policy 4 new residential accommodation for rural workers will only be permitted where all the following are met:
   a) it can be demonstrated that the functional needs of agriculture, or some other essential rural-based enterprise, requires that a full time worker must live at the location proposed;
   b) it can be demonstrated that there are no opportunities for providing the accommodation by using other dwellings within the control of the applicants, or by the conversion of an existing suitable building, or by the acceptable sub-division or extension of an existing dwelling;
   c) the enterprise that the dwelling will serve must not have been instrumental in disposing of any residential property in the preceding three years that would have satisfied the need now identified,
   d) the dwelling will be located within or adjoining an existing group of buildings; and,
   e) in the case of a new permanent dwelling, its size should be commensurate to the needs of the new rural enterprise or associated agricultural unit. This should be justified by evidence supporting the planning application.

2. If the proposal is for a new rural enterprise or if the long term financial viability of the enterprise cannot be demonstrated, the need to be met by a temporary solution, such as the siting of a residential caravan in a suitable location, for a three year period.

Justification of our preferred approach

4.135 National policy states that housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities and that new isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided. Policies in this Plan therefore focus new build housing in the settlements named in Policy 4 ‘Settlement Hierarchy’. Housing for rural workers in agriculture and forestry who have an essential need to live permanently at or near their place of work can sometimes justify a new home in open countryside. Nevertheless, a rural enterprise must be acceptable in its location before a new home is even considered and it will often be more sustainable for workers to live in nearby towns or villages or in suitable existing housing.

4.136 Justifying a new home outside of a named settlement, in the open countryside depends on the essential functional and financially sound needs of an enterprise for full-time employees to live at their place of work. Normally, this will be full-time agricultural workers, as forestry employment based upon contract labour is often less spatially fixed.

4.137 Dwellings for rural workers in the open countryside, whether through a conversion or for a new build dwelling, will therefore require the submission of an independently prepared

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50 DCLG (2012) NPPF, para 55
appraisal to accompany an application. This will need to justify an essential functional need for a rural worker and the long-term financial viability of the business, with a requirement that the worker(s) needs to be readily available at most times, day and night for most of the year, and bearing in mind current and future business requirements.

4.138 The requirement for an evaluation of financial viability is part of an appropriate framework that is necessary to demonstrate the essential need for a new dwelling in the open countryside within the National Park. Where there is any doubt as to the permanent need for the dwelling, or the financial viability of the business is marginal, then temporary permission may be given for a residential caravan in accordance with Policy 14.

Policy Options Paper (2017) Sustainability appraisal outcomes

4.139 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 settlement character and condition. In turn biodiversity, recreation and ecosystem services may benefit from indirect effects.

4.140 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.

4.141 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.

Policy Options Paper (2017) public consultation outcome

4.142 Support for potential criteria-based policies that would support the provision of both rural workers’ housing and live/work units. Respondents were also broadly supportive of future planning policies being more flexible for the provision of housing that would enable an employee of a business to live locally to their place of work (rural workers’ housing). This would suggest that there could be support for potentially relaxing the current approach which restricts the conversion of buildings outside of settlements to residential use.

Consideration of alternative options

4.143 Given the broad public support and sustainability appraisal conclusion it was considered that the preferred approach was the most appropriate option to take forward.

Local Needs Housing

4.144 In recent years, tighter lending restrictions have caused problems for mortgage lenders, developers and some home buyers because of the length of time the Authority’s occupancy restrictions have sometimes added to house sales. Developers have cited the
restrictions as a significant constraint on house building in the National Park. Consequently our preferred approach is to replace the current Local Needs Housing criteria with a principal residence housing policy (15) for new open market housing and local connection occupancy criteria for new affordable housing in accordance with policies 12 (Affordable Housing) and 13 (Rural Exceptions Sites).

**Principal Residence Housing**

4.145 Principal Residence housing is a form of market housing controlled by a mechanism which ensures it can be lived in by anyone but only as their principal residence. The aim of this mechanism is to prevent any new market housing being used as a second or holiday home given the existing high percentage of homes in the National Park with no usual residents (20%\(^{51}\)) and its impact on the social well-being of a number of communities where the overall proportion may be significantly higher.

**Our preferred approach**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy 15: Principal Residence Housing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Any new market housing development will be Principal Residence housing and will only be permitted, through the change of use of non-residential buildings to housing in settlements, and/or where it is required to enable the delivery of affordable housing to meet local needs in accordance with other plan policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Where permission is granted for a Principal Residence market dwelling, a condition will be attached to ensure that the occupancy of the dwelling(s) is confined to a person’s sole or principal residence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Consistent with an exceptions approach to housing, provision will not be made for housing solely to meet open market demand and housing land will not be allocated in the development plan.</td>
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</tbody>
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**Justification of our preferred approach**

4.146 Overall vacancy rates (i.e. the difference between dwellings and households) is approximately 20% across the National Park area (taking into account second homes and holiday homes). The comparative statistic for Northumberland is 6.4% and just over 4% for the North East and England\(^{52}\). Policy intervention is required in order to address this issue.

**Sustainability appraisal outcomes**

4.147 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.

4.148 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

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\(^{51}\) Census 2011.

\(^{52}\) Census data (2011) and Northumberland National Park Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2017)
and structure does not result in balanced, economically productive communities which support local services and maintain special qualities.

4.149 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.

Public consultation outcome

4.150 Support for a principal occupancy clause being applied generally but particularly if holiday homes were permitted to change their use to become permanent residences.

Consideration of alternative options

4.151 Given the broad public support and sustainability appraisal conclusion it was considered that the preferred approach was the most appropriate option to take forward.

Housing for Gypsies and Travellers

4.152 The accommodation requirements of travelling communities, who include gypsies, travellers and travelling show people, are part of the overall accommodation needs to be addressed across a local planning area and considered alongside the housing needs of settled communities. National Government aims to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers in a way that facilitates their traditional and nomadic way of life while respecting the interests of the settled community. National planning policy highlights the importance of ensuring that traveller sites are sustainable, recognises that some areas may have special or strict planning constraints and that local planning authorities have a duty to co-operate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries.

4.153 National planning policy requires planning authorities to allocate sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches where there is evidence of need to do so. If there is no evidence of need then authorities are required to set out an exceptions policy, similar to that applied to affordable housing. The purpose is to provide criteria that will guide development, should a need become apparent during the Plan period.

Our preferred approach

Policy 16: Gypsy and Traveller Housing

As an exception to other policies the siting of residential caravans for Gypsies and Travellers will be permitted provided all the following criteria are met:

- a) there is evidence of a permanent need for a type and scale of Gypsy or Traveller pitch within the relevant part of the National Park, as advised by the local housing authority;
- b) the site is located within one and a half miles of an identified settlement and is capable of adequate provision of essential infrastructure and services without significant harm to the landscape;
- c) the site should respect the scale of, and not dominate the nearest settled community, and should also avoid placing an undue pressure on the local infrastructure;
- d) the proposal satisfies the requirements of Policy 2 (General Development Principles) in all other respects.
Justification of our preferred approach (evidence)

4.154 An assessment of need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches has been carried out at County level and has not been disaggregated to the National Park boundary\textsuperscript{53}. Nonetheless, levels of need are negligible and so the evidence is insufficient to justify allocation of a site within the National Park and an exceptions policy is therefore appropriate.

Sustainability appraisal outcomes

4.155 Sustainability implications dependent upon extent of need identified. Provision of appropriate sites for gypsy and travellers should presents societal benefits but potentially negative landscape and environmental issues.

Public consultation outcome

4.156 Some support expressed for the local plan policies to broadly meet identified need for housing/accommodation in the National Park.

Consideration of alternative options

4.157 Based on the available evidence and compliance with national policy it was considered that the preferred approach was the most appropriate option to take forward.

Replacement Dwellings

4.158 In the countryside outside towns and villages national policy and guidance is restrictive towards the development of new housing. There will be occasions however where it is necessary to replace an existing unsuitable dwelling with a new one. This can provide an opportunity to enhance the landscape through better design and use of materials, as well as delivering a much more energy efficient and comfortable modern home.

4.159 Assuming the building still has a lawful residential use, the main planning consideration will be whether repair is possible or not and whether replacement is capable of securing any beneficial improvement in terms of appearance and landscape impact.

4.160 Replacement dwellings should not be substantially larger than the original. The reason for this is to mitigate landscape impact and avoid a precedent that might undermine the Authority’s housing strategy which seeks to maintain a range of house sizes and types across the National Park. Permitted development rights will be removed at the time of permission and further extensions that would increase the size of the dwelling will not be approved.

4.161 Replacement dwellings will not have their occupancy restricted by legal agreement, unless the original dwelling was already restricted in this way.

4.162 Applications for replacement dwellings often come forward where an existing dwelling is in disrepair. In many cases such dwellings are of timber construction, modest in size and built prior to the introduction of planning control. Listed buildings or dwellings that are considered to be of historic or architectural importance will not be considered for

\textsuperscript{53} Northumberland Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show people Accommodation Assessment (2015)
replacement. The Northumberland National Park Historic Environment Record has a source of information that includes the historic built environment and can provide useful evidence for applicants proposing to replace an existing dwelling. Where the residential use has been abandoned, any proposals will be assessed against policies for new build residential dwellings.

4.163 Applicants will need to be able to demonstrate that the existing building adversely affects the landscape or built character of the area. Dwellings recently destroyed by accident/fire will be eligible for replacement.

Our preferred approach

Policy 17: Replacement Dwellings

The construction of a replacement dwelling will only be permitted provided all the following criteria are met:

a) residential use of the dwelling has not been abandoned;

b) it is demonstrated that the repair of the existing building is not economically feasible and that the replacement building would bring about a significant enhancement in terms of its landscape impact;

c) replacement would not lead to the avoidable loss of a building that already contributes to architectural or historic interest or makes a useful contribution to local housing needs;

d) the replacement dwelling would not be substantially larger than the original dwelling.

e) the proposal satisfies the requirements of Policy 2 (General Development Principles) in all other respects.

Permitted development rights will be removed by planning condition. Further extensions that would increase the size of the replacement dwelling will not be permitted.

Justification of our preferred approach (evidence)

4.164 Evidence shows that here is a clear housing need in the National Park and the replacement of disused, abandoned or damaged dwellings (that are beyond repair) will contribute to meeting that need in accordance with the other housing policies in this Plan.

Policy Options paper (July 2017) sustainability appraisal outcomes

4.165 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. Ultimately, where such a balance is successful it should be expected to help maintain the positive human influence of a living and working landscape and harmonious built environment.

Policy Options Paper (July 2017) public consultation outcome

4.166 The provision of housing to meet local needs was strongly supported by respondents to the public consultation.
Consideration of alternative options

4.167 Given the public support, evidence and sustainability appraisal conclusion it was considered that the preferred approach would be the most appropriate option to take forward.

Employment and business development

4.168 The latest Census data suggest that the Northumberland National Park has a very small ‘working age’ population of less than 1,600 people. However, the local rate of economic activity (76%) is significantly higher than the National Park and England averages of 70%. This is due to a relatively high number of full-time and particularly self-employed workers, while part-time employment is relatively low meaning that rates of economic inactivity are therefore lower than average. The gateway settlements surrounding the National Park (including Bellingham, Otterburn, Rothbury, Haltwhistle, Hexham and Wooler are also an important source of labour and services for businesses and residents within the Park. However, connectivity between these areas was considered to be poor, with few road links and no regular public transport options generating a reliance on car travel.

4.169 Farming (and forestry) is the dominant industry within the National Park being the primary economic sector employing residents (22%) and could account for two thirds of businesses and 55% of jobs located within the National Park, however this being said, the percentage of residents employed in farming and forestry has also declined from 28% in 2001 to 22% in 2011. The economically active population has increased from 74% in 2001 to 76% despite an increase in the number of retired people. This is due to the relatively high numbers of full-time and particularly self-employed workers whilst the number of people looking after the home/family, long-term sick/disabled, and students has declined (consistent with a decline in the younger population)\(^54\).

4.170 More recent Experian figures, which are underpinned by IDBR data, indicate that there are currently 470 employee jobs in the National Park. It is acknowledged, however, that this data is based upon VAT registered businesses and is therefore likely to under-record the true level of employment within the local economy. The figures suggest that employment in the National Park declined by 37% between 2006 and 2016 – this is in stark contrast to the growth in jobs recorded at the national and regional level over the same period\(^55\).

4.171 An analysis of the sectoral breakdown of employment within the National Park identifies that the largest sectors within the local economy are: agriculture, forestry and fishing; manufacturing; accommodation and food services; and administrative and support services. Manufacturing and administrative and support services are two of the only sectors within the National Park to experience jobs growth between 2006 and 2016. Agriculture, forestry and fishing and accommodation and food services, however, both declined and underperformed relative to national and regional trends.

4.172 The evidence also shows that the National Park’s business base is dominated by micro firms and small businesses. ONS data indicates that there are no businesses operating within the National Park that employ more than 50 members of staff (with 97% employing fewer than 10). It also highlights connectivity as a key challenge for the local economy at present. Road connectivity and public transport access is relatively poor, with a

\(^{54}\) Northumberland National Park State of the Park Report 2015

\(^{55}\) NNP Economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (2018)
number of local businesses viewing this as a cause of recruitment difficulties. In addition, business satisfaction in relation to broadband provision is understood to be low, with this impacting upon recruitment and networking activities. It does, however, note that work is currently underway to improve broadband provision across the National Park.

4.173 Tourism, agriculture and forestry are key sectors driving demand for workspace in the National Park. Whilst the agriculture and forestry sectors are not forecast to expand over the plan period, tourism in the Park, which has been increasing, is expected to continue to do so. Growth in tourism could increase demand for additional visitor facilities and accommodation (particularly self-catering if past trends continue). Increased visitor spend could also increase demand for locally produced arts and crafts and food and drink. In the longer term this may strengthen demand for small studios and workshops. Up until now, demand for such in the National Park has been accommodated through conversion of outbuildings. With the viability of upland farming expected to worsen if the UK leaves the EU, farm diversification would be expected to ensure a continuing supply of outbuildings to meet such demand.56

4.174 More than three quarters of the National Park is farmed at present, with more than 256 farms located within, or partly within the Park boundary. A more detailed understanding of the size and nature of agricultural holdings can be obtained via an analysis of data published by DEFRA in 2017. This indicates that there were that there were 256 farm holdings in 2009 (including 178 commercial holdings). The total number of holdings remained broadly static from 2007 to 2009 whilst the number of commercial holdings has subsequently increased to 180 in 2016.57 Farms within the National Park are typically larger than the national average for hill farms, albeit the size does vary considerably across the study area (reflecting differences in terrain). The average farm in the Cheviots, for instance, is four times larger than the average Hadrian’s Wall farm.

4.175 Without a viable local economy that supports people and communities to live and thrive, the landscape and its associated qualities would eventually degrade through lack of conservation and management. The public would then not be able to enjoy the National Park to the same extent and the wider benefits it brings to the nation and to society would be eroded. The health of the local economy is, therefore, of key importance to the future of the National Park. The recent opening of the Sill: National Landscape Discovery Centre and its associated rural enterprise hubs will provide a boost to the economy of the National Park and wider region to the tune of approximately £5 million per year in additional visitor spending.

4.176 The established brand and quality of Northumberland National Park presents business opportunities that are wider than just tourism and farming. Certain types of business thrive in designated landscapes that have strong rural identities and high perceived qualities of life. There is a direct the link between protected landscapes and business success.58 The promotion of national parks and their special qualities tend to be an asset to business rather than a constraint. National parks attract home workers and footloose micro enterprises. Consequently the local plan should explore how to best support sustainable land-based rural enterprises.

4.177 The development of new bespoke buildings for shared residential/business use is a potential opportunity that could fit well into the National Park context. It could be used to

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56 NNP Economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (2018)
57 NNP Economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (2018)
58 Valuing England’s National Parks April 2013
promote the National Park as a place to live and work by solving the problem of having to find two separate properties at the same time. It could attract new, low-impact, high-quality and skilled jobs, develop stronger business networks and entrepreneurship, support construction of new local occupancy housing, support existing services and reduce carbon emissions from commuting and modern energy-saving technologies. There are a wide range of low impact uses that could potentially be compatible in the deeply rural context of the National Park. These could include workshops, light manufacturing, food processing, professional services, packaging, journalism, music production, internet sales etc.

4.178 A flourishing local economy depends on sustaining existing businesses and keeping sites available for new business. Given the high demand for retirement and second homes in the National Park, once a piece of land changes its use away from employment, normally to housing, it is unlikely to change back. Whilst this might not matter in an area with plenty of surplus brownfield land, it is much more of a problem in a protected landscape that has a lack of alternative sites and employment opportunities.

4.179 The Authority is not planning to meet a specified employment land requirement. It is extremely difficult to plan in this way for such a rural area, particularly given the predominance of micro-business and home based working. Instead, one employment policy option could be to pursue an opportunity-based approach, facilitating development as and when the need for them arises for example.

Our preferred approach

**Policy 18: A Sustainable Local Economy**

In order to create and retain a sustainable local economy the National Park Authority will support proposals which enable:

a. The creation of new businesses and the expansion of existing businesses which relate to the special qualities of the National Park but do not negatively impact on them;

b. The expansion of existing employment uses particularly tourism, recreation, farming and other types of diversification which do not negatively impact on the special qualities; and

c. Home-based employment activities which do not adversely affect neighbours or neighbouring land uses.

**Justification of our preferred approach**

4.180 Evidence suggests that the National Park performs better than the County, regional and national average in terms of its economic activity, economic inactivity and employment rates, however indicators suggest the existence of limited capacity to increase the local workforce from the existing population. This represents a potential growth constraint for sectors with a high labour replacement need, or an ageing workforce. The preferred approach would assist in addressing this issue.

4.181 The National Park also benefits from relatively low levels of deprivation (as defined by the levels of income, employment, education, health, crime, barriers to housing and services and living environment), with the majority of the Park falling within the 50% least

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59 NNP Economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (May 2018)
deprived in England. Pockets within the north of the NNP, however, including the settlements of Shotton, Westnewton, Hethpool, Kirknewton, Akled, Langleeford, Greensidehill and Ingram are ranked within the 30% most deprived areas in England.

4.182 With regards to business premises, evidence shows that most premises in the National Park are small reflecting occupier requirements which will often derived from indigenous businesses wanting workspace without having to relocate. Premises are typically old but maintenance and refurbishment have prolonged their economic life. New premises are principally tourism related. Overall requirements have been largely accommodated within the existing building stock. In addition an analysis of travel-to-work patterns demonstrates that the strongest linkages with Northumberland and, in particular, the settlements of Rothbury, Bellingham, Hexham and Alnwick. This also supported by the travel-to-work catchments defined by ONS, which show the majority of the NNP as being located within the wider Hexham and Blyth and Ashington areas.

Policy options paper (2017) sustainability appraisal outcomes

4.183 Inherently sustainable outcomes would be expected.

Policy options paper (2017) public consultation outcome

4.184 There was broad support (60%) for continuing the approach as set out by current policy 14.

Consideration of alternative options

4.185 Given the public support, evidence and sustainability appraisal conclusion it was considered that the preferred approach would be the most appropriate option to take forward.

Home-bases businesses or live/work units

4.186 Working from home reduces commuting and supports local services. Planning permission is not normally needed to convert a room to a home office or craft workshop, as long as the use remains subordinate to the main use as a dwelling. Where planning permission is required for an extension, an ancillary building or an intensification of the employment use, then the Authority will be supportive, subject to safeguarding neighbouring residential amenity and mitigating any other harmful impacts. Where the employment use would grow to a level of activity that would exceed the capacity of a residential area, road network or environment to contain it, then the Authority will encourage relocation to a more appropriate employment site.

4.187 The development of new bespoke buildings for shared residential/business use is a potential opportunity that could fit well into the National Park context. It could be used to promote the National Park as a place to live and work by solving the problem of having to find two separate properties at the same time. It could attract new, low-impact, high-quality and skilled jobs, develop stronger business networks and entrepreneurship, support construction of new local occupancy housing, support existing services and reduce carbon emissions from commuting and modern energy-saving technologies. There is a wide range of low impact uses that would be compatible in the deeply rural context of the National Park.

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60 NNP Economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (May 2018)
61 NNP Economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (May 2018)
These would include workshops, light manufacturing, food processing, professional services, packaging, journalism, music production, internet sales etc.

4.188 Experience of live/work in the National Park suggests that the policy is more likely to be successful when targeted at purpose-designed, new-build premises that do not look like conventional houses and are located within existing or allocated business sites. The Design Guide contains supplementary advice for live/work proposals.

4.189 In the National Park, where a high proportion of housing is occupied by people who have retired to the area or is used as second homes, there is a risk that live/work schemes could lose their work element over time. To try to ensure live/work units achieve their objective of a sustainable mixed use and to avoid them becoming residential only, a number of criteria will be included in a Section 106 legal agreement. This will require the residential use to be secondary to the main business use. The residential part will be required to be occupied after the implementation of the business, in order to avoid invalidating the permission. Sole residential use will only be permitted in the event of retirement or business failure. The use will then revert to live/work again on re-occupancy. To confirm that the business use is continuing the legal agreement will require the occupier to submit annual approved business accounts to the Authority.

4.190 In considering the detailed design and layout of a new live/work building, developers will be required to demonstrate a functional separation between the domestic space and the work area, unless this would prejudice the viability of the employment use proposed.

Our preferred approach

Policy 19: Home-based businesses and live/work units

1. The use of part of a residential property, (a small scale extension, the use of ancillary buildings where they are well related to existing buildings or, where no suitable buildings exist new outbuildings within the domestic curtilage), for a home-based business will be permitted where there is no unacceptable adverse impact on the landscape or the amenity of the area or on the occupiers of neighbouring properties.

2. Proposals for live-work units should be in accordance with the housing policies in this Plan and will also need to meet the following criteria:
   a) The residential use will be ancillary to the business use;
   b) The occupancy of the living area will be restricted to a person working in the business.

3. Where necessary, conditions will be attached to any granting of planning permission including to:
   a) control the use to avoid or minimise any potential adverse impacts;
   b) remove permitted development rights to protect the character and appearance of the building;
   c) ensure any new development may only be occupied in association with the dwelling and cannot be let or disposed of separately from that dwelling; and
   d) allow, where appropriate, the business use to cease and revert to an ancillary domestic use without the need for further planning permission.
Justification of our preferred approach

4.191 Census data and evidence shows that 60% of the 1,032 residents who live and work in the National Park do so from home. This is largely because of the predominance of agriculture and small tourism providers. More recently home internet connections have enabled people in other business sectors to work at least some of their time from home. This form of employment offers potential scope for sustainable growth, if high-speed broadband can reliably reach more areas of the National Park.

Policy Options paper (2017) sustainability appraisal outcomes

4.192 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 settlement character and condition. In turn biodiversity, recreation and ecosystem services may benefit from indirect effects.

4.193 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.

4.194 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.

Public consultation outcome

4.195 Support for potential criteria-based policies that would support the provision of both rural workers’ housing and live/work units. Respondents were also broadly supportive of future planning policies being more flexible for the provision of housing that would enable an employee of a business to live locally to their place of work (rural workers’ housing). This would suggest that there could be support for potentially relaxing the current approach which restricts the conversion of buildings outside of settlements to residential use.

Consideration of alternative options

4.196 Given the public support, evidence and sustainability appraisal conclusion it was considered that the preferred approach would be the most appropriate option to take forward.

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62 NNP Economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (May 2018)
Transport and Access

4.197 The NPPF highlights that the Local Plan should support a range of transport modes with priority given to walking, cycling and public transport and consideration of disabled access. Accessibility to essential services is difficult for those who do not have access to a private car, or regular public transport services. The National Park Authority will work with Northumberland County Council, as the local transport authority and transport providers, to support more sustainable travel choices, including through the ongoing provision of public transport services, and to encourage demand-responsive community transport initiatives, particularly in those areas where regular public transport services are not available.63 Similarly, car-sharing clubs are another means of improving accessibility in a rural area, and can also be helpful in reducing the need for second cars in a household and therefore the burden of related costs.

4.198 Transport policies have an important role in facilitating sustainable development and minimising greenhouse gas emissions. Sustainable modes of transport are supported, however it is recognised that the rural nature of much of the National Park, and its dispersed population, means that the majority of people rely on the private car to access jobs, services and facilities.64 The settlement strategy set out in Policy 4 (Settlement Hierarchy) recognises that new development should be focused in the named settlements to help maintain their future sustainability, self-sufficiency and resilience, and should not lead to a severe increase in traffic.

4.199 Well designed and safe access routes encourage walking. Northumberland National Park has an extensive public rights of way network along with more informal routes. This network provides access for walking, cycling and horse riding. Cycling infrastructure includes cycle routes which are not public rights of way. The Authority (in partnership with the County Council) will look to protect and enhance the coverage, standards and safety of these networks in accordance with the Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

4.200 Opportunities to maximise bus services inevitably vary between urban and rural areas. Whilst it is acknowledged that the timetabling and funding of public transport services, use of public rights of way and the cycle route network lie outside the scope of the planning system, the Local Plan can provide a positive planning policy framework for the improvement of facilities and networks.

4.201 This could potentially facilitate behavioural change by enabling people to make smarter choices to walk, cycle or use public transport more for journeys to work, home, school and leisure destinations, especially in the settlements within the National Park (but also within the gateway settlements), is a priority that the Authority will work towards. The important link between Health and Wellbeing and transport should be recognised and considered from a development site to a strategic level. Travel information, road safety and demand management measures also play a vital part alongside traditional infrastructure improvements to support sustainable modes.

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Our preferred approach

Policy 20: Accessibility and Connectivity

In order to maximise accessibility and minimise the environmental and health impacts of traffic when assessing planning applications the National Park Authority will seek to:

a. Protect and support existing Public Rights of Way, National Trails, open access land and other access routes for use by pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians;
b. Encourage the creation of new access routes particularly when they create links between existing routes and local services;
c. Encourage small scale developments and facilities that contribute to the safe use of the right of way network;
d. Minimise the overall need for journeys, whilst seeking to maximise the proportion of journeys made by: public transport, bicycle, and walking;
e. Ensure that proportionate transport and accessibility needs are incorporated into new development proposals (including the provision of cycling facilities);
f. Promote good design principles in respect of the permeability, connectivity and legibility of buildings and public spaces; and inclusive access; and

g. Support the delivery of reliable, safe and efficient transport networks, in partnership with other organisations, service providers and developers.

Justification of our preferred approach

4.202 NNP has relatively poor road connectivity, with the A68 representing the only major road network running centrally through the Park from Otterburn to Camptown. The A697 runs to the east and the A69 to the West, providing minor road links into the NNP, but no further major road links are available within the Park.

4.203 No train stations are included within the Park’s boundaries and there is limited bus connectivity provided by Arriva services, Go North East and Stagecoach (with a higher number of services provided in the summer months). This limited public transport connectivity was highlighted within the NNP’s Business Needs Survey as presenting a key challenge in recruiting appropriate staff and in supporting tourism development. More than half (54%) of the businesses that responded said that they had difficulties in recruiting qualified staff local, with 13% citing the lack of public transport options as a reason for this and 8% identifying accessibility as a factor affecting recruitment65.

4.204 The proposed preferred approach would help to facilitate sustainable travel within the National Park whilst also assisting the Authority achieve its second statutory purpose whilst also promoting better health and wellbeing for residents, workers and visitors in accordance with the Authority’s statutory duty.

Policy Options paper (2017) sustainability appraisal outcomes

4.205 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

65 NNP Economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (2018)
benefits. Restriction on car-based visitor numbers may however present negative economic implications because of a realistic lack of convenient or attractive alternatives.

4.206 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.

Public consultation outcome

4.207 Broad agreement that future planning policies should where possible seek to reduce the amount of trips made by the private car and that the Local Plan should support more widely available public transport services. A handful of individuals also thought that the private car would nevertheless remain a preferred travel option given the sparse and highly dispersed population pattern of the National Park. Some suggested other potential solutions to this issue such as car sharing schemes or community-led transport projects. The potential option to continue to pursue a spatial strategy focussing new development within existing settlements was also generally supported.

Consideration of alternative options

4.208 Given the public support and sustainability appraisal conclusion it was considered that the preferred approach would be the most appropriate option to take forward.

Farming and Estates

4.209 The landscape of the National Park has been shaped by farming and other rural land-based enterprises (defined for the purpose of this paper as farming, shooting estates, rural estates, wildlife trusts, National Trust land, the military, and forestry estates; which manage land holdings larger than 5 hectares). Agriculture and Forestry remain the Park’s primary business sector, with 22% of residents being employed in this sector. To maintain many of the Special Qualities of the National Park it is important that beneficial types of farming and land management continue and the Local Plan aims to support sustainable development necessary for those activities to continue to thrive.

4.210 Livestock grazing and management of land for moorland shooting are central to the appearance of the National Park landscape and its habitats. They are by far the most important sector in land use terms. The National Park Management Plan recognises that the landscape is shaped by farming and land management practices and it contains a number of objectives to support these industries and to improve the value of their produce and their environmental outputs.

4.211 Most agricultural operations are either not classed as development or are permitted without the need for formal planning permission. However, above certain thresholds, some farm buildings and structures do require consent because of their size and potential economic impact. The role for planning policy in the National Park is to help farmers and land managers find the best locations, designs, materials and solutions to meet their operational requirements but with the least harmful impact on the special qualities of the

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66 State of the Park Report 2015
area. This is usually successful and most farm businesses are able to develop a range of buildings and structures to undertake their modern operational requirements.

4.212 The Authority supports proposals to diversify farm and estate businesses. Diversification can extend to almost any new business proposition as long as it is appropriate in scale and impact to its rural context and remains subordinate to the primary land-based enterprise. Development may involve conversion of traditional buildings and re-use of modern agricultural sheds or the construction of a new building or structure. The Authority also supports farm and estate diversification because of its inherent economic benefits and because it can support farming and land management activity, which conserves and enhances landscape quality.

4.213 As diversification potentially enables development to take place in open countryside where it would not normally be permitted (for landscape and sustainability reasons), it would need to remain tied to the primary use of the land, usually through the means of a legal agreement. The purpose of the legal agreement would be to prevent the new business from being sold off separately, which might otherwise undermine agricultural operations or lead to harmful sporadic development.

4.214 There have been cases where diversification activities have outgrown a farm holding or the environmental capacity of their site, causing the agricultural use to be abandoned or leading to harmful retrospective issues for residential amenity and damage to the landscape. It is important in the National Park context – where farming and estate management are delivering key habitat and landscape benefits – that their viability continues to be supported by diversification, but not to the extent that the main land management activity is threatened or the Park’s special qualities are harmed. If the new business activity cannot grow beyond a scale that would otherwise harm the qualities of the area, then it could be time to move to a new site with greater capacity or else restrict further growth.

4.215 The potential implications of Brexit will also need to be considered further once outcome of the detailed negotiations is known. This could be a potential opportunity or a threat for the agricultural sector and something which National Parks England is currently discussing with Defra.

Our preferred approach

Policy 21: Farming and rural land-based enterprises

1. In order to recognise the varied roles of agriculture which include the maintenance and management of the countryside the National Park Authority will support appropriate development proposals that will enable farming and farmers to become more competitive and sustainable, to diversify and to demonstrate good environmental and farming practices.

2. Agricultural, forestry and other rural land-based development will be permitted if it is necessary to serve the needs of the enterprise in that location. When this development is no longer required for its approved purpose it will be dismantled and removed from the site, unless permission is granted for an alternative use.

3. Diversification of existing land-based enterprises will be permitted if it assists their viability and supports the beneficial aspects of land management and will otherwise meet the criteria set out by Policy 2 (General Development Principles).
Justification of our preferred approach

4.216 Data indicates that more than three quarters of the National Park is farmed at present, with more than 256 farms located within, or partly within the Park boundary. A more detailed understanding of the size and nature of agricultural holdings can be obtained via an analysis of data published by DEFRA in 2017. This indicates that there were that there were 256 farm holdings in 2009 (including 178 commercial holdings). The total number of holdings remained broadly static from 2007 to 2009 whilst the number of commercial holdings has subsequently increased to 180 in 2016\(^{67}\). Farms within the National Park are typically larger than the national average for hill farms, albeit the size does vary considerably across the study area (reflecting differences in terrain). The average farm in the Cheviots, for instance, is four times larger than the average Hadrian’s Wall farm.

4.217 Focussing on commercial holdings (defined by DEFRA as those with significant levels of farming activity), on the basis that more up-to-date figures are available; this shows that the amount of rented farmland fell by 2% (from 51,013ha to 50,046ha) between 2009 and 2016. In contrast, the level of owned farmland increased by 53% over the same period (from 21,028ha to 32,221ha)\(^{68}\). This continued shift towards owned farms could have potential consequences for agricultural land use within the NNP in that the personal and business objectives of individuals will shape decisions regarding tenure.

4.218 There is a small concentration of land ownership in the NNP, with 50% of the farmland owned by four large landowners (Northumberland Estates, Ministry of Defence, Lilburn Estates and College Valley Estates). As a consequence, any change of policy by one of the few large landowners will significantly affect the data.

4.219 For example due to rising costs, owner occupied farmers in some instances may take land ‘back in hand’ as opposed to re-letting in an attempt to spread the costs of their own business, whilst being aware that the costs for new tenants would be reflected in the rent they pay/offer. Changes in policies regarding subsidies have ensured the availability of the owner occupier to ‘farm’ the land thereby claiming the subsidy and environmental payments associated with it, whilst letting it to a grazier to graze the land. The returns for the landlord utilising this method can be far greater than that of conventional letting to a tenant.

4.220 Consequently, with fewer conventional lettings in the NNP, there is a risk that local communities could be adversely affected. A decline in the number of traditional family farms could, for instance, give rise to knock-on effect to the local community and essential community services (including local schools). The potential of a decline in money earned and spent within the Park does present a threat to the sustainability of local businesses and in turn communities within the Park. The potential may exist, however, to offset this by developing alternative income streams for owned farms (as a result of diversification).

4.221 Farm diversification is another way to grow and improve the resilience of the rural economy. Diversification encompasses activities to enhance the quality and value of farm produce, promote local food, deliver ecosystem services, light manufacturing and contracting that support traditional farming or shooting estates. There are particular opportunities for visitor accommodation, visitor services, nature tourism and recreational activities that make use of the Special Qualities of the area. This policy, therefore, supports and encourages well-conceived diversification schemes that will increase spending, create jobs, improve

\(^{67}\) NNP economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (2018)  
\(^{68}\) NNP economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (2018)
economic resilience, deliver services and help manage land in accordance with National Park purposes.

Policy Options Paper (2017) sustainability appraisal outcomes

4.222 A viable farming and forestry sector is essential to the management of many of the special qualities of the National Park, and therefore there will be a strong underlying sustainable benefit to policies which facilitate support for traditional practices of the sector.

4.223 Agricultural practice on the whole lies out-with the control of the planning system, and only where operational development is required (new buildings and infrastructure) do planning policies tend to apply. Hence impact upon biodiversity and land management because of local plan policy is likely to be low unless it is reliant of new buildings and infrastructure.

4.224 There is inherent potential for harmful visual impacts from modern farm infrastructure within valued landscapes of the National Park which can undermine statutory purposes and the challenge for policy will be to present criteria which foster the well-being of the agricultural sector within the natural and visual capacity of the Park to accommodate such change.

4.225 Reuse of existing structures and material assets is on the whole a sustainable use of resources and particularly where they contribute to distinctive and valued built components of the National Park.

4.226 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.

Policy Options Paper (2017) public consultation outcome

4.227 The feedback received demonstrated a broad endorsement of continuing to support farm businesses to diversify, through for example permitting the conversion of suitable buildings. Most respondents did however also recognise the need to manage diversification carefully to ensure there would be no harmful impact on the special qualities of the National Park with one individual suggesting that tourism would be the easiest sector for farms and estates to diversify into. There was also broad support from respondents for greater flexibility in allowing the conversion of redundant farm buildings to more viable uses.

Consideration of alternative options

4.228 Given the public support, evidence and sustainability appraisal conclusion it was considered that the preferred approach would be the most appropriate option to take forward.
Natural Environment

Wildlife conservation and biodiversity enhancement

4.229 The National Park designation provides the highest status of protection relating to conserving landscape and scenic beauty. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) draws upon the requirements of legislation and other government policy that underpins this conservation and enhancement of the environment. Paragraph 115 of the NPPF sets out that:

- great weight be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, and
- the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in these areas.

4.230 In addition, the NPPF makes it clear that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural environment through the protection and enhancement of valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils, minimising the impacts on biodiversity and, where possible, providing net gains in biodiversity. It also recognises the wider benefits of ‘ecosystem services’ (para.109), such as linkages between habitats, carbon storage, flood protection, water purification, and areas for recreation and enjoyment.

4.231 The location of Northumberland National Park in the northern upland of England puts it at an important ecological crossroads between other rich habitats. The historic low level of development and the extensive green spaces between its settlements, however, mean that there is a lot less pressure on these networks in the National Park than in more urbanised areas or intensively-farmed land elsewhere. It is unlikely that ecological networks will be a constraint to most types of new development in the National Park but they may present opportunities to shape development in ways that could enhance their functionality.

4.232 Northumberland National Park boasts a wide range of species and habitats, for example curlew, red squirrel, upland rivers and burns, ancient woodland, upland hay meadows, blanket bog and heather moorland. Extensive areas of the National Park have been designated for their international importance for nature conservation such as Special Areas of Conservation and Ramsar sites. Within the National Park five of the Sites of Special Scientific Interest were designated for their geological importance, from the Cheviot volcanic and glacial features in the north to the Whin Sill intrusion and escarpments in the south. The Northumberland National Park Natural Environment Vision (2014) outlines our vision for the natural environment of Northumberland National Park up to 2035. It describes how the landscape, habitat and natural environment should change in response to appropriate human interaction and sustainable environmental and land management, both within and outside the National Park.

4.233 The role of the Local Plan and the planning system is to protect designated sites and species from developments that would be harmful and to mitigate the impact of development on other more locally-important habitats such as woodland, individual trees, roadside verges and geomorphological features. A Local Plan policies map will identify the areas of greatest habitat sensitivity, internationally and nationally important habitats, and any fragments of the same habitats.

4.234 The new Local Plan presents a potential opportunity to make small and proportionate biodiversity gains on an application-by-application basis; a strategy that is encouraged by

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69 Including Section 3 land.
national planning policy. This would require certain types of new development to include proportionate enhancement measures. To ensure that these measures would be affordable, their cost should be minimal in relation to the overall value of a scheme.

4.235 Development costs in the National Park are already competitive because the Authority does not charge an infrastructure levy on planning permissions. There could, therefore, be potential financial scope for small scale biodiversity enhancement measures to be included in relevant planning proposals. The policy option would only apply to developments that have some form of biodiversity impact e.g. new buildings, housing, extensions, development of land and provision of infrastructure.

4.236 The National Park Authority will work with adjoining authorities, local communities and land managers, the private sector and conservation organisations to identify and take forward opportunities for biodiversity enhancement where this is consistent with landscape character. The Biodiversity Strategy 2020 encourages the establishment of Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs) by local partnerships, based on a local assessment of opportunities for restoring and connecting nature on a significant scale. Applicants are advised to check with the National Park Authority as to whether any NIAs have been agreed.

4.237 The hierarchy of international, national and local wildlife sites will be shown on the Policies Map. Priority Habitats will not be shown on the Policies Map, and many of these will be protected by existing designations; however, applicants can seek advice from officers if it is considered that proposals may impact on priority habitats. In considering applications affecting the natural environment, the National Park Authority will seek to minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity, where possible.

4.238 Applications for development should ensure that sufficient information is provided on the wildlife sites or species that may be affected by a proposal. Pre-application discussions can help ensure that planning applications are submitted with adequate information on biodiversity and geological impacts and prevent delays. In some cases, (for example if proposals may affect a SSSI) it may be appropriate to include third parties, such as Natural England, in these discussions.

4.239 Pre-application enquiries can help ascertain whether a European protected species, a species identified as important or rare in a national context, or a locally important species, is present on site. Where such species may be present, the application should be informed by an ecological survey prepared by a suitably qualified consultant to assess this. The re-use of buildings and previously developed land in particular would require careful assessment of any existing wildlife interest.
Policy 22: Wildlife, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

1. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife, habitats and sites of geological interest within the National Park will be given great weight.

2. Development delivery, management agreements and positive initiatives will conserve, restore and re-create priority habitats and conserve and increase priority species identified for the National Park.

3. Sites designated for their international, national or local importance, priority habitats, priority or protected species, ancient woodland and veteran trees will be protected from development likely to have direct or indirect adverse effects including on their conservation objectives. Protection will be commensurate with their status, giving appropriate weight to their importance, in accordance with the following principles:
   a) Development likely to have a significant effect on any internationally designated site either directly or indirectly, including on features outside the designated site which support the ecological functioning of cited habitats and species, will not be permitted unless it can be ascertained that the development will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site.
   b) Development likely to have an adverse impact on the notified special interest features of nationally designated sites will not be permitted. An exception will be made only where the benefits of the development, at that site, clearly outweigh both the impacts it is likely to have on the special interest features of the designated site and any broader impacts on the network of nationally designated sites.
   c) Development likely to cause harm to legally protected species, or lead to the loss of or damage to their habitats, will not be permitted unless this can be mitigated or then offset so that local populations are at least maintained.
   d) Development likely to adversely affect local sites designated for their wildlife will not be permitted, unless it can be demonstrated that the need for, and benefits of, the development clearly outweigh the loss of biodiversity.
   e) Development likely to adversely affect priority species and habitats must be avoided wherever possible (subject to the legal tests afforded to them) unless the need for, and the benefits of the development are exceptional and clearly outweigh the loss of biodiversity.
   f) Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable ancient woodland (including ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites) and veteran trees, will not be permitted unless the need for and the benefits of the development are wholly exceptional and clearly outweigh the loss of biodiversity.

4. Regionally important geological sites (RIGS) will be safeguarded for their geological and geomorphological interest.

5. Where, in exceptional circumstances and following an assessment against clauses 1, 2, 3 (b)-(f) and/or 4 above where required, the need for and benefits of the development are considered to outweigh the harm to habitats, species or the geological interest of sites, measures will be required to first avoid such impacts, and if they cannot be avoided, to mitigate harm or, as a last resort, to provide appropriate and proportionate compensatory measures.

6. The enhancement of biodiversity and creation of multi-functional green infrastructure networks at a variety of spatial scales, including cross-boundary connectivity to areas adjacent to the National Park, that help support ecosystem services will be encouraged.
7. Opportunities will be promoted for habitat management, restoration, expansion that strengthens the resilience of the ecological network, and enables habitats and species adapt to climate change or to mitigate the effects of climate change.

8. Green infrastructure that incorporates measures to enhance biodiversity, including dispersal areas identified within the ecological network, should be provided as an integral part of new development.

9. In assessing development proposals affecting biodiversity and geodiversity, adverse impacts of development will be minimised and net gains for biodiversity will be sought by:
   a) Avoiding significant harm through location and/or design. Where significant harm cannot be avoided, applicants will be required to demonstrate that adverse impacts will be adequately mitigated or, as a last resort proportionately compensated for (where viable and practical);
   b) Securing proportionate net biodiversity gains and/or wider ecological enhancements through new development, unless such measures are demonstrated not to be viable or practical.

Justification of our preferred approach

4.240 All public authorities, including Northumberland National Park Authority, have a biodiversity duty which requires them to, “have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity”\(^{70}\). The UK’s commitment to the conservation of biodiversity is delivered through the Government’s Biodiversity Strategy which sets an ambition to halt overall loss of England’s biodiversity by 2020 and to move to a position of net biodiversity gain in the longer term, supporting a more integrated landscape–scale approach to conserve habitats on land and at sea, and improve links between them\(^ {71}\). This strategy will help nature to better withstand future environmental pressures such as climate change and provide a wider context for conservation work. The NPPF is clear that planning should contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural and local environment, improving biodiversity by minimising impacts, providing net gains for nature, protecting geological conservation, and contributing to the Government’s commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures. Biodiversity is also of value to the local economy, in terms of the important habitats and wildlife that are appreciated by people living in and visiting the area, but also in terms of the ecosystem services they provide.

4.241 31% (32,758 ha) of the area of the National Park is comprised of priority habitats. These priority habitats are the most important areas for biodiversity. They are nationally and internationally scarce and are home to a huge variety of wild plants and animals. About one third (8,873 ha) of priority habitats are protected by SSSI designation but the remaining two thirds have no special protection. However in 2014, a further 21,777 ha of priority habitats were managed under Higher Level Stewardship agri-environment schemes leaving just over 2,000 ha without enhanced management practices\(^ {72}\).

\(^{72}\) NNP State of the Park Report (2015)
Policy Options Paper (2017) sustainability appraisal outcomes

4.242 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.

4.243 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.

4.244 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.

Policy options paper (2017) public consultation outcome

4.245 70% of respondents to the Policy Options consultation supported the introduction of a potential criteria-based policy to protect wildlife, species and habitat networks where appropriate. Further, responses received to both consultations show a clear recognition for the importance of protecting the natural environment and special qualities of the National Park overall.

Consideration of alternative options

4.246 Given the public support and sustainability appraisal conclusion it was considered that the preferred approach would be the most appropriate option to take forward.

Landscape, Tranquillity and Dark Skies

4.247 The distinctive landscape character of Northumberland National Park is one of its special qualities. The importance of giving protection to the area’s remote and inspiring landscape was fundamental to its designation as a National Park. Northumberland National Park is a living, working landscape that sits atop an underlying geology that was laid down some 400 million years ago. This has subsequently been shaped by glacial activity, water erosion, climatic weathering and more recent human land management activity. The upland land masses can generally be divided into the three distinct areas comprising the Cheviots, Simonside Hills and the cuesta ridges of Hadrian’s Wall country that includes the Whin Sill. Dividing these masses are the watersheds of the North Tyne, Rede and Coquet, with smaller water bodies such as the River Breamish, Harthope and College burns radiating outwards from Cheviot itself, at 815 metres the highest point in the north east.

4.248 Human activity has had an increasing influence on the landscape character of the National Park, initially by altering the type and extent of vegetation that blanketed the underlying geology. The wildwood that established after the last ice age 10,000 years ago was gradually felled and replaced with swathes of grassland, moorland and wetland bog. Today we see a predominantly rural landscape with the upland moors giving way to semi-improved grassland on
the valley sides and improved in-by land around the farmsteads that tend to nestle in the valley floors. Upland hill farming predominates with 80% of the land managed in this way. The remaining 20% is largely set aside to commercial plantation forestry with Kielder Forest Park adjoining much of the western boundary of the National Park.

4.249 With this land management came the settlers and the onset of the built environment that has had a more dramatic influence on the landscape character, stretching back as far as the Mesolithic period (c 8,000 – 4,000 BC) through to today. From the early settlements and hill forts, Roman roads and camps, medieval villages, castles, bastles through to the modern road network, quarries, settlements, plantation forestry and overhead electrical and telecommunications infrastructure, development has increasingly had a greater influence on the landscape character of the National Park that we see today.

4.250 From Hadrian’s Wall World Heritage Site in the south, to the prehistoric landscapes of the Cheviot Hills in the north, there are evocative reminders of our colourful past which survives largely undamaged by more recent agricultural or industrial activity. The many layers of historical landscapes in the National Park offer a rich opportunity for furthering understanding, appreciation and enjoyment, for example there are 424 Scheduled Monuments, 228 Listed Buildings and over 4000 entries in the National Park’s Historic Environment Record. The landscape of the Park has been shaped by farming and other rural land-based enterprises (defined for the purpose of this policy as farming, shooting estates, rural estates, wildlife trusts, National Trust land, the military, and forestry estates). Agriculture, forestry and fishing remains the primary business sector, forming 47% of the National Park’s total employment base.

4.251 One aspect of grouse moor and forestry management that has the potential to have a significant effect upon the landscape character and views of the National Park relates to the construction of formal forest roads and moorland tracks. From a landscape perspective, the key aspect to consider is whether both the construction and ongoing use of the track will leave the track surface in a condition that it becomes visually prominent within the landscape. The expected means to mitigate against this would be to establish a sustainable re-vegetated surface. It is widely accepted that the sustainability of this type of track surface will be dependent upon a number of factors including, gradient of the track, the type of vehicle, frequency of use, weather conditions at the time of use and effectiveness of track maintenance being undertaken.

4.252 To maintain many of the Special Qualities of the National Park it is important that beneficial types of farming and land management continue. Many large modern agricultural buildings have been permitted where they are necessary for agricultural purposes. In order to enhance the landscape of the Park it is generally desirable that these buildings (and other development such as wind turbines, communications masts MOD infrastructure) should be dismantled when no longer required (subject to Policy 21). Over time, new uses can sometimes outgrow a rural location. It may be necessary, therefore, to seek legal agreements or impose planning conditions to ensure that new commercial activities remain tied to the agricultural business and do not undermine land management in the longer term.

4.253 Tranquillity is one of the special qualities of the National Park that is valued by people and any potential impacts on tranquillity from proposed development, would need to be minimised to a level which would not adversely affect people’s enjoyment of the National Park.

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73 NNP Economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (May 2018)
74 Including sequential visual effects and cumulative landscape effects.
Park. There may also be impacts on residential properties, particularly where schemes are located close to existing dwellings or buildings.

4.254 Northumberland International Dark Sky Park encompasses the whole of Northumberland National Park and much of the adjacent Kielder Water & Forest Park. Within this combined area, there is a mosaic of sparsely populated upland moorland and large tracts of coniferous forest, incised by river valleys where isolated farmsteads, small hamlets and villages tend to be found. In relation to categorising the effect that artificial lighting has on this remote, treasured environment, a unique Environmental Zone numbering system has been devised for the purposes of Dark Sky Park designation. Development proposals should have regard to the Northumberland National Park Good Practice Guide for Outside Lighting in Northumberland International Dark Sky Park (2017) and also the Northumberland International Dark Sky Park Lighting Management Plan (November 2015).

Our preferred approach:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy 23: Landscape, Tranquillity and Dark Skies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The natural beauty and heritage of the National Park will be conserved and enhanced whilst being responsive to landscape change. All proposals will be assessed in terms of their impact on landscape character, views and sensitivity as defined in the Landscape Supplementary Planning Document. Development which would adversely affect the quality and character of the landscape, or views of the landscape, will not be permitted. In addition, there may be a requirement to remove certain types of redundant development from the landscape.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. New, extended or altered moorland tracks and forest roads can have a significant impact upon the appearance of the landscape, archaeology and on the biodiversity of an area. All track development should be well designed, and sensitive to its location. As such all applications for new tracks shall be submitted with details of and nature of the use, frequency of use, construction methodology, materials to be used in any hardsurfacing, water drainage features and an ongoing track maintenance plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Development proposals which conserve or enhance the tranquillity and pristine dark skies of the National Park will be supported. In order to limit potentially adverse effects on open countryside landscapes, natural habitats and the settings of historic/cultural assets, and to conserve or enhance tranquillity, development proposals will be required to demonstrate that:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) The level of noise, traffic and light generated as a result of the development during construction and thereafter is minimised and dark skies maintained;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Intrusive external features, such as hard surfaces, car parking and urban-style boundary treatments are minimised;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) The sense of openness is not reduced;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) The quiet enjoyment of the landscape is maintained.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During construction and thereafter, development should not result in a net adverse impact on the level of dark skies and where appropriate improvements should be sought. Where exterior lighting on developments is required and has the potential to impact on the dark skies, it should be designed and installed in accordance with current best practice guidance.
Justification of our preferred approach

4.255 Northumberland National Park remains the most tranquil place in England and is the most tranquil protected landscape in England. The county of Northumberland is the most tranquil local authority area in England followed by Cumbria, North Yorkshire, and County Durham. Tranquility scores for place areas of the National Park close to the highest score in the whole country. The adjoining areas of the National Park and Kielder Water and Forest Park were designated a ‘Gold Tier’ International Dark Sky Park in 2013 making it the largest dark sky protected area in Europe and the best place in England to view the night sky. The 2011 Resident Survey reveals that 83% of residents think that ‘peace and tranquillity’ make the National Park a special place. The relative importance of landscape and tranquillity to visitors to the National Park increased in 2014 with special qualities other than landscape / tranquillity such as cultural heritage, historic buildings, wildlife, and opportunities for outdoor recreation all tending to be cited less in 2014 than in 2011.\(^75\)

Policy options paper (2017) sustainability appraisal outcomes

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

Policy options paper (2017) public consultation outcome

4.257 Preferred approach broadly supported.

Consideration of alternative options

4.258 Given the public support, evidence and sustainability appraisal conclusion it was considered that the preferred approach would be the most appropriate option to take forward.

Trees, Woodlands, and Forests

4.259 Trees, woods and forests cover 23,547 hectares or 22.4% of the National Park area and thus make a significant contribution to the landscape character and wildlife habitat of the National Park. 90% of the woodland is in active management and this reflects the role and employment opportunities that productive forest management provides across the National Park.

4.260 In terms of diversity, 84% of this tree cover is mapped as conifer woodland, 14% as predominantly broadleaved and 2% as mixed woodland. Just 700 hectare of ancient and semi-natural woodland remains and as such, to promote greater diversity, disease resilience and wildlife habitat opportunity, the Authority actively encourages the expansion of native

\(^75\) NNP State of the Park Report 2015
broadleaved woodland and seeks to ensure that all woods and forests are managed in line with the requirements and guidance set out in the UK Forestry Standard, (UKFS).

4.261 It is recognised that there is work required to bring some of the older forestry plantations in line with the requirements and guidance set out in the UKFS and in so doing new infrastructure such as forest roads, bridges and quarries that are often required for this to happen will be subject to development guidelines.

4.262 In relation to woodland creation, expansion or tree planting, the Authority endorses the core principal of planting the 'right trees in the right place'. Therefore:
- In identifying the suitability of sites for tree planting and considering the appropriateness of species to be planted and their ongoing management needs, the National Park Authority has a presumption in favour of schemes that will conserve and/or enhance the special qualities of the National Park.
- In meeting this requirement, schemes that also provide for public access and thereby provide opportunities for the public to understand and enjoy the special qualities of the National Park are likely to be seen more favourably.
- In assessing the wider effects of any planting scheme, the potential social and economic benefits to the local community will also be taken into consideration, but this will not override the presumption identified above.

4.263 Trees are also an important part of the National Park's living landscape and they often represent important cultural features or landmarks. As they age and become hollow, they provide particular niche habitats which support many species including owls, woodpeckers, other hole nesting birds and bats. Ancient and veteran trees may be a surviving component of a former hedgerow, indicating previous land use; or represent boundary markers on an ancient woodland bank. In situations where the Authority is made aware of an activity that may cause harm to such trees then steps may be taken to seek to formally protect them by use of a Tree Preservation Order.

4.264 The retention of existing healthy trees is an effective way of integrating new development into the landscape. Where development is proposed close to existing trees, it is essential that sufficient space is left to allow for future crown growth. This will not only prevent nuisance and potential hazard to new buildings but will also leave adequate room for future replacement planting. Trees can be damaged during construction operations and developers must demonstrate how they will be protected.

4.265 In situations where a proposed development will result in the unavoidable loss of trees from the development site, then the Authority would look favourably on proposals that indicate replacement planting taking place on the site so that there is no net loss of trees occurring as a result of the development.

4.266 In most cases development should be sited to retain notable trees and to incorporate them within a landscaping scheme. Where necessary, the National Park Authority will require the applicant to submit a detailed tree survey with their planning application. The tree survey will involve an assessment of condition, details of how the applicant will protect the notable trees and how they will be managed in the long term, in line with the relevant British Standard.
Our preferred approach:

**Policy 24: Trees, Woodlands and Forests**

1. In order to maximise the social, economic and environmental opportunities that trees, woodlands, and forests present, support will be given to development proposals which are not detrimental to other semi natural habitats or cultural heritage assets which:
   a. Protect and enhance the character and nature conservation value of native trees and semi natural ancient woodlands;
   b. Include native tree planting in appropriate locations where landscaping is required as part of the development;
   c. Contribute to the target to increase the proportion of native woodland in appropriate areas of the National Park;
   d. Develop sensitively located and sustainably managed woodland for sustainable uses such as recreation or production of biomass;
   e. Promote the sustainable recreational, economic and environmental use of woodlands and forests; and
   f. Support appropriate, sensitively located small scale developments of the forestry industry.

2. Trees will be considered for protection under a Tree Preservation Order where the tree(s) are considered to bring significant amenity benefit to the local area, including their contribution to the local landscape and biodiversity value. An Order will only be served where it would be expedient and where there is a clear risk to the tree.

Justification of our preferred approach

4.267 Conifer plantations cover 20% of the area. Whilst providing habitat for some species and 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%)\(^76\).

**Policy options paper (2017) sustainability appraisal outcomes**

4.268 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.

**Policy Options paper (2017) public consultation outcome**

4.269 The positive role that forestry and woodland plays socially, environmentally and economically was recognised by a small number of respondents to the Issues Paper consultation. However, a small number of respondents to the Policy Options consultation highlighted some of the negative impacts that afforestation can have on the natural environment. Nevertheless, while half of the Policy Options survey respondents did not comment on the proposal to continue the approach to woodland creation and protection as set out in policy 22, most of those who did respond (40%) supported the preferred approach as set out.

\(^76\) NNP State of the Park Report (2015)
Consideration of alternative options

4.270 Given the public support, evidence and sustainability appraisal conclusion it was considered that the preferred approach would be the most appropriate option to take forward.

Flood Risk

4.271 Flood risk can arise from fluvial, surface water and tidal flooding. The Environment Agency is responsible for managing the risk of flooding from main rivers, large reservoirs, estuaries and the sea, and must be consulted on certain applications. The presence of formal raised manmade flood defences within the National Park is limited. Long term planning for flood risk within the National Park is set out in Catchment Flood Management Plans. These provide a catchment overview of the main sources of flood risk and how these can be managed in a sustainable way for the next 50 to 100 years. The policy options range from no active intervention, to taking further action to reduce flood risk. The National Planning Policy Framework advocates that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk or, where development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

4.272 National policy sets out a sequential test for assessing the flood risk of proposed development. The sequential test is a simple decision-making tool designed to ensure that sites at little or no risk of flooding are developed in preference to areas at higher risk. Development should avoid areas of flood risk, and the presumption is that all development should be located within Flood Zone 1 (areas with the least risk of flooding). Where this is not possible, then sites within Flood Zone 2 can be considered (areas of low to medium risk). Only where there are no reasonably available sites in Flood Zones 1 or 2 should the suitability of sites in Flood Zone 3 (highest risk) be considered, taking into account the flood risk vulnerability of the type of development proposed. The National Park Authority will consult the Environment Agency on any proposals within flood risk areas. A sequential approach should be used in areas known to be at risk from any form of flooding. Other sources of flooding (not included in the flood zones), which require consideration, are surface and ground water flooding, and flooding from sewers and artificial sources. The National Park Authority will consult the lead local flood authority on proposals which raise surface water or other local flood risk issues.

Our preferred approach

Policy 25: Flood Risk

1. Development proposals will be permitted where they:
   a) are consistent with the sequential test and applicants demonstrate that sites at little
      or no risk of flooding are developed in preference to areas at higher risk;
   b) do not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere;
   c) do not reduce the potential of land used for current or future flood management; and
   d) use development to reduce the risk of flooding through location, layout and design
      and incorporate sustainable drainage systems to minimise surface water run-off and
      avoid pollution.

2. Where appropriate, a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment should be submitted and
   include appropriate measures to mitigate flood risk.

3. Where, as a result of applying the sequential test, a development is approved on an
   exceptions basis, planning agreements will be sought to ensure that the development is
   protected from flooding to the appropriate standard throughout its lifetime. Any required
   additional or enhanced flood defences should not conflict with National Park purposes.

Sustainability appraisal outcomes

4.273 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.

4.274 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.

4.275 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.

Policy options paper (2017) public consultation outcome

4.276 With regards to flood risk, the majority (70%) of respondents to the Policy Options
   consultation supported the preferred approach to amend the existing policy approach to
   reflect updated national policy and guidance which would potentially promote the use of
   sustainable rural drainage schemes (RSUDS). This reiterated the broad support for policies
   that would reduce/mitigate downstream and other potential flood risk, including RSUDS,
   which was demonstrated through the previous consultation. There were also a couple of
   comments received supporting the potential opportunities that sustainable rural drainage
   schemes could provide for habitat and species network creation.
Consideration of alternative options

4.277 Given the public support, evidence and sustainability appraisal conclusion it was considered that the preferred approach would be the most appropriate option to take forward.

Renewable Energy

4.278 At a national scale, targets for reductions in carbon emissions of 80% by 2050 relative to 1990 levels, have been embedded in law. Capacity studies reveal that there are significant physical, infrastructural and environmental constraints on renewable energy in the National Park\textsuperscript{79}. These result in assumptions that the National Park will only contribute very modestly to regional and sub-regional capacity through microgeneration technologies, chiefly small scale wind, solar, hydro and biomass technologies. The National Park’s main contribution to national targets will be through its carbon ‘sinks’ – forests, woodlands and huge areas of peatland, which absorb carbon from the atmosphere.

4.279 Nonetheless, the Authority wants to see greater take up of small-scale renewable and low carbon technologies. With no mains gas supply, energy choices are already quite restricted in the National Park. Reliance on expensive domestic oil, liquid petroleum gas and solid fuels to heat properties has left many households vulnerable to fuel poverty, and has a negative effect on the viability of local businesses, especially farms.

Our preferred approach

Policy 26: Renewable and low carbon energy provision
1. Proposals for small scale renewable and low carbon technologies will be permitted where they contribute to meeting the energy needs of communities and businesses in the National Park. Particular encouragement will be given to designing renewable and low carbon technologies into new development (including for example on-site power storage, wind turbines, PICO-hydro or electric-car charging points).

2. Proposals must comply with Policy 2 (General Development Principles) and not adversely affect local communities, businesses or the National Park’s special qualities, having regard to impacts in isolation and in combination with other renewable energy schemes.

3. All technologies permitted will be required to be removed, and the site restored to its former condition, should they cease to be operational.

4. There will be a presumption against proposals for large scale low carbon and renewable energy development unless it can be clearly demonstrated that they will be compatible with the special qualities of the National Park, its communities and businesses and must comply with Policy 3 (Major Development).

Justification of our preferred approach

4.280 This policy focuses on supporting take up of small-scale schemes that will reduce costs and generate revenue for local communities and businesses. It contains a presumption

\textsuperscript{79} Northumberland National Park draft Infrastructure Plan (2017)
against large-scale commercial schemes that would be incompatible with the area’s Special Qualities.

Sustainability appraisal outcomes

4.281 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.

Public consultation outcome

4.282 64% agreed with an approach that would continue to support small-scale renewables whilst restricting large-scale renewables. It was suggested however, that what is considered small or large scale needed to be clearly defined.

Consideration of alternative options

4.283 Given the public support, evidence and sustainability appraisal conclusion it was considered that the preferred approach would be the most appropriate option to take forward.

Historic Environment

4.284 The Government’s vision and policies for the historic environment recognise the central role it plays in cultural heritage and the multiple ways it supports and contributes to the economy, society and daily life and that it is a non-renewable, resource. Government places a priority on the conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, and their value to current and future generations.

4.285 The historic environment is the physical remains of past human activity, whether visible or buried known or yet to be discovered, the product of human interaction with the nature and landscape over millennia. It is a rich and diverse part of Northumberland National Park’s cultural heritage. This includes archaeology, the material remains of the past, from prehistory to the present day and historic buildings and structures, which include grand country houses to the distinctive bastles of the Border Reivers, historic villages, farmhouses, barns, workers cottages, limekilns, milestones and boundary stones.

4.286 Together these form the historic landscape, shaped by the interaction of people with nature. This cultural heritage, gives meaning to place and is given meaning by people, often inspired by nature, it inspires culture. It is an indelible part of our human story, best

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understood at a landscape scale, and is highly regarded and valued by communities and visitors alike, providing attractive places to live, work and visit.

4.287 The interaction between people and places through time creates local distinctiveness and a sense of place. This historic environment provides the evidence for past ways of life, technologies and the exploitation of the natural resources. The National Park’s historic landscape includes thousands of individual sites and structures, and the preservation of sites is generally good. The survival of such a remarkable record of landscape change is very rare in England.

4.288 The quality of the cultural heritage and historic environment are part of what attracts people to visit the National Pak, and is therefore an important part of the local economy. However, these resources are also fragile, vulnerable to insensitive change and, ultimately irreplaceable. The protection and enhancement of Northumberland National park’s cultural heritage and historic environment is consequently a high priority. The historic character of buildings and settlements is easily eroded by small incremental changes over time, as well as by new development and insensitive modernisation, for example, unsightly overhead wires, or the removal of traditional fabric. Similarly, the quality and character of historic buildings can easily be destroyed by unsympathetic or inappropriate renovation, repair, extension, redevelopment, or simply by neglect. The National Park Authority places a high priority on protecting and enhancing cultural heritage and historic environment and the planning policies set out in this Plan seek to achieve this aim.

Our preferred approach

Policy 27: Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage

1. Northumberland National Park’s local distinctiveness, cultural heritage, and historic environment, will be conserved and enhanced to ensure that present and future generations can increase their knowledge, awareness and enjoyment of these special qualities.

2. Development proposals affecting heritage assets (identified on the Northumberland National Park Historic Environment Record) and their settings, will be considered in a manner appropriate to their significance including:
   a) designated conservation areas, scheduled monuments, listed buildings, and registered historic parks and gardens; and
   b) locally important historic sites and features.

3. Development proposals should make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness of the historic environment and ensure that the character, special interest, integrity, and significance of any affected heritage asset and its setting is conserved or enhanced.

4. Development proposals likely to affect heritage assets and/or the setting of heritage assets should be supported by a desk-based assessment appropriate to their significance. In certain cases, developers will be required to arrange for archaeological or historic building evaluations.

5. Where development proposals will lead to substantial harm to, or total loss of significance of, a designated heritage asset, permission will be refused.
6. Adverse impacts on locally important heritage assets and/or their settings should be avoided. Where proposals are likely to cause substantial harm to or loss of locally important assets, permission will only be granted in exceptional circumstances where the public benefit outweighs the asset’s historic or archaeological interest, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. The features of interest should be preserved in situ, but where this is not justifiable or feasible, provision must be made for appropriate preservation by record.

7. Development proposals should positively reinforce the historic character of the National Park’s settlements through reflecting the traditional vernacular architecture and enhancing local distinctiveness.

**Heritage Assets**

4.289 Heritage assets are the significant buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes within the historic environment which are identified because of their heritage interest. They contribute to our society, knowledge and culture and therefore merit consideration in planning decisions. The significance of a heritage asset is based on its value to current and future generations, and is the sum of its architectural, historic, artistic or archaeological interest and its setting. Some heritage assets have a level of significance that justifies special protection measures through designation and legislation, but locally valued (non-designated) assets also have historic interest and play a key role in defining place and in building local pride.

4.290 Heritage assets are recorded by the National Park Authority on the HER. This includes all known historic sites and features from the earliest human activity to the present day. All aspects of the archaeological and built environment are recorded and these records are updated as sites are identified. These include earthworks, ruins, finds, historic buildings, historic landscapes, industrial archaeology, military sites and boundaries. It records the existence of sites and indicates the research which has been undertaken for these assets. The HER also records locally important designed landscapes and historic gardens. New heritage assets are being identified all the time, and are added to the HER. The HER can be accessed online, or by contacting National Park Authority officers. In considering development proposals, specialist advice may be sought from National Park Authority officers on the significance of the heritage asset and how it contributes to the conservation and enhancement of the area’s cultural heritage.

4.291 In considering applications likely to affect locally important assets, their significance and the desirability of their preservation will be assessed. Applicants will be required to provide adequate information to enable the National Park Authority to assess the significance of a site or feature. Harm to heritage assets of local importance should be avoided and development will only be permitted where the archaeological/historic interest is capable of being preserved in situ. Where, in exceptional circumstances, an application is approved which will result in the loss (wholly or in part) of heritage assets, then developers must record and make publically available this information to advance understanding of the significance of the assets. However, the ability to record evidence of the assets will not be a factor in deciding whether loss of the asset should be permitted.

4.292 There may be other occasions when a threat to archaeological remains arises from an activity which is permitted development. In such cases consideration will be given to

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82 Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015
whether the archaeological interest can be protected through the withdrawal of permitted development rights under Article 4 of the General Permitted Development Order which will then require an application for planning permission to be made.

4.293 Heritage assets which are likely to be affected by development proposals, should be identified at pre-application stage. Applications should describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset’s importance, in order to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Sites of archaeological significance should be preserved wherever possible. The NNP HER should be consulted as a minimum to determine whether or not a heritage asset, and/or its setting and its significance is likely to be affected. The National Park Authority should be contacted if data is required in support of a planning application. Further guidance can be provided and early discussion with officers is encouraged. Historic England also provides guidance through relevant advice notes.

4.294 Whilst the protection of listed buildings is paramount, it is recognised that historic buildings have been altered and extended over time and that the need for change will continue and may sometimes be necessary to ensure their use is maintained. This may include adaptation or re-use to take account of climate change or bringing the building back into viable use. Any proposals for alteration, repair, extension (including internal works or works within the curtilage) or changes of use must be compatible with the listed building’s historical or architectural interest. The character of a listed building is linked to its setting, and development proposals which adversely affect settings will not be permitted. The maintenance and use of heritage assets should make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

4.295 Hadrian’s Wall, was built around the year 122 AD and constituted the main element in a controlled military zone across northern Roman Britain. The Wall was supplemented by the ditch and banks of the vallum, supporting forts, marching camps and other features in a wide area to the north and south, linked by an extensive road network. Hadrian’s Wall World Heritage Site (WHS) was designated in 1987. World Heritage Sites are places of ‘Outstanding Universal Value’ (OUV), recognised as such under the terms of the 1972 World Heritage Convention.

4.296 While a WHS is an international designation, it is the responsibility of national governments to ensure that the Outstanding Universal Value is maintained. However the designation itself brings no additional statutory controls over and above those afforded through the planning system and through other designations that cover elements of the WHS. Much of the length of the Wall and its associated forts and surrounding settlements are however scheduled monuments, and protected as such. The planning controls that apply to these assets are an important part of the recognition and protection of the OUV of the World Heritage Site. The remaining elements, (often the less obvious surface features) rely for their protection on the application of criteria-based policies and a precautionary approach applied across the WHS itself and a surrounding ‘buffer zone’.

4.297 The Hadrian’s Wall Management Plan informs such decisions, as well as the day to day management of the whole extent of the WHS, its buffer zone and its wider landscape setting. Its primary objective is to secure the identification, protection, conservation,
presentation and transmission to future generations of the Outstanding Universal Value of the WHS.

Our preferred approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy 28: Conserving Heritage Assets</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hadrian’s Wall World Heritage Site</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Authority supports measures to protect and enhance Hadrian’s Wall in accordance with the Scheduled Monument designation of much of its length and associated assets. Development adversely affecting these assets and their setting will not be permitted unless substantial public benefits would outweigh that harm or loss.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Conservation Areas

Development proposals affecting conservation areas should ensure that:

- a) the character or appearance of the area is preserved or enhanced;
- b) they deliver high quality design and incorporate materials that reflect the scale, architectural quality and detailing of the area.

Other Heritage Assets and their Settings

Development proposals affecting a heritage asset and its setting should demonstrate:

- a) a positive contribution to the setting through sensitive design and siting;
- b) the promotion of the understanding and enjoyment of the heritage asset and its setting or better reveal its significance and appreciation of the setting; and
- c) avoidance of unacceptable adverse effects and cumulative visual effects that would impact on the setting.

Redundant Heritage Assets and Assets at Risk

- a) development proposals that seek to bring heritage assets, that are redundant or at risk, into a viable use in ways that are consistent with their long term conservation will be encouraged; and
- b) proposals should be consistent with policy 27 (Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage) to ensure they continue to positively enhance local character and distinctiveness.

Justification of our preferred approaches

4.298 The historic environment, cultural heritage and archaeological assets/landscapes of the national Park are one of its special qualities which should be conserved and enhanced whilst allowing sustainable development proposals to come forward that would not harm these heritage assets.

Sustainability appraisal outcomes

4.299 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.
4.300 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.

4.301 Development or uses which facilitate wider appreciation, 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 from heritage focused proposals would normally be seen as sustainable if access and transport effect can be minimised and then mitigated.

Public consultation outcome

4.302 Respondents to both consultations generally endorsed an approach that could potentially be more flexible in enabling the re-development and re-use of heritage assets (including Listed Buildings). 60% of survey respondents said that they would support a criteria-based policy that would enable the re-development and re-use of heritage assets where appropriate and a further 60% said they would be supportive a policy approach which encourages the re-use of buildings at risk with a more flexible approach to new uses.

4.303 Support for a specific criteria-based policy that would protect non-designated heritage assets as well as those that are designated and using Historic England’s guidance when assessing proposals for enabling development.

4.304 Broad support for continuing a policy approach that ensures all development in the National Park, including conversions, would be sympathetic to the local character and vernacular.

Consideration of alternative options

4.305 Given the public support, evidence and sustainability appraisal conclusion it was considered that the preferred approach would be the most appropriate option to take forward.

Leisure and Tourism

4.306 The National Park is designated because of the value of its landscapes, tranquillity, dark skies, wildlife and cultural heritage and the opportunities they offer for the public to visit and enjoy them. Successive visitor surveys confirm that it is the scenery, open spaces, opportunities for walking and tranquillity that are the main reasons why people visit the National Park. These special qualities, however, need to be supported by infrastructure such as car parking, footpaths, trails, access areas, toilets, shops, cafes, pubs and interpretive material to accommodate visitors and facilitate their enjoyment of the area. These facilities need to be maintained and sometimes improved and extended and that will often require planning permission.

4.307 The tourism industry plays a significant part in the NNP economy, with 9% of the employed population working in accommodation and food services and a further 4% working
in recreation. In terms of premises, the 2017 Rating List indicates that there are 114 hotels/guest houses/self-catering accommodation units within the NNP, representing an increase of 54 since 2011. This increase is largely due to additional holiday accommodation, particularly self-catering and guest houses. However, this rate of increase (73%) is lower than the 118% increase experienced outside of the Park, potentially due to change of use restrictions and the availability of premises within the NNP’s boundaries. The number of camping and caravan sites within the NNP has also declined over this period, falling from 20 in 1990 to 13 in 2017 (-35%). Supporting activities including outdoor pursuit centres/retreats have declined from 4 to 3 between 1990 and 2017, although cafes and restaurants have increased from 1 to 5 over the same time period. These facilities now represent an important part of the visitor offer, helping to extend visitor duration and spend\(^{84}\).

4.308 Sports facilities form an important element of the tourism offer within the NNP including cycle routes; running events; walking routes; horse-riding; and fishing. Whilst these facilities do not typically require physical buildings and there are no studies suggesting an undersupply, consultees noted that there are no cycle hire facilities/cycle hubs available within the NNP, unlike the nearby Kielder Water\(^{85}\). Other leisure facilities do not relate directly to the special qualities of the National Park but are nevertheless an important part of the wider visitor experience of it. It is essential that these facilities are as good as they can reasonably be within the proviso that they do not themselves prejudice National Park purposes (e.g. dark skies observatory).

4.309 The National Park Management Plan contains specific objectives to promote the National Park as a leading sustainable tourism destination and to improve the quality and variety of its tourism offer without harming its distinctiveness. The contribution that the Local Plan can make is centred mainly on reviewing planning policy for new or improved visitor accommodation and considering the need for new facilities and their relationship to the special qualities of the National Park.

4.310 The development of sites for purpose-built visitor accommodation could offer potential local benefits in terms of new employment and increased spending as well as extending the range of visitor accommodation in the National Park. Quality design, high insulation, eco standards and holiday occupancy conditions could make these sites suitable for year-round use. The careful redevelopment of these sites could also offer permanent landscape and biodiversity improvements.

4.311 Since one of the statutory purposes of the National Park are to promote opportunities for the public to enjoy and understand the area, the question should be asked whether planning policy should attempt to safeguard existing visitor accommodation and visitor facilities from change of use that would erode the role of the National Park as a visitor destination.

4.312 The planning system should not, however, be used to block the normal ebb and flow of business so the use of planning policy to test the continued viability of visitor facilities would have to be proportionate to the contribution those uses make to National Park purposes. It is not intended to block the change of use of, say, bed and breakfast accommodation to alternative uses.

\(^{84}\) NNP Economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (2018)

\(^{85}\) NNP Economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (2018)
4.313 The Authority classifies sustainable self-catering as fixed but reversible short stay visitor accommodation of sympathetic design. This excludes static caravans and which are considered to be an inappropriate and unsustainable form of visitor development in the National Park. The market for this accommodation has increased rapidly in recent years and includes wooden cabins, camping pods, ‘shepherds huts’, railway carriage conversions, yurts and other types of off-grid/eco accommodation. These are treated separately in policy terms from tented camp sites and touring caravans because they are a more permanent form of development and a more intensive use of land.

**Our preferred approach**

**Policy 29: Sustainable Tourism and Recreation Development**

The National Park Authority will support proposals for sustainable tourism and recreation developments which:

a) Maximise opportunities for visitors to increase their understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park whilst not adversely impacting on them;
b) Integrate with existing visitor facilities, particularly where they can be accessed by public transport; or
c) Reuse buildings to provide: self-catering and / or bunk house / camping barn accommodation.

The development of new sustainable self-catering visitor accommodation will be permitted provided that all the following criteria are met:

a) sites are well screened at the time of application, and subsequently, to the extent that development will not cause adverse impact to landscape character; and,
b) the units will be restricted to holiday use and short term letting only; and,
c) on-site facilities would not harm the economic vitality or viability of nearby settlements.

**Justification of our preferred approach**

4.314 In terms of wider recreational facilities available for residents of the NNP, the 2017 Infrastructure Plan identifies no formal public leisure centres, with built facilities comprising village halls or school related facilities. Evidence indicates that the majority of residents are happy with the current level of accessible open space. Therefore based upon the current surplus of provision in the north and west of the County, as well as the aspiration to maintain a level of provision equivalent to 1.69ha per 1,000, it is anticipated that the modest level population growth projected within the National Park is unlikely to generate a need for the provision of further outdoor sports facilities over the Plan period.\(^{86}\)

4.315 This policy is intended to complement existing forms of visitor accommodation and open up opportunities for existing operators, farmers and rural estates to diversify into new markets. The objective is to diversify supply and support more year round visitor stays, provide opportunities for multi-day visitor activities and educational packages, and generate more spending in the local economy.

4.316 The Authority will consider proposals and investigate mitigation measures for wholly new sites. The design, number and appearance of units will be key to their capacity for satisfactory accommodation into the landscape. So, for example, a scheme that has a high

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\(^{86}\) NNP Economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (2018)
A proportion of cabins, camping pods or other units manufactured from wood, designed in organic shapes and with darker colours, is more likely to fit into the landscapes of the Northumberland. Planning approval for new sustainable self-catering accommodation will define the type of units permitted in order to maintain future control over replacement units. Sites that are located within walking distance of existing services such as shops, pubs and visitor facilities will also be considered more sustainable. The Authority will also expect new units to incorporate designs and technologies that will conserve energy, recycle waste, generate renewable power and heat, utilise natural resources sustainably, and enhance biodiversity.

4.317 It is hoped that this policy will also support new small scale campsites as a form of farm or rural estate diversification. Farms and rural estates usually contain groups of existing buildings against which tents could be sited to reduce their visual impact in the landscape and which could also host site facilities and management. Where existing buildings are not available or suitable for re-use, the Authority will permit the construction of appropriate new facilities. All proposals must also be able to demonstrate that they can be managed effectively in order to prevent disturbance and safeguard the enjoyment of their users and the amenity of nearby residents.

4.318 Although the intention is to explore the opportunity for year round provision, there will be areas with particular sensitivities in terms of ineffective winter screening, ecological or archaeological sensitivity, where seasonal restrictions will be required.

Sustainability appraisal outcomes

4.319 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 health and social coherence.

4.320 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.

4.321 Nevertheless, promotion of understanding and enjoyment of the National Park by all is a statutory purpose 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 undermining those qualities for which the Park was primarily designated. This should include the safeguarding of existing facilities which contribute the second statutory purpose.

4.322 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.
4.323  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.

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

4.325  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.

Public consultation outcome

4.326  Both consultations demonstrated broad support for the conversion of under-used or redundant buildings to holiday accommodation in suitable locations (60% of the respondents to the Policy Options survey agreed with this potential policy option). Respondents to the Policy Options survey also demonstrated strong support for the proposals that would seek to support the provision and retention of tourism accommodation in the National Park. 60% of survey respondents agreed with a potential criteria-based policy that would allow the provision of new sustainable self-catering visitor accommodation in suitable locations where appropriate.

Consideration of alternative options

4.327  Given the public support, evidence and sustainability appraisal conclusion it was considered that the preferred approach would be the most appropriate option to take forward.

Minerals and Waste

Minerals

4.328  The National Park produces an amount of primary minerals for use in the construction industry. There is currently only one operational crushed rock quarry within the National Park that has extant planning permission for mineral extraction87. In the absence of new permissions, mineral working is finite in the National Park. The issue for the Local Plan is whether the physical extent or the operational time horizons of this quarry should be permitted to extend and, if so, under what circumstances.

87 Joint Local Aggregate Assessment for County Durham, Northumberland and Tyne & Wear (April 2018).
Our preferred approach

Policy 30: Quarrying

The development of new quarries or the extension of existing quarries into areas of undisturbed land will not be permitted other than in the exceptional circumstances set out in Policy 3 (Major Development).

Extensions, in time, extraction area or depth, will only be permitted in disturbed land within the boundary of an existing active quarry, and where all the following criteria are met:

a) the environmental and economic benefits of further quarrying will outweigh the individual and cumulative impact on the landscape and the natural and historic environment. Proposals will need to demonstrate how any unavoidable impacts will be mitigated;

b) using currently-permitted operations and already-agreed restoration schemes as a baseline, any proposal must:
   i) demonstrate local economic benefits through job creation or job safeguarding;
   ii) reduce visual impacts through landscaping and restoration;
   iii) offset biodiversity impacts during the life of the quarry and subsequently after quarrying has ceased through onsite or offsite enhancement in the locality;
   iv) give up already-permitted reserves where working would result in harmful impacts;
   v) demonstrate biodiversity and landscape enhancement where nature conservation afteruse is proposed. Where restoration other than to nature conservation is proposed, this must be supported by an afteruse study that explores options either to deliver National Park purposes or new employment/business/recreational uses that would be compatible with Local Plan policy. The quarry developer will be expected to provide infrastructure and finance to deliver the preferred use.

4.329 National planning policy requires that Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSAs) are defined in Local Plans to identify the total area covered by a mineral resource. The purpose of MSAs is to prevent the sterilisation of resources by alternative development. There is, however, no presumption that the resource identified within the MSA will be worked.

Policy 31: Mineral Safeguarding Areas

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would sterilise a mineral safeguarding area identified on the Policies Map, unless there is a need for alternative development that overrides the need to safeguard the mineral.

4.330 In compliance with national planning policy areas of the National Park will be identified as MSAs. Further work is required in order to identify their exact locations. The identification of a MSA would not however presume in favour of extraction or override international or national landscape, heritage or nature conservation designations. It is merely recognition that a mineral resource exists and that regard should be had to its long term

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88 As defined under Regulation 16 of The Quarries Regulations 1999.
protection. Not all of the deposits shown on the policies map are of sufficient thickness, or appropriately located, to ever be realistically workable.

4.331 Furthermore, Policy 31 (crushed rock quarrying) clearly presumes against the establishment of new quarries, or extensions beyond existing quarry boundaries. The designation simply reflects the underlying geology and will not have implications for the vast majority of development proposals in the National Park, which are generally small in scale and located in settlements and other building groups where the mineral resource has already been sterilised. The MSAs identified on the Policies Map will be taken from the Mineral Resources information produced by the British Geological Survey (BGS).

Waste
4.332 There are no operational waste disposal sites in the National Park and little evidence of demand or need\(^{89}\). Much of the organic agricultural waste has traditionally been disposed of through land spreading. However, as technology develops, there is increasing scope for small-scale, on-farm anaerobic digestion plants as an alternative means of dealing with livestock wastes. Such plants can reduce the risks posed by diffuse pollution as well as generating useful electricity or heat. This can be a valuable form of farm diversification - providing additional income to support the viability of farm businesses (Policy 21), but could also be part of other commercial operations, subject to the scale restrictions set out in Policy 26 (Renewable and low carbon energy provision).

Our preferred approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy 32: Waste Management</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposals for the disposal of household and other non-inert wastes will not be permitted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposals for the disposal of inert waste will only be permitted where:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) the waste is produced within the National Park;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) the waste cannot be re-used or recycled; and,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) the proposals are small in scale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposals for the siting of collection facilities for locally generated, re-usable or recyclable household or commercial waste will be permitted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposals for the processing of organic waste will be permitted in accordance with Policies 21 (Farming and rural land based businesses) and 26 (Renewable and low carbon energy provision).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All proposals for the collection, processing and disposal of waste under this policy will need to satisfy the requirements of Policy 2 General Development Principles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sustainability appraisal outcomes

4.333 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

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\(^{89}\) North East England Waste Arisings and Waste Management Capacity Study (2012)
fundamentally unsustainable position. The physical profile and topography of the National Park is (in human context) irreplaceable, and minerals workings potentially present major threat to landscape, natural processes, biodiversity and heritage assets across the short, medium and longer term.

4.334 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.

4.335 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.

4.336 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.

4.337 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 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.

Public consultation outcome

4.338 Respondents of both consultations were largely in support of continuing a policy that would safeguard minerals supplies by restricting development in appropriate locations so that the land is not sterilised by other potential development. Arguments for the creation of jobs and the benefits of providing local building materials for local developments were made however there were also concerns of potential traffic, noise and other environmental impacts. Feedback received in relation to waste management largely endorsed the proposed approach of continuing to restrict large-scale waste facilities in the National Park whilst supporting the provision of smaller scale local recycling facilities.

Consideration of alternative options

4.339 Given the public support, evidence and sustainability appraisal conclusion it was considered that the preferred approach would be the most appropriate option to take forward.
## Glossary of Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affordable housing</td>
<td>Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households. Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers (as defined in section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008), for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority. Affordable rented housing is let by local authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable). Intermediate housing is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing. Homes that do not meet the above definition of affordable housing, such as &quot;low cost market&quot; housing, may not be considered as affordable housing for planning purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biodiversity</td>
<td>The variety of life on earth, and is used here to refer to the diversity of wildlife and habitats found in the National Park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brownfield land</td>
<td>Also known as 'previously developed land'. Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate change adaptation</td>
<td>Adjustments to natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic factors or their effects, including from changes in rainfall and rising temperatures, which moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate change mitigation</td>
<td>Action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing the sources or enhancing the sinks of greenhouse gases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community facilities</td>
<td>A wide range of local facilities and services accessible to members of the public including schools, libraries, local shops, healthcare facilities, places of worship, meeting halls, public houses, sports facilities and public open spaces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)</td>
<td>A levy allowing local authorities to raise funds from owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in their area to fund the infrastructure needed to support development such as sporting and recreational facilities, open spaces, schools and other educational facilities, medical centres, transport infrastructure and flood defences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Land Trust (CLT)</td>
<td>Community Land Trusts are local organisations set up and run by ordinary people to develop and manage homes as well as other assets important to that community, such as community enterprises, food growing or workspaces. The CLT’s main task is to make sure these homes are genuinely affordable, based on what people actually earn in their area, not just for now, but for every future occupier(^{90}).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Heritage</td>
<td>Inherited assets, which people identify and value as a reflection and expression of their evolving knowledge, beliefs and traditions, and of their understanding of the beliefs and traditions of others. This includes all physical assets of the historic environment, which are the surviving remains of past human activity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{90}\) As defined by the National Community Land Trust Network [http://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk/what-is-a-clt](http://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk/what-is-a-clt)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Cumulative landscape effects</strong></th>
<th>The effects of a proposal on the landscape fabric, character and quality and so concerns the degree to which the development becomes a significant or defining characteristic of the landscape, a feature in particular views, and the effect this has upon the people experiencing them.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Curtilage</strong></td>
<td>The extent of the land around a property (particularly a dwelling) that often, but not always, delineates the amount of land associated with the property. For larger, particularly country properties, the curtilage will only refer to an immediate cultivated garden and associated forecourt, rather than any other land included within the overall ‘planning use’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development Plan</strong></td>
<td>This includes adopted Local Plans and neighbourhood plans and is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Designated heritage assets</strong></td>
<td>Heritage assets formally designated under relevant legislation including: conservation areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments, and historic parks and gardens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duty to co-operate</strong></td>
<td>A requirement of the Localism Act for public bodies (such as neighbouring local planning authorities) to co-operate in the preparation of their plans and strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ecological Zone of Influence (EZI)</strong></td>
<td>These zones are areas outside the designated Special Area of Conservation, which nonetheless if affected can adversely impact on the integrity of the site’s conservation objectives, as species are not necessarily limited by the designated site boundary (e.g. Barbastelle bats and otters).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ecosystems</strong></td>
<td>Environments consisting of all living things in a particular area and the non-living things with which they interact such as soil, air, water and sunlight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ecosystem services</strong></td>
<td>The benefits people obtain from nature often referred to as ecosystems. These include provision of natural resources such as food, water, and fuel; regulation by natural systems including clean water and air, fertile soils, flood control and climate regulation; cultural services such as recreation, and cultural heritage, and the basic infrastructure of life including soil formation, the water cycle and nutrients, fixation of carbon by plants and the ecosystems themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment Land Review</strong></td>
<td>Analysis of the future demand for employment land and premises over the Plan period, including a review of the quality and suitability of existing employment sites, and assessment of the need for additional employment land over this period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extended Family dwelling</strong></td>
<td>The provision of homes for close family members through the conversion of existing buildings either on farmsteads or within the curtilage of existing dwellings in the named settlements. Either the occupants of the existing dwelling or those of the new Extended Family dwelling should have a 3 year local connection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Farmstead</strong></td>
<td>A clear grouping of farm buildings with an existing dwelling.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Flood Risk</strong></td>
<td>Identified probability of flooding from any water sources including fluvial, tidal, surface and ground water flooding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Green infrastructure</strong></td>
<td>A network of protected sites, nature reserves, green spaces and greenway linkages. The linkages include river corridors and flood plains, migration routes and features of the landscape, which are of importance as wildlife corridors. Green infrastructure should provide for multi-functional uses i.e. wildlife, recreational and cultural experience, as well as delivering ecological services, such as flood protection and micro-climate control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)</strong></td>
<td>A legal requirement to assess the impact of plans and proposals on the nature conservation importance of designated European habitats.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hamlet</strong></td>
<td>An established, closely grouped number of dwellings within a contiguous built form, and separate from other named settlements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heritage assets</strong></td>
<td>A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. The term heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Historic environment</strong></td>
<td>All aspects of the environment result from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, including landscape and planted flora and fauna.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing Market Area (HMA)</strong></td>
<td>Geographic areas defined by household demand and preferences for housing. They reflect the key functional linkages between places where people live and work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Infrastructure</strong></td>
<td>A collective term for services such as roads, electricity, sewerage, water, schools, health facilities and types of green infrastructure.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)</strong></td>
<td>Sets out the critical infrastructure that is required to support the objectives, policies and spatial strategy set out in the Local Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Landscape character type</strong></td>
<td>A defined geographical zone with distinct types of landscape that is relatively homogeneous in character.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Landscape character area</strong></td>
<td>Single unique areas within landscape character types, which have their own individual character and identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Landscape sensitivity</strong></td>
<td>The degree to which a particular landscape character type or area can accommodate change without unacceptable detrimental effects on character.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Aggregate Assessment</strong></td>
<td>A Local Aggregate Assessment is an annual assessment of the demand for and supply of aggregates in a mineral planning authority’s area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Centres</strong></td>
<td>NNP’s largest settlements which, although they are rural with small populations relative to areas outside the National Park, function as locally important rural service centres and are the most suitable locations in principle for new development of a scale that does not harm their form, setting and character.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Green Space</strong></td>
<td>The designation of locally important green space for special protection, ruling out development other than in exceptional circumstances. Local Green Space is designated when a local or neighbourhood plan is prepared and reviewed. It must be reasonably close to the community it serves; have demonstrable local significance and interest; be local in character and not cover an extensive tract of land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local needs affordable housing</strong></td>
<td>Affordable housing (see definition above) which is intended to meet the needs of the local community. This includes a local connection to the National Park through residency and includes people who need to live close to their place of work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)</strong></td>
<td>Sites (also known as County Wildlife Sites) identified for their wildlife interest, which complement the network of nationally and internationally designated sites. These include important species-rich grassland, ancient woodland, heath and freshwater habitats of high quality or recognised because they support species of conservation importance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Major development</strong></td>
<td>The Local Plan contains a policy (GP2 Major Development) provides an interpretation of major development in the context of paragraph 116 of the NPPF. However, the Development Procedure Order also provides a definition of major development in terms of the classification of planning applications. Development which falls into this category of planning application will not always meet the definition set out in policy 2 and the supporting text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Material planning considerations</strong></td>
<td>Any consideration relevant to the use and development of land and which is taken into account in determining a planning application. The weight attached to material considerations in reaching a decision is a matter of judgement for the decision-taker; however, the decision-taker is required to demonstrate that in reaching that decision that they have considered all relevant matters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Named settlement(s)</strong></td>
<td>This term represents the settlements identified in policy 4 Settlement Hierarchy. These settlements have been identified as locations that are most suitable for new development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Nature Reserve (NNR)</strong></td>
<td>Designated for their nature conservation or geological interest, with the aim of providing opportunities for the public to enjoy and experience these interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</strong></td>
<td>The Government’s planning policies for England and how they should be applied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neighbourhood Plans</strong></td>
<td>Community-led development plans prepared by parish and town councils for particular neighbourhoods, in general conformity with the strategic policies of this local plan, to shape future development in a local community, being supported by the majority of the neighbourhood in a local referendum.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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91 The formal definition of ‘major development’ (for the purposes of consultation on planning applications) is set out in The Town and Country Planning (Development Procedure) (England) Order 2010, and includes – minerals development (i.e. mining, etc.); waste development; housing development of more than 10 units or 0.5 hectares; new building(s) with floorspace 1,000 sqm or more; development of land 1 hectare or more.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Open Space</strong></th>
<th>All space of public value, including public landscaped areas, parks, allotments and playing fields, and including, not just land, but also areas of water, such as rivers, lakes and reservoirs, which offer opportunities for sport and recreation or can act as visual amenity. Safeguarded open space is defined on the Policies Map as Important Open Space for Recreation, and Important Visual Amenity Space.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planning Obligation</strong></td>
<td>A legal agreement or undertaking under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 that assists in mitigating the impact of unacceptable development to make it acceptable in planning terms. Planning obligations may only constitute a reason for granting planning permission if they meet the tests that they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development, and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind. They can also be used to tie the occupancy of affordable housing. The use of Section 106 Agreements is affected by the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)</strong></td>
<td>The Government’s planning practice guidance that supports and informs the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and how these policies are expected to be applied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policies Map (formerly proposals map)</strong></td>
<td>A map showing the areas or sites to which local plan policies and proposals apply. The Policies Map for the Northumberland National Park Local Plan will also contain Inset Maps, showing particular areas in more details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principal Residence housing</strong></td>
<td>A form of market housing controlled by a mechanism, which ensures it can be lived in by anyone but only as their sole or principal residence. The aim of this mechanism is to prevent any new market housing being occupied as a second or holiday home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regionally Important Geological Site (RIGS)</strong></td>
<td>Local, non-statutory sites identified for their geological and geomorphological interest – also referred to as Local Geological Sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Registered Provider</strong></td>
<td>The term (private) Registered Provider of social housing is the generic name for the providers of social housing (social landlords) not covered by local authorities. This term is commonly used to describe 'housing associations' which were also referred to as Registered Social Landlords in previous editions. The term Registered Providers is defined in section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rural communities</strong></td>
<td>Small rural communities which are not identified in the spatial strategy, but have an established, closely grouped number of dwellings within a contiguous built form, and are separate from other named settlements, and include service provision in the form of a shop, pub or community meeting place/hall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rural exception sites</strong></td>
<td>Defined in the National Planning Policy Framework as small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rural land based enterprises</strong></td>
<td>Rural land-based businesses are businesses that manage the land in a way that conserves the National Park’s special qualities. These can be defined as: farming enterprises based on primary food production, rural estates, forestry, mixed enterprises (e.g. with equestrian activities and/or game shooting) and other businesses that manage the land for conservation and/or recreation, which have benefits for health and well-being. Rural land-based businesses must also have a need to be located in the open countryside due to the nature of their operations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rural workers</strong></td>
<td>A rural worker in agriculture, forestry or other land-based rural enterprise operating in the locality who is engaged in actual physical work, actively contributing to the management of the land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 3 Land</strong></td>
<td>In NNP these are areas of moor and heath, woodland, identified by the National Park Authority whose natural beauty is particularly important to conserve as set out under section 43 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sequential visual effects</strong></td>
<td>The recurrence of developments when moving through a landscape, and how these are experienced along transport routes, public rights of way and access land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)</strong></td>
<td>Sites designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. SSSIs are the country’s very best wildlife and geological sites. They are important as they support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
plants and animals that find it more difficult to survive in the wider countryside. The protection of SSSIs is a shared responsibility between landowners, local authorities and Natural England.

| **Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)** | Areas given special protection under the European Union’s Habitats Directive, which is transposed into UK law by the Habitats and Conservation of Species Regulations 2010. |
| **Special qualities of the National Park** | Identified by the National Park Authority in the National Park Management Plan setting out the distinctive quality of the National Park’s landscape, wildlife, cultural heritage, wilderness, tranquility, and dark night skies and people’s understanding and enjoyment of these. |
| **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)** | A statement setting out how Northumberland National Park Authority intends to consult and engage the public and other stakeholders on future planning policy documents, and planning applications. |
| **Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)** | An assessment of risks from all sources of flooding (taking into account the impacts of climate change) and to assess the impact that land use changes and development in the area will have on flood risk. |
| **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)** | A technical document that identifies a future supply of land which is suitable, available and achievable for housing development uses over the plan period. |
| **Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)** | A study to identify the future quantity of housing needed in a Housing Market Area, including a breakdown by type, tenure and size over the plan period. |
| **Sustainability Appraisal (SA)** | The process used to ensure that environmental and sustainability considerations have been integrated in the preparation of planning policy documents. The SA includes the requirements of the European Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment to avoid unnecessary duplication. Together they play an important part in testing the soundness of the Local Plan. |
| **Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)** | A document that sets out more detailed policies in support of those contained in a local plan. It does not form part of the Development Plan, but is a material consideration on planning applications. |
| **Sustainable development** | Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. |
| **Sustainable Rural Drainage Systems (RSUDs)** | RSUDs are designed to control the quantity of runoff from a development to reduce flood risk, to improve the quality of the run off, and to enhance the nature conservation, landscape and amenity value of the site’s surroundings. |
| **Sustainable tourism** | Any form of development, management, or tourist activity which ensures the long term protection and preservation of natural, cultural and social resources and contributes in a positive and equitable manner to the economic development and well-being of individuals living, working or staying in protected areas. |
| **Traditional building** | Mostly older buildings of solid wall construction built of natural and often local materials (e.g. stone, cob, brick, lime mortar and render). In the National Park these usually predate World War II. |
| **Travellers** | Defined in the National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites; the collective name for ‘gypsies and travellers’ and ‘travelling show people’. |
| **Villages** | Smaller than Local Centres which act as focal points for people living in the National Park. |
| **Water Framework Directive (WFD)** | European Union legislation that requires all countries throughout the EU to manage the water environment to consistent standards. |