Northumberland National Park
Local Plan 2017-2037

Publication Draft Plan

May 2019
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Foreword

In the summer of 2018 we asked you to give us your opinions on the preferred options for the emerging draft planning policies that will guide future development proposals within the National Park. Your responses have helped us to refine these emerging draft policies in accordance with updated evidence and national planning policy guidance.

In this Publication Draft Plan, we set out our vision, strategic priorities, spatial objectives and revised draft policies 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 purposes as well as our statutory duty to foster the social and economic wellbeing of local communities.

The local 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, attract more families and workers to live in the National Park and help retain young people. This will help to sustain our local communities and services whilst at the same time ensuring that the special qualities of the National Park are conserved and enhanced in accordance with our statutory purposes and duty.

There are a lot of detailed draft policies in the plan that will affect the National Park, its settlements and communities. If you would like to make a comment on the soundness of the Plan information on how to get involved is provided within this document.

Thank you for taking the time to read this Publication 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 for the Park and a strategy to achieve this through planning decisions 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 Supplementary Planning Document (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 National Park 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 (between Northumberland County Council, Newcastle City Council and North Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council) and the commencement of a 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 be prepared and agreed between the Authority and these various parties as necessary. A joint Statement of Common Ground between the National Park Authority and the County Council is being prepared which will be finalised for the submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State. Further details can be found within the draft Duty to Cooperate statement that has been published alongside this document.

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 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 Publication Draft Plan.
What influences the Local Plan?

1.10 This Plan is not written in isolation. In addition to technical work carried out to inform its contents it is expected to help deliver or work alongside the aims and objectives of other plans, policies and statutory responsibilities. In particular:

- **The Statutory Purposes and Duty** – The two statutory purposes¹ of National Parks are: ‘to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park’ and ‘to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Park by the public’. In addition, there is a statutory duty on the National Park Authority, in pursuing these purposes ‘to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities’ and shall for that purpose co-operate with local authorities and public bodies whose functions include the promotion of economic or social development within the area of the National Park. Legislation requires that these public bodies and local authorities must also take account of the statutory National Park purposes - ‘In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in a National Park, any relevant authority shall have regard to [National Park] purposes’. In practice this means that this Local Plan must assume a policy of restraint and protection, based upon the need to fulfil the first purpose, and it must also make sure that the Park can be enjoyed and appreciated for its special qualities. In the event of any potential conflict between the two statutory purposes the first takes precedence (known as the Sandford principle).

- **The Northumberland National Park Management Plan** – This is the overarching plan for the National Park Authority and its partners with an interest and role in the future of the National Park. It sets out policies for the management of the National Park and defines the ‘special qualities’ that are referred to in the second National Park purpose. It was last updated in 2016 and is due for review every five years.

- **The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)** – The NPPF, produced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is the main statement of Government planning policy and, together with its accompanying online practice guidance sets out the expectations of central government as to what a local plan should aim to deliver. The NPPF sets out a ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’ at paragraph 11, unless policies in the framework indicate that development should be restricted – for example because land is designated as a National Park. Originally published in March 2012, new drafts of the NPPF were published in July 2018 and February 2019.

- **The English National Parks and Broads Circular 2010** – This circular was produced by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and sets out the government’s vision for National Parks. The most relevant section is Section 4 covering National Park statutory purposes, climate change, securing a diverse and healthy natural environment and maintaining vibrant, healthy and productive living and working communities.

- **An Eight Point Plan for England’s National Parks 2016** – This sets out the Government’s intention to protect, promote and enhance National Parks over a four year period (2016-2020) and is part of its wider ambition to improve the environment as set out in the 25 year plan published in 2018. Although the plan does not specifically

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¹ Section 5 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, as amended by Section 61 of the Environment Act 1995
mention the statutory planning function of National Park Authorities, several of its points are partially fulfilled through successful implementation of planning policy.

- **The 25 Year Environment Plan, 2018** – “A Green Future” sets out future government action on improving the natural environment, including cleaner air and water, protecting threatened species and an environmentally led approach to agriculture, forestry, land use and fishing. It also includes actions on waste and soil degradation, climate change and opening up the mental and physical health benefits of the natural world to people from the widest possible range of ages and backgrounds.

**Research and evidence**

1.11 A series of technical reports (collectively known as the evidence base) that underpin this Local Plan are available, including:

- **The Sustainability Appraisal (May 2019)**, which has assessed all policies in this Plan to see if they are the best means of delivering development which strikes the right balance between environmental, economic and social objectives;

- **The Landscape Character Assessment (2007, revision forthcoming)**, which categorises landscapes into particular types, describes their features, overall character and sets out how sensitive they may be to new development;

- **A Habitats Regulation Assessment or HRA, (May 2019)**, which is undertaken to make sure the Authority's policies do not have any harmful impacts on key protected wildlife habitats;

- **The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (level 1 – 2010; level 2 - 2015)**, which looked at whether any particular areas of the National Park are susceptible to flooding;

- **The Strategic Housing Market Assessment or SHMA (May 2017)**, which looked at housing need and demand;

- **The Strategic Land Availability Assessment or SHLAA (May 2019)**, which looked at available land for housing, and the likelihood of it coming forward for development;

- **The Local Plan Viability Assessment (May 2019)**, which looked at whether policies are setting any requirements that would prevent new development from being delivered;

- **The Infrastructure Plan (September 2017)**, which reviewed the capacity of existing infrastructure covering the National Park; and

- **The Economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (May 2018)**, which assessed the likely future need for economic development in the National Park.

1.12 All of the above technical reports are available to download on the NNP website at: [www.nnp.org.uk/localplan](http://www.nnp.org.uk/localplan).
Using this Plan

1.13 It is important that the Plan is read as a whole. Several policies may apply to one proposal but to help keep the document concise, cross referencing of policies is only used where another policy is directly relevant. All policies and any neighbourhood plans should be considered where they are relevant to a particular development proposal.

1.14 Throughout this Plan, unless stated otherwise, where policies contain separate criteria all criteria are intended to apply.

1.15 The Local Plan includes ‘Strategic’ Policies that are intended as ‘scene setting’ policies and indicate the guiding principles that will be at the forefront of decision makers’ minds when it comes to assessing the appropriateness of new development at the planning application stage. Other policies then provide more detailed ‘development management’ policy on how planning applications will be assessed. Strategic policies are also separated out as they are the ones that any future neighbourhood plan would need to be in ‘general conformity’ with. This does not mean they carry greater status and all policies in this Plan carry equal weight within the plan-led system.

How to get involved

1.16 Consultation on the Publication Draft Plan is taking place over a 6-week period between 31st May and the 12th July 2019. The representations received during this stage in the consultation process will be submitted to the Secretary of State when the Plan is submitted for independent examination in August 2019.

1.17 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 (Eastburn, South Park, Hexham) and some County libraries (Bellingham, Haltwhistle, Haydon Bridge, Hexham, Kielder, Rothbury and Wooler).

1.18 During the consultation period, a number of drop-in sessions have been arranged to allow people to find out more about the Publication 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

1.19 Representations on the Publication Draft Local Plan can be submitted by returning a response form by email or by post (details below). The response forms can be downloaded from our website however hard copies will be available at the drop-in events, NNPA headquarters and some County libraries. Details of how to respond to the Local Plan using these methods is provided below:

- Email: localplan@nnpa.org.uk
- Post: Forward Planning, NNPA HQ, Eastburn, South Park, Hexham, NE46 1BS.

1.20 All representations must be received by 4.30pm on Friday the 12th July 2019. As the Publication Stage is a statutory stage, we will not be able to accept representations beyond the six week response period - i.e. no further representations after 4.30pm on Friday 12th July 2019.
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 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 Framework\(^2\).

Figure 1: Northumberland National Park Location

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3 This publication includes mapping data licensed from Ordnance Survey © Crown Copyright and database right 2019. Ordnance Survey 100022521.
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%)\(^4\). 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 increasing from 16% to 24%\(^6\). Evidence\(^7\) 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. 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 Parks\(^8\). However, the percentage of residents employed in farming and forestry has declined from 28% in 2001 to 22% in 2011\(^9\).

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 difficulties\(^10\).

2.10 Local wages are also low in relation to house prices. Despite relatively low unemployment, there is still a need to broaden 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 as is anticipated, the Local Plan will need to help identify more opportunities for agricultural diversification which makes use of the assets available within farm businesses and rural estates.

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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 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2017)
\(^8\) Valuing England’s National Parks (National Parks England 2013)
\(^9\) State of the National Park Report 2015
\(^10\) 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 live. 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.

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 help to ensure 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 The long-term challenge of maintaining and enhancing the area’s landscapes, 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 also provides an opportunity to do more to enhance biodiversity and maximise the benefits provided by natural capital and its associated ecosystem services. The Local Plan will help meet these challenges by:

- 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.
- Conserving and enhancing landscapes, wildlife and historic assets.

2.17 The new Local Plan is more 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 rely on restrictive criteria to minimise harm.
2.18 Whilst this could be viewed as potentially creating more development risk than has previously been the case in policy making, it should be noted that approved rates for planning applications are currently very high in the National Park (97% in 2018/19). The new policies are based on evidence and 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.

2.19 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.

**Strategic Environmental Assessment**

2.20 Local Plans are required to be tested via 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. Given the outcomes of previous assessments it is unlikely that this draft Plan will have any significant impact on designated sites. This Strategic Environmental Assessment process has been incorporated into the more holistic Sustainability Appraisal (SA) exercise 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 the Issues Paper (spring 2017); the Policy Options Paper (autumn 2017) and the Preferred Options Draft Plan (July 2018) public consultations which are available to view on the National Park Authority’s website at [www.nnp.org.uk/localplan](http://www.nnp.org.uk/localplan).

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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.
3. Vision, Strategic Priorities and Spatial Objectives

3.1 In March 2016 a new National Park Management Plan\textsuperscript{12} was adopted following 11 months of public consultation and discussion. The Plan was prepared by a 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.

\textsuperscript{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 Priorities

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

**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 and resilient to change while at the same time conserving and enhancing its character.
4. Strategic Policies

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 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development which can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.13

4.3 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 development14. For plan-making this means that:
- plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area, and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change;
- strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:
  i. the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or
  ii. 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.

4.4 The purpose of the Local Plan is to help deliver sustainable development.15 It responds to the national growth agenda and is a step change in policy that will extend the scope and flexibility for new development that is needed in the National Park, or which would otherwise be beneficial to it.

4.5 In the context of the Northumberland National Park, development will be sustainable where it helps keep people living and working in the area with a good quality of life. In doing so, however, development should not erode the Special Qualities of the Park, which are its unique assets that lie at the heart of its reason for designation and duty to develop a stronger and more sustainable local economy in future.

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13 NPPF paragraph 7 (MHCLG 2019)
14 NPPF paragraph 11 (MHCLG 2019)
15 The Local Plan is accompanied by and has been informed by a Sustainability Appraisal. This tests the Plan’s objectives and policies against a series of sustainability objectives to ensure that it effectively contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
National Park Purposes

4.6 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\(^\text{16}\).

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

4.8 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, much of which is recognised as being of national or international importance, and is protected by law.

4.9 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 to this.

4.10 The second statutory purpose is also relevant to conservation because it aims to promote the ‘Special Qualities’ which attract people to the National Park. It follows that if the Special Qualities are damaged, for example by insensitive development, then that will obstruct their enjoyment by the public.

4.11 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\(^\text{17}\). 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.

\(^\text{16}\) 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’.

Sustainable Development

Policy ST1: Sustainable Development

1. Northumberland National Park Authority will adopt a presumption in favour of sustainable development. 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;
   d) conserves or enhances the landscape character 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) conserves the quality and quantity of natural resources, including water, air, soils, geodiversity and biodiversity;
   g) makes efficient use of land and infrastructure, in particular by prioritising the use of previously developed land and buildings;
   h) improves public access to, and enjoyment of, the National Park’s special qualities;
   i) reduces waste and greenhouse gas emissions through improved energy efficiency and making full use of small-scale renewable energy;
   j) avoids development which increases flood risk, and allows for the natural drainage of surface water;
   k) conserves or enhances the historic environment and helps secure a sustainable future for the assets at risk; and,
   l) furthers the statutory National Park purposes and duty.

2. Development will be deemed to be unsustainable if it would harm:

   a) the health and/or well-being of local communities;
   b) the diversity, quality and local distinctiveness of the natural and cultural landscape, wildlife, historic environment or other special qualities of the National Park;
   c) the local economy;
   d) the supply of housing to meet identified needs;
   e) access to local services and community facilities; and,
   f) the National Park statutory purposes.

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18 Landscape character assessment and NCA profiles
19 by helping to protect or enhance Water Framework Directive (WFD) status.
20 As set out in NNP Management Plan 2016-2021
4.12 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”\(^{21}\). 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\(^{22}\).

4.13 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.

4.14 31% (32,757 ha) of the area of the National Park is comprised of priority habitats\(^{23}\). 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\(^{24}\). Despite this the National Park has experienced a decline in bird nesting\(^{25}\) and there is a need to halt and where possible reverse this.

4.15 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.

4.16 National policy sets out a sequential test for assessing the flood risk of proposed development\(^{26}\). 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

\(^{23}\) NNP State of the Park Report (2018)
\(^{24}\) NNP State of the Park Report (2015)
\(^{25}\) Natural England
\(^{26}\) NPPF Paragraph 157 (MHCLG 2019).
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\(^{27}\). The National Park Authority will consult the Environment Agency on any large-scale proposals within flood risk areas. A sequential approach will 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 where appropriate.

4.17 When considering development proposals the Authority will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work proactively with applicants and secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

4.18 Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be regarded as sustainable development and approved without delay, unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. When considering whether a development proposal is sustainable or not, account will be taken of the sustainable development goals set out in Strategic Policy ST1.

4.19 Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision, the Authority will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise, taking into account whether:
   a) any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
   b) specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

4.20 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. 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.

4.21 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. The Authority encourages developers to engage with officers and seek pre-application advice at an early stage of the development process.

4.22 Policy ST1 has been informed by a Sustainability Appraisal which assessed a number of alternative options to this approach including: continuing the approach as set out

in the Core Strategy (2009); having a National Park specific definition of sustainable development; or not including a sustainable development policy. Overall it was considered that not including a specific sustainable development policy would potentially reduce clarity and ease of reference to plan users and give rise to opportunity for sustainable development priority to be under-weighted in the policy and planning balance. In addition it was considered that the inclusion of a National Park-specific definition of ‘sustainable would not fully or directly enough refer to environmental criteria. Consequently it was considered that the criteria-based ‘sustainable development’ policy tailored to the very specific sustainability issues of the National Park would be the most appropriate and effective way forward providing clarity and certainty to the policy approach.

**Policy ST2: General Development Principles**

1. To maintain and enhance the distinctive character of the National Park, development will be permitted where:

   a) The special qualities of the National Park will be conserved or enhanced;
   
   b) The proposal is of a high quality design that will make a positive contribution to the National Park’s special qualities and the local environment incorporating high quality construction materials and design details that reflect or complement the local vernacular;
   
   c) The siting, orientation, layout, scale, height, massing and density of the proposal are compatible with existing buildings and the local built form;
   
   d) The proposal 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;
   
   e) The proposal will not have an unacceptable adverse impact upon the amenities of adjoining occupiers;
   
   f) Sustainable design and construction techniques are incorporated in the proposal where proportionate including measures to minimise waste and energy use and where appropriate use energy from renewable sources;
   
   g) Where appropriate incorporate a good quality landscaping and planting scheme which reinforces local landscape character, increases habitat connectivity and makes use of appropriate native species;
   
   h) Opportunities are taken to enhance local wildlife and biodiversity that are proportionate to the development proposed;
   
   i) The proposal ensures the proportionate creation of an accessible, safe and secure environment for all potential users with appropriate cycling facilities and car parking provision and without compromising local highway safety or public rights of way;
   
   j) The proposal ensures the provision of appropriate and proportionate services and infrastructure to meet the needs of the development and that these are capable of being provided without compromising the quality of the landscape; and
   
   k) The proposal will be served by appropriate and adequate storage, waste management and other infrastructure proportionate to the scale of development proposed.

4.23 Policy ST2 has been informed by a Sustainability Appraisal which concluded that the approach set out in Policy ST2 would be the most suitable option as it related closely to and builds upon the strategic principles set out in Policy ST1, offering a more specific scope of considerations to take effect at the site/development level to further its objectives.
Major Development

4.24 It has been national planning policy since 1949 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 172 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.

4.25 Other than some 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.

4.26 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 and high voltage overhead power lines.

4.27 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.

4.28 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. This scale of development could have a potentially significant impact on the special 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.

4.29 Policy ST3 has been informed by a Sustainability Appraisal which assessed a number of alternative options to this approach including: continuing the policy approach set out in the Core Strategy (2009) or not including a major development policy at all. Overall the conclusion was that it would be more sustainable to include an updated Major Development policy within the Plan as the scope is tightly limited by national planning policy and National Park statutory purposes and that the Policy ST3 provides clarity to plan users as to the processes of consideration of proposals for major development in the National Park, rather than setting an alternative scope to that of national policy.
Policy ST3: Major Development

1. Proposals for major development will only take place in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest. The applicant will be required to demonstrate:
   a) The need for the development including a national need and the contribution of the development to the national economy;
   b) The impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy of the National Park;
   c) Whether, in terms of cost and scope the proposal cannot viably and technically be located elsewhere outside the National Park in a place that would avoid conflict with the National Park’s statutory purposes; or that the need for it cannot be met in some other way;
   d) 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
   e) Whether all possible measures have been taken to minimise adverse effects on the special qualities of the National Park, the landscape and recreational opportunities and the extent to which these could be mitigated.

2. When the activity for which the major development is required ceases the land will be required to be suitably restored or enhanced where it is appropriate to do so.

Settlements

4.30 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. This Plan takes account of the different roles and character of areas and in promoting sustainable development in rural areas and locates development, such as housing, where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. This includes recognising that in the National Park with its sparse population groups of smaller settlements may share and support services within and between their communities.

4.31 The settlement hierarchy will help to ensure that National Park settlements are socially cohesive and equitable by maintaining and creating balanced and mixed communities. 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. In the small dispersed communities within the National Park 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.

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28 NPPF paragraph 7 (MHCLG 2019)
Policy ST4: Spatial Strategy

1. Development will be guided in accordance with the following settlement hierarchy:

Local Centres (Alwinton, Elsdon, Falstone, Greenhaugh, Harbottle, Holystone, Lanehead, Rochester and Stannersburn) and Smaller Villages (Charlton, Ingram, Kirknewton, and Stonehaugh).

2. Development should support the service function of Local Centres and the sustainability of Smaller Villages by providing additional small scale housing (principal residence or affordable) and employment premises, new facilities and services that would be proportionate to the size of each settlement.

Open Countryside (including farmsteads and hamlets)

3. Development will only be permitted in Open Countryside in the following cases:
   a) Where development reuses a building in a way that supports an economic use or meets the need for principal residence or affordable housing, and is also in accordance with Policy DM6;
   b) Where there is an essential need for development to meet the needs of farming, forestry and other rural enterprise or land management activities;
   c) Where it is essential to meet social or community needs and it can be demonstrated that there are no other suitable and available locations within the Local Centres and Smaller Villages;
   d) Where the proposal is supported by other relevant Local Plan policies.

4.32 Local Centres: These settlements have a more ‘self-contained’ character, with some facilities serving the wider community. The Local Plan allows for small scale development in or adjacent to these areas to meet local housing, employment and community needs, including ‘principal residence’ housing on infill sites. No development boundaries or limits are defined and the suitability of a site for development will be defined on a case by case basis.

4.33 Smaller Villages: The settlements included within this definition have more limited or no facilities at all, with any that are available often being ‘shared’ amongst groups of settlements and therefore a limited amount of new development may be forthcoming or is envisaged. The Local Plan allows for small scale development in or adjoining these areas to meet identified needs. No development boundaries or limits are defined and the suitability of a site for development will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

4.34 Open Countryside: Outside of the Local Centres and Smaller Villages, the rest of the National Park is classed as ‘open countryside’ where development will not be permitted, save in a very few circumstances. Open countryside is defined as areas with no development, sporadic development or isolated buildings. Whether a building is isolated will be determined on a case-by-case basis considering relevant factors.

4.35 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.

4.36 Policy ST4 has been informed by a Sustainability Appraisal which assessed a number of alternative options to this approach including: keeping the settlement hierarchy as set out in the Core Strategy (2009) thereby not allowing change of use to residential outside of settlements; and further restricting all development outside of settlements to protect the National Park’s special qualities.

4.37 Overall it was considered that keeping the existing settlement hierarchy whilst making it more flexible in relation to the conversion of buildings to residential outside of settlements was the most sustainable option which would support better utilisation of material assets (the building stock), a proper component of sustainable development.

4.38 It was also considered given the scale and dispersed distribution of settlements and the population distribution within the National Park that within such a constrained context, that Policy alternatives presenting greater restraint in the reuse of buildings in the open countryside may deliver some limited trip generation benefits, but may also serve to underpin existing trip generation between homes and countryside workspaces.

Housing

4.39 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.

4.40 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 75 of the NPPF (2019) 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.

4.41 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;

30 Northumberland National Park Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2017)
• The economic viability of delivering affordable housing on sites across Northumberland National Park.

4.42 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 choice31.

4.43 In relation to housing tenure approximately 58.4% of occupied properties are owner-occupied (35.0% owned outright and 23.4% owned with a mortgage), 35.3% are private rented or living rent-free and 6.2% are affordable (rented from a social landlord or shared ownership). 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 in the National Park area that are classed as being ‘in-need’32.

4.44 In accordance with paragraph 11 of the NPPF strategic local plan policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, (as well as any unmet needs from within neighbouring areas) unless the application of other national policies that protect areas or assets of particular importance (such as designated landscapes) provide a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area.

4.45 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. The objectively assessed housing need (OAHN) for Northumberland National Park is for up to approximately 160 units over the plan period (2017-2037)33 with approximately 40 of these being affordable.

4.46 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 provided34. Consequently the National Park Authority has taken account of statutory National Park purposes, the local socio-economic duty to National Park communities and concluded that the provision of open market housing development should be restricted.

4.47 Instead the Local Plan proposes to meet as much of the OAHN within the National Park as the identified constraints will allow (without harming the Park’s special qualities) whilst also considering the lack of suitable housing sites and the difficulty of delivering viable affordable housing development without subsidy. This will be achieved by providing an appropriate amount of principal residence and affordable housing within identified settlements; allowing the conversion of buildings in the open countryside to residential use in very specific circumstances; allowing self and custom housebuilding in certain locations; and allowing 100% affordable housing developments in sustainable locations adjoining an

31 Census 2011
33 Northumberland National Park Strategic Housing market Assessment (SHMA) (2017)
identifying settlement. This plan will not allocate housing sites nor will it contain a housing delivery target.

4.48 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 housebuilding 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. It is also proposed that the remaining housing need would be met within the gateway settlements outside of the National Park boundary (Wooler, Rothbury, Bellingham and Haltwhistle). This will be in accordance with the joint Statement of Common ground agreed with Northumberland County Council under the Duty to Cooperate.

4.49 The National Park Authority will positively encourage the delivery of custom and self-build housing and be proactive in exploring ways to approve plots in pursuit of the duty set out in the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Regulations.

4.50 It is considered that this approach is 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.

Principal Residence Housing

4.51 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. Policy intervention is required in order to address this issue.

4.52 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 and reduce any potentially harmful impact on the social well-being of a number of communities where the overall proportion may be significantly higher than 20%.

4.53 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 in perpetuity.

Replacement Dwellings

4.54 In the open countryside national policy and guidance is restrictive towards the development of new housing as is the approach set out in strategic policy ST4. 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.

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35 NNP Economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (2018)
36 NNPA/NCC Joint Statement of Common Ground (May 2019)
37 Census data (2011) and Northumberland National Park Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2017)
4.55 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.

4.56 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 need to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

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

4.58 Applications for replacement dwellings often come forward where an existing dwelling is in disrepair. Listed buildings or dwellings that are considered to be of historic or architectural importance will not be considered for replacement without a thorough justification\(^\text{38}\). The Northumberland National Park Historic Environment Record includes information on 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.

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\(^{38}\) In accordance with paragraph 197 of the NPPF (MHCLG 2019)
Policy ST5: New 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. Development proposals will be assessed according to how well they meet the needs of those living in and seeking to move to Northumberland National Park, as identified in the most recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

3. New housing will be permitted:
   a. Within Local Centres and Smaller Villages where it comprises conversion of an existing building or a small infill development providing principal residence or affordable housing.
   b. In Open Countryside,
      i. where there is an essential need for a new dwelling to support established farming, forestry or other land management activities;
      ii. Where the development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;
      iii. the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;
      iv. the development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential dwelling;
      v. the design is of exceptional quality;
      vi. where an existing dwelling needs to be replaced;
      vii. where a building is being converted in accordance with Policy DM6.
   c. The replacement of an existing dwelling in the open countryside will only be permitted where:
      i. Residential use has not been abandoned;
      ii. The dwelling is not of architectural or historic importance;
      iii. If the replacement dwelling is not in the same position as the existing building, provision shall be made for the removal of the redundant building in a timely manner where it is appropriate to do so.

4. Custom and self-build housing may be approved in accordance with other relevant housing policies as either:
   a) affordable housing: where the house would be restricted to occupation by an eligible household and the value discounted by 25% in perpetuity; or
   b) local needs custom and self-build housing: where occupancy of the house would be restricted to a Local Person in perpetuity.

5. Affordable housing will be permitted in accordance with Policy DM3.

4.59 Policy ST5 has been informed by a Sustainability Appraisal which concluded that the approach set out presents pragmatic and strong sustainable development performance in the context of the plan area, seeking to achieve the difficult balance between accommodating demand for development within a highly constrained and sensitive landscape, whilst fostering the socio-economic needs of the resident population and communities and re-balancing housing type and tenure mix.
5. Detailed Development Management Policies

Community facilities

4.60 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.

4.61 The National Park has experienced a loss of community facilities. 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. 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.

Infrastructure

4.62 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.

4.63 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.

4.64 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.

4.65 Due to the very modest scale and volume of development in the National Park, it is not feasible for the Authority to charge developers via the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). 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 tailored solutions.

4.66 It is important 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.

4.67 The risks of this type of reactive, case-by-case approach to infrastructure planning are recognised and even though the Authority will not be charging a Community Infrastructure Levy on new development, it will liaise with infrastructure providers to assess capacity issues. This will assist in anticipating where developments, individually or cumulatively, might give rise to the need for improvements. If any serious or recurrent infrastructure shortfalls become apparent, the Authority’s approach to the Community Infrastructure Levy in the National Park will be reviewed.

4.68 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 conserve or enhance the special qualities of the National Park.

4.69 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.
Policy DM1: Community Facilities and Infrastructure

Community Facilities

1. Proposals that would result in the loss of or an unacceptable adverse impact on a community facility will not be permitted, unless it can be demonstrated that the facility is no longer suitable or viable in that location or that it is no longer needed.

2. Applications for the loss of community facilities must be supported by appropriate and proportionate independent evidence, including appropriate financial, business planning, options appraisals, marketing and community engagement evidence.

3. The provision of new community facilities will be permitted:
   a) Within one of the Local Centres or one of the Smaller Villages
   b) In other locations, as an exception to Policy ST4, where it can be clearly demonstrated that there are no suitable sites in a Local Centre or Smaller Village and that this would be in accordance with other relevant local plan policies.

4. Improvements to existing, community facilities, will be supported where it would be in accordance with other relevant local plan policies.

Infrastructure

5. Proposals that would result in the loss of infrastructure will not be permitted, unless it can be demonstrated that the infrastructure is no longer suitable or required.

6. Proposals for new, improved or supporting infrastructure will be permitted where:
   a) They represent the least harmful option reasonably available having regard to any operational requirements and technical limitations that are applicable;
   b) The design minimises impact on visual amenity, including the character and appearance of the locality and the wider landscape;
   c) There are no unacceptable adverse impacts on the National Park’s special qualities;
   d) They will not have a harmful impact on the wider environment particularly in relation to flood risk.

7. When no longer required for its approved purpose all infrastructure shall be removed and the site suitably restored to its former condition where it is appropriate to do so.
Housing and the Rural Economy

Housing Provision

4.70 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\(^{39}\).

4.71 Evidence indicates a clear need for housing to meet the needs of elderly residents\(^{40}\) it also acknowledges that the ageing population may increase demand for residential care facilities. However, 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\(^{41}\). This makes it unlikely that any extra care accommodation would be needed or provided within the National Park.

4.72 The development of additional housing both within and on the edge 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\(^{42}\).

4.73 This plan necessarily focuses on new development - which is a small part of the National Park’s existing housing stock. Policy ST5, 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.

4.74 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.

4.75 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.

\(^{39}\) NNP Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2017) and Housing Needs Survey (2016)
\(^{40}\) NNP Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2017)
\(^{41}\) NNP Economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (2018)
\(^{42}\) NNP Economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (2018)
Householder development

4.76 The role of the Householder Development 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 be proportionate to ensure that the character of the surrounding landscape, individual buildings and settlements are conserved or enhanced. The National Park Authority will require that extensions are sympathetically designed and proportionate in scale, bulk and form to the original dwelling.

4.77 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.

DM2: Householder Development

1. Proposals for development within the domestic curtilage of a dwelling should take full account of the character of the local area and the special qualities of the National Park and will be permitted where:
   a) The scale, height, form, position and design of the new development do not detract from the character and form of the original dwelling or its setting in the landscape;
   b) The development does not unacceptably affect the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers or result in inadequate levels of amenity for the existing dwelling;
   c) Any extension should be subservient to the main building.

2. An extension to an affordable home that is subject to a local occupancy tie will only be permitted if it would not make the dwelling unaffordable for current or future occupants.

3. In the case of existing outbuildings and the development of new outbuildings, the following criteria must also be met:
   i) The outbuilding should be required for purposes incidental to the residential use of the main dwelling;
   ii) Any new or extended outbuilding should be proportionate in size;
   iii) New outbuildings should be appropriately sited in relation to the existing built development on site.
Affordable housing

4.78 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 will need to show that they have taken into account the housing needs of the local 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. Any market (Principal Residence) 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.

4.79 The SHMA\textsuperscript{43} 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; rather it expresses the overall need from the Housing Register compared with the current supply of affordable housing.

4.80 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, 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 evidence case-by-case basis subject to evidence of need.

4.81 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.

\textsuperscript{43} NNP Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2017)
Policy DM3: Affordable Housing

1. In order to meet specifically identified local affordable housing needs, the development of 100% affordable dwellings will be permitted as an exception to policy on appropriate sites:
   a) Adjoining a Local Centre;
   b) Adjoining a Smaller Village, provided a Sustainability Appraisal demonstrates that the homes will contribute to the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the settlement.

2. Proposals on exceptions sites will only be permitted where:
   a) The need for the proposed number, type, size and tenure of affordable dwellings is supported by an up-to-date local housing needs assessment and the proposed rent and/or mortgage costs are affordable for local people;
   b) The number, design, materials and proposed layout of the dwellings are appropriate to the size, form and character of the settlement;
   c) There is no conflict with the NNP Landscape Character Assessment and the proposal is supported by an up-to-date visual impact assessment;
   d) Robust arrangements are put in place to ensure that the dwellings remain affordable to the community in perpetuity;
   e) Effective community engagement has been undertaken.

3. Within a Local Centre (where the site is capable of accommodating more than five dwellings) 50% of dwellings provided will be affordable.

4. Where a scheme is proposed within a Local Centre and there are exceptional circumstances which demonstrate that the delivery of the required affordable housing would not be financially viable, the Authority will consider an element of principal residence housing as part of a revised proposal.

5. On sites within a Local Centre where between 6 and 10 dwellings would be provided, the Authority will accept the payment of a commuted sum in lieu of the on-site delivery of the relevant proportion of affordable housing required provided that it is demonstrated that on-site delivery (including any element of principal residence housing) would not be viable.

6. The occupancy of all affordable dwellings will be restricted to those in need of affordable housing who also have a local connection in accordance with the criteria set out in this Local Plan.
**Local Connection Criteria**

- Currently resident in the National Park (or in another part of a parish split by the National Park boundary), having been resident there for at least the previous 3 years;
- Currently in employment in the National Park; or
- Having an essential need to live close to relative(s) who are currently living in the National Park (or in another part of a parish split by the National Park boundary), have resided there for at least the previous 3 years and require substantial support; or
- Having an essential requirement for substantial support from relatives who are currently living in the National Park (or in another part of a parish split by the National Park boundary) and have resided there for at least the previous 3 years.

**Rural Workers’ Housing**

4.82 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 locations.

4.83 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.

4.84 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.

4.85 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 ST4 ‘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.

4.86 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.

4.87 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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44 DCLG (2019) NPPF, para 79
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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.

**Policy DM4: Rural Workers’ Housing**

1. Dwellings for rural workers engaged in farming, forestry or other essential land management activities will be permitted where the accommodation is essential to support a new or existing enterprise or activity, whether on a newly created or an established unit. In all cases it must be demonstrated that:
   
a) There is a clear functional need for the dwelling;
   
b) The need cannot be met by using another existing dwelling or property on the unit or any other existing accommodation in the area;
   
c) There is clear evidence that the proposed enterprise has been planned on a sound financial basis;
   
d) There is a firm intention and ability to develop the enterprise concerned;
   
e) The proposed location is well related to existing buildings; and
   
f) The proposal would comply with other relevant local plan policies.

2. Any application to remove an existing agricultural or rural workers’ occupancy condition will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there is no longer a need for the accommodation on the holding or from persons meeting the conditions in the locality. Where this has been successfully demonstrated the condition will be substituted with a condition limiting the dwelling to principal residence housing in accordance with Policy ST5.

**Housing for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers**

4.88 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 planning policy requires local 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. National planning policy also 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.

4.89 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. Nonetheless, levels of need are negligible and so the evidence is insufficient to justify allocation of a site within the National Park.

45 Northumberland Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show people Accommodation Assessment (2015)
DM5: Accommodation for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers

1. Proposals for permanent sites within the National Park to meet the identified accommodation needs of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that:

   a) There is a proven permanent need as evidenced by a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Accommodation Assessment;

   b) There are no alternative suitable sites outside the National Park boundary to meet that need;

   c) It can be demonstrated that National Park purposes will not be compromised;

   d) The proposed site is in close proximity to the highway network in a position that is appropriate to the locality with existing screening;

   e) Essential infrastructure and services can be provided at the site without there being a harmful impact on the surrounding area;

   f) Reasonably accessible to local services, including schools and has sufficient space for vehicle parking and manoeuvring.

Conversion and Enhancement of Buildings

4.90 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.

Policy DM6: Conversion of Buildings

1. Proposals for the conversion of buildings within the settlements identified by Policy ST4 will be permitted.

2. Proposals for conversion of buildings in Open Countryside will be permitted where:

   a) The building makes a positive contribution to the landscape and special qualities of the National Park;

   a) The building is structurally sound and capable of conversion without substantial rebuilding, as demonstrated by a suitably qualified structural engineer’s report;

   b) The building is of sufficient size to accommodate the proposed use without the need for significant alterations, extensions or other new buildings;

   c) The proposal is of an exceptional quality design which retains existing features which contribute significantly to the character of the building or its setting;

   d) The proposed use does not lead to changes in the building’s curtilage or the creation of any new vehicular access or parking area that would unacceptably affect the character and appearance of the building or the surrounding landscape;

   e) The requirements of Policy DM14 are also met.
3. The proposed new use must be compatible in nature, scale and level of activity with the surrounding locality and any neighbouring buildings. Acceptable new uses for rural buildings that may be permitted under this policy are:

a) Employment, education or training use;

b) Holiday accommodation or tourism facilities

c) Principal residence housing, provided that:

i. The building is located within an existing group of buildings that have a close physical and visual relationship to each other and also include an existing residential unit within that group;

ii. the building is redundant or disused and the conversion would enhance its immediate setting; and

iii. it is not in an isolated location.

d) Where the building is within the immediate curtilage of an existing dwelling, purposes incidental to the residential use of the dwelling.

Employment and business development

4.91 The latest Census data suggest that the Northumberland National Park has a 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 no regular public transport options generating a reliance on car travel.

4.92 Farming (and forestry) is the dominant industry within the National Park being the primary economic sector employing residents (22%) and accounts for two thirds of businesses and 55% of jobs located within the National Park. 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).

4.93 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.

4.94 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 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.

4.95 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\(^\text{48}\). 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.

4.96 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 has provided 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.

4.97 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 link between protected landscapes and business success\(^\text{49}\). 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 explores how to best support sustainable land-based rural enterprises.

4.98 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.

4.99 Evidence\(^\text{50}\) 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.

\(^{48}\) NNP Economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (2018)
\(^{49}\) Valuing England’s National Parks April 2013
\(^{50}\) NNP Economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (May 2018)
4.100 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 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\textsuperscript{51}.

4.101 With regards to business premises, evidence shows that most premises in the National Park are small reflecting occupier requirements which will often derive 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\textsuperscript{52}.

Home-bases businesses

4.102 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.

4.103 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. These would include workshops, light manufacturing, food processing, professional services, packaging, journalism, music production, internet sales etc.

4.104 Census data and evidence shows that 60% of the 1,032 residents who live and work in the National Park do so from home\textsuperscript{53}. 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.

\textsuperscript{51} NNP Economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (May 2018)
\textsuperscript{52} NNP Economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (May 2018)
\textsuperscript{53} Census 2011
4.105 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)\(^5\). 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.

4.106 There is a small concentration of land ownership in the NNP, with 50% of the farmland owned by large landowners (Forestry Commission, 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.

4.107 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 economic resilience, deliver services and help manage land in accordance with National Park purposes.

4.108 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.

\(^5\) NNP economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (2018)
Policy DM7: The Rural Economy and Diversification

1. Development that contributes to the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park will be permitted where one or more of the following criteria are met:
   
   a) It promotes and protects existing businesses by providing flexibility for established rural businesses to diversify and expand;
   b) It provides opportunities for the operation of home-based businesses where appropriate;
   c) It helps maintain or increase job opportunities in the agricultural, forestry and tourism sectors;
   d) It provides for and supports small and micro businesses through the provision of small, flexible, start-up businesses or incubator uses;
   e) It provides additional facilities, or better use of existing facilities, including those which provide further opportunities to understand and enjoy the special qualities of the National Park.

2. Proposals for new sustainable rural economic development (including the diversification of existing agricultural or forestry businesses) will be permitted where:
   
   a) The scheme is well designed and will make use of an existing building and complies with other relevant plan policies. New buildings will only be permitted if the diversified use cannot be suitably accommodated through the conversion or alteration of an existing building in accordance with Policy DM6;
   b) The proposed use is compatible with and subsidiary to the existing farming or forestry activity in terms of physical scale, activity and function;
   c) The proposal is of a quality, scale and design that takes into account and reflects the sensitivity of the local landscape;
   d) Existing access arrangements are appropriate for the proposed use and the site can be safely accessed by the existing road network;
   e) There are satisfactory arrangements for storage, parking and the manoeuvring of vehicles.

3. Small-scale diversification proposals will be supported where they demonstrate sustainable practices and outcomes sustain the long term operation of the business and secure multiple wider public and environmental benefits.
Agricultural Development

4.109 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.

4.110 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 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.

**Policy DM8: Agricultural Development**

1. Proposals for new agricultural buildings and structures or extensions to existing buildings will be permitted where:
   a) The form, height and size of the proposed development is appropriate to its setting and will not have an adverse impact on the landscape and special qualities of the National Park;
   b) There is a functional need for the building to sustain existing primary agricultural activity and the scale of the development is commensurate with that need;
   c) The building is designed for the purposes of agriculture and uses appropriate materials with subdued colours and non-reflective surfaces;
   d) The site is related physically and functionally to existing buildings associated with the business unless there is an exceptional agricultural need for a more isolated location;
   e) The proposal will not significantly harm local amenity in terms of noise, odours or level of activity either individually or in combination with the existing agricultural activity;
   f) Where appropriate, a landscaping scheme is provided which complements the character of the locality and retains existing and/or introduces new planting to reduce the visual impact of the proposal on the wider landscape and encourages biodiversity.

2. The Authority will impose a condition on appropriate planning permissions requiring the removal of the building or structure if it is no longer needed for agricultural purposes.
Leisure and Tourism

4.111 The tourism industry plays a significant part in the Northumberland National Park (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 outside the NNP 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\(^{55}\).

4.112 Sports facilities form an important element of the tourism offer within the NNP including cycle routes; walking routes; horse-riding; grouse shooting 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\(^{56}\). 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy DM9: Tourism and Recreation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Proposals for tourism and recreational development will be permitted where:</td>
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<tr>
<td>a) They conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife, tranquillity and cultural heritage of the National Park;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) They provide and protect opportunities for people to increase their awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park in a manner that will not undermine the enjoyment of those qualities by other visitors or the quality of life of residents;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) They are of a quality, scale and design that takes into account and reflects the sensitivity of the local landscape;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) They do not lead to unacceptable harm in terms of noise and activity (including traffic).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. In the case of new buildings for tourism and recreation uses development will be permitted where:</td>
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<tr>
<td>a) It is located within one of the settlements listed in Policy ST4;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) It uses existing buildings in open countryside or involves the adaptation or small scale extension of an existing building;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) It is within the open countryside but in accordance with Policy ST4.</td>
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</tbody>
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\(^{55}\) NNP Economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (2018)

\(^{56}\) NNP Economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (2018)
4.113 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.

4.114 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 educational 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 1.69 hectares 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\textsuperscript{57}.

4.115 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.

**Transport and Access**

4.116 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.

4.117 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\textsuperscript{58}. The settlement strategy set out in Policy ST4 (Spatial Strategy) 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.

4.118 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 County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

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\textsuperscript{57} NNP Economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (2018)

\textsuperscript{58} NPPF paragraph 84 (MHCLG 2019)
Policy DM10: Transport and Accessibility

1. 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 where appropriate enhance existing networks of 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 inclusive access; and
   g) Where appropriate support the delivery of reliable, safe and efficient transport networks, in partnership with other organisations, service providers and developers.

2. New transport or access routes should take account of existing ecological networks and green corridors and where appropriate include measures to facilitate the safe movement of species across open spaces.

Natural Environment

4.119 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.

4.120 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.

4.121 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

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59 Including Section 3 land.
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.

4.122 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.

4.123 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.

4.124 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.

4.125 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 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.

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

4.127 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.

4.128 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.
DM11: Habitats, Biodiversity and Geodiversity

1. Habitats, Biodiversity and Geodiversity in Northumberland National Park will be given great weight in decision making.

2. All developments and activities should:
   a) Maintain and where appropriate enhance features of ecological value and recognised geodiversity assets;
   b) Maximise opportunities to strengthen the integrity and resilience of habitats and species within the National Park and provide a net gain in biodiversity where possible; including those priority species for which the National Park supports a significant proportion of the regional or national populations and those found at the edge of their range; and
   c) Maintain and where appropriate enhance existing wildlife connections and landscape features such as water courses, disused railway lines, hedgerows and tree lines for biodiversity as well as for other green/blue infrastructure and recreational uses.

3. Development proposals that are likely to have a harmful impact on protected or valuable sites or species will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:
   a) There are no alternative options that would avoid or reduce the harm to the protected or valuable interest;
   b) Suitable mitigation measures to avoid or reduce the harm have been incorporated into the proposals and will be maintained in order to retain their biodiversity or geodiversity benefits;
   c) Any residual harmful impacts have been offset through appropriate habitat enhancement, restoration or creation on site or in another appropriate location within the National Park;
   d) The wider sustainability benefits of the development outweigh the harm to the protected or valuable interest.

4. Proposals will be considered in accordance with the following hierarchy:
   **International Sites and Protected Species:**

5. Proposals that have a likely significant effect on European sites (comprising Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites) will be subject to an appropriate assessment in accordance with the Habitats Regulations. Where the assessment indicates that it is not possible to ascertain that the proposal, either on its own or in combination with other plans or projects, would have no adverse effect on the integrity of the site, development will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where there are no alternative solutions, there is an imperative over-riding public interest and compensation measures are secured. This protection will be extended to proposed or potential European sites and significant weight will be given to this policy in areas where the presence of internationally important features is recognised but no formal designation process has begun. Species protected under international legislation will also receive this highest level of protection.
   **National Sites and Protected Species:**

6. Proposals that would adversely affect the notified special interest features of an existing or proposed Site of Special Scientific Interest or National Nature Reserve or the nature conservation interest of a nationally protected species will only be permitted
where the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the impact on the protected interest.

Regional and Local Sites and other valuable habitats and species:

7. Proposals that would adversely affect any existing or proposed locally designated site such as a Local Nature Reserve, Local Wildlife Site, Regionally Important Geological or Geomorphological Site or other valuable habitat or species will only be permitted where the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the impact on the protected interest.

8. Where a proposed development would attract a significant number of additional visitors to an area or facility, it should be demonstrated how any potential impact upon the area or feature of biodiversity interest will be managed as part of the new development.

Landscape, Tranquillity and Dark Skies

Landscape

4.129 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.

4.130 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-bye 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.

4.131 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.

4.132 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\(^60\).

4.133 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.

4.134 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. Over time, new uses can sometimes outgrow a rural location.

Tranquillity and Dark Skies

4.135 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\(^61\), need to be minimised to a level which would not adversely affect people’s enjoyment of the National Park.

4.136 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. Tranquillity 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\(^62\). 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).

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\(^60\) NNP Economic Futures and Employment Demand Study (May 2018)

\(^61\) Including sequential visual effects and cumulative landscape effects.

Policy DM12: Landscape, Tranquillity and Dark Skies

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 will not be permitted.

2. 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 and to conserve or enhance tranquillity, development proposals will be required to demonstrate that:
   a) The level of noise, traffic and light generated as a result of the development during construction and thereafter is minimised and dark night skies maintained;
   b) Intrusive external features, such as hard surfaces, car parking and urban-style boundary treatments are minimised;
   c) The sense of openness is not reduced;
   d) The quiet enjoyment of the landscape is maintained.

3. 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.

4. All development proposals should avoid external lighting where possible. Where external lighting is necessary its design should avoid all unacceptable adverse impacts, or as a last resort mitigate them to the greatest possible extent in order to avoid unacceptable adverse impacts on tranquillity, dark skies, biodiversity, visual amenity, landscape character and heritage significance.

5. Development will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that it is compatible with the conservation and enhancement of Northumberland National Park’s landscapes by ensuring that:
   a) the visual impact of the development in its immediate and wider setting is minimised through high quality design that reflects local landscape character with particular regard to scale, siting, materials, and colour; and
   b) the cumulative and/or sequential landscape and visual effects of development do not detract from the natural beauty of the National Park and the experience of tranquillity.

6. Proposals which are considered to be significant in terms of scale and/or impact should provide a professional landscape appraisal as part of the application submission.
4.137 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.

4.138 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 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).

4.139 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.

4.140 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.

4.141 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.

4.142 Woodland, traditional orchards and hedgerows are also integral to the landscape character of the National Park, providing valuable habitats for wildlife as well as delivering environmental benefits such as carbon storage, flood risk management and opportunities for recreation. There will be a presumption in favour of the retention of all trees and hedgerows of value and in considering development proposals the Authority will look at the ecological, visual, amenity and landscape value of existing trees and hedgerows on site.
4.143 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.

4.144 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 show replacement planting taking place on the site so that there is no net loss of trees occurring as a result of the development and where there is a wider benefit from the proposal.

4.145 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.

4.146 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%).

4.147 A clear distinction should be made between the role of well-designed small-scale forestry planted for the sole purpose of screening unsightly development to reduce the harm to the landscape and large-scale productive forestry plantations. The large-scale productive forestry plantations would not permanently screen any harmful development and could themselves potentially be harmful to the openness of the unique landscape found within the National Park. Further, noise arising from the felling and transportation of wood resulting from logging activities could also potentially reduce the tranquillity thereby harming one of the National Park's most important special qualities.

4.148 Whilst it is acknowledged that the NNP Economic Futures Report (2018) does highlight the economic benefits of forestry in a broad context it does go on to say that 'it should be noted that any proposals would need to accord with the aims and objectives of the NNP Management Plan and the overall principle of the right tree in the right place.' The Authority recognises the important role that productive forestry can play in increasing sustainable economic growth in rural areas however this should never harm the National Park's special qualities.

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Policy DM13: 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 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. Promote the sustainable recreational, economic and environmental use of woodlands and forests; and
   e. Support appropriate, sensitively located small-scale forestry-related development.

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.

3. There will be a presumption in favour of the retention and enhancement of existing trees, woodland, traditional orchards and hedgerows of value on all proposed developments.

4. Where a development would result in the unavoidable loss of an existing tree, orchard or hedgerow but the wider sustainability benefits of the development significantly outweigh the loss, proposals will be expected to minimise harm and provide a net biodiversity and amenity gain, with appropriate replacement of lost trees or hedgerows.

5. Development will not be permitted that would lead to loss of or damage to ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland unless the need for, and benefits of the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss.
Renewable Energy

4.149 The UK has legal commitments to cut greenhouse gases and meet our increasing energy demands from renewable sources. Targets for reductions in carbon emissions of 80% by 2050 relative to 1990 levels have been embedded in law. The Government’s Vision for National Parks says we should be “leading the way in adapting to, and mitigating climate change”\(^64\). The National Planning Policy Framework explains that all communities have a responsibility to help increase the use and supply of renewable energy, but this does not mean that the need for renewable energy overrides environmental protections and the planning concerns of local communities.

4.150 Capacity studies reveal that there are significant physical, infrastructural and environmental constraints on renewable energy in the National Park\(^65\). 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. 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.

4.151 The National Park has the potential to contribute to the reduction in energy demand, and the supply of renewable energy at a household or community level. It is not an appropriate location for large scale energy development aimed at power generation to support national and regional energy supply. Wind energy and solar photovoltaic farm development in particular can significantly harm the National Park’s Special Qualities.

4.152 New development should take a ‘fabric first’ approach and aim for a building to be as efficient as possible through good design and construction which exceeds Building Regulations where possible. The building should be at its most efficient before renewable energy ‘bolt-ons’ are considered. NNP has a high proportion of traditional properties built of solid wall construction, and no mains gas supply. These ‘hard to treat’ homes are difficult to make energy efficient and it means that the potential energy efficiency of existing housing stock is limited. Small-scale renewable energy can do much to improve efficiency, but should be considered alongside other cost-effective improvements where these are suitable, such as wall insulation and draught proofing.

4.153 Small scale renewable energy development which meets the energy demands of a single property or local community can be achieved without impacting on the National Park’s Special Qualities. There is potential for micro-hydro generation, in locations where biodiversity impacts can be avoided. A range of domestic scale renewable energy facilities can be installed without the need for planning permission, and ground source and air source heat can be a relatively low impact source of renewable energy where a building is already at its most energy efficient. In some instances this can be achieved on a larger community scale to provide renewable energy without impacting on the National Park’s Special Qualities.


\(^{65}\) Northumberland National Park Infrastructure Plan (2017)
4.154 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 ST3 (Major Development). 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 against large-scale commercial schemes that would be incompatible with the area’s Special Qualities.

Policy DM14: Renewable Energy

1. Development proposals for small-scale schemes for the generation of renewable energy will be permitted where:
   a) It is of a scale and design appropriate to their locality;
   b) Renewable and low carbon technologies are incorporated into the design of new development proposals where appropriate (including for example on-site power storage, wind turbines, PICO-hydro or electric-car charging points).
   c) It respects the existing landscape character type as defined in the Northumberland National Park Landscape Character Assessment;
   d) It does not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the special qualities of the National Park, either on its own, or in combination with other schemes;
   e) It does not unacceptably impact natural resources, including river flow.
   f) It provides environmental enhancement or community benefits wherever possible;
   g) It makes provision for the removal of the facilities and reinstatement of the site, should it cease to be operational. Any planning impacts identified by the affected local community have been sufficiently addressed.

2. There will be a presumption against proposals for large-scale low carbon and renewable energy development unless it can be clearly demonstrated that they would:
   a) be compatible with the special qualities of the National Park,
   b) meet the needs of local communities and businesses;
   c) be supported by the local community; and
   d) be in accordance with Policy ST3 (Major Development).
Historic Environment

4.155 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.

4.156 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.

4.157 The historic environment contributes to the overall landscape character. The historic landscape is, 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 understood at a landscape scale, and is highly regarded and valued by communities and visitors alike, providing attractive places to live, work and visit.

4.158 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.

4.159 The high quality of the cultural heritage and historic environment are part of what attracts people to visit the National Park, 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.

67 NPPF section 16 (MHCLG 2019)
Heritage Assets

4.160 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.

4.161 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.

4.162 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 valum, 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.

4.163 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’.

4.164 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.

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68 English Heritage (2015) Historic Environment Good Practice Advice Note 1: The Historic Environment in Local Plans
Understanding Significance

4.165 Significance is the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest (archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic). Significance can be affected not only by development which has a direct effect upon it, such as physical changes to a Listed Building, but also by development which affects its setting.

4.166 Understanding the significance of an asset is crucial in order to make informed decisions. All proposals affecting a heritage asset must be accompanied by a ‘Heritage Statement’ which identifies its significance. If there is insufficient information to enable the Authority to assess the impact of the proposal on the significance of the asset or insufficient justification to outweigh any harm to the asset the Authority will refuse consent.

4.167 Historic England provides useful advice and guidance on the assessment of significance and in particular “Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance” (April 2008). Information on many heritage assets can also be found on the Authority’s Historic Environment Record.

Optimal Viable Use

4.168 Sustaining heritage assets in the long term often requires investment and putting heritage assets to a viable use is likely to enable the maintenance necessary for their long-term conservation. Certain heritage assets may have limited or no scope for new uses or may be so sensitive to change that alterations to accommodate a viable use would lead to an unacceptably level of harm and loss of significance.

4.169 It is important that any use is viable, not just for the owner, but also the future conservation of the asset. The optimum viable use may not necessarily be the most profitable one, but is instead the use which causes least harm to the significance of the heritage asset(s).

The Historic Environment Record

4.170 Information on identified heritage assets is available on the Authority’s Historic Environment Record (HER). However, this is not a definitive record of all heritage assets in the National Park. Many assets are yet to be identified or properly understood. Applicants should therefore ensure that they consider the heritage implications of all proposals regardless of whether a heritage asset has been previously identified, as new assets may be identified during the heritage assessment phase.
Policy DM15: Historic Landscape Assets and Built Heritage

1. Development affecting historic landscape assets of the National Park will be required to conserve and enhance landscape quality and character by taking into consideration the elements which contribute to its significance.

2. Where development will impact on features which contribute to the historic landscape the Authority will seek to preserve the features in situ. When in situ preservation is not justified the applicant will be required to make adequate provision for recording in advance of the development, secured through a Written Scheme of Investigation.

3. Development affecting the built heritage of the National Park should reinforce its distinctive historic character by fostering a positive and sympathetic relationship with traditional local architecture, materials and construction. High standards of design will be promoted to conserve and enhance the built heritage, settlement layouts and distinctive historic, cultural and architectural features. Development proposals will be supported where they:
   a) Conserve, enhance or better reveal elements which contribute to the significance of the heritage asset or its setting including key views, approaches and qualities of the immediate and wider environment that contribute to its value and significance;
   b) Preserve and enhance the special character and appearance of settlements including buildings, open spaces, trees and other important features that contribute to visual, historical or architectural character;
   c) Reinforce the distinctive qualities of settlements through the consideration of scale, height, massing, alignment; design detailing, materials and finishes;
   d) Respect the integrity of the form of historic settlements including boundary and street patterns and spaces between buildings;
   e) In the case of new uses, ensure the new use represents the optimal viable use of the asset which is compatible with its conservation;
   f) In the case of adapting assets for climate change mitigation, the proposal is based on a proper understanding of the asset and its material properties and performance. Development should not harm the heritage value of any assets affected.

4. When in situ preservation is not justified or the form and appreciation of a heritage asset is compromised though the proposal, the applicant will be required to undertake an appropriate programme of historic building recording (HBR) and analysis secured through a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI).

5. Development proposals that unacceptably harm the setting of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire: Hadrian’s Wall World Heritage Site (WHS) will not be permitted. Proposals within the extent of the (WHS) or its setting should, where possible, seek opportunities to sustain and better reveal the significance of its Outstanding Universal Value as set out in the adopted Statement of OUV and informed by World Heritage Site Management Plan, including seeking to protect and, where appropriate, enhance:
   a) Evidence of the scale and complexity of the Wall and its associated frontier features;
   b) The group value of features, including features beyond the World Heritage Site;
   c) The setting; and
   d) Communal values including educational and recreational.
Archaeological Heritage

4.171 The National Park has over 400 Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Policy DM16 includes criteria for development proposals affecting heritage assets with archaeological interest. Archaeological sites are a finite and irreplaceable resource that helps us to understand our past. Archaeological heritage assets of regional and local significance may collectively constitute a nationally important cultural landscape. They can however easily be damaged or destroyed by development, and once lost cannot be replaced. The most significant known archaeological heritage assets are designated as Scheduled Monuments and are of national importance and have statutory protection. It is widely recognised that there are sites which have equal significance, but which are non-designated heritage assets. If the significance of such sites have been demonstrated they will be treated in the same way as Scheduled Monuments.

4.172 In addition, there are many other archaeological sites which do not have such a great significance but which form a valuable part of the National Park’s heritage. Information on known archaeological sites and monuments is available on the Authority’s Historic Environment Record (HER). However, this is not a definitive record of all archaeological remains in the National Park. Many assets are yet to be identified or properly understood. Applicants should therefore ensure that they consider the heritage implications of their proposals regardless of whether archaeological remains have been previously identified, as new sites may be identified during the heritage assessment phase.

4.173 The significance of assets should be established through a desk-based assessment and where necessary field evaluation to identify necessary mitigation measures to be set out within a Written Scheme of Investigation in accordance with the professional standards of the Chartered Institute for Archaeology (CIfA). Information from this investigation and recovered archaeological assets should be made available as appropriate, for public understanding and appreciation.

Policy DM16: Archaeological Heritage

1. Development that would result in harm to the significance of a Scheduled Monument or other nationally important archaeological site will not be permitted.

2. The preservation of other archaeological sites will be an important consideration having regard to their significance. When development affecting such sites is acceptable in principle, the Authority will seek the preservation of remains in situ, as a preferred solution. When in situ preservation is not justified, the applicant will be required to make adequate provision for excavation and recording in advance of development, secured through a Written Scheme of Archaeological Investigation.

3. The Authority will require applicants to provide sufficient information to allow an informed assessment of the significance of the archaeological heritage asset and its setting, and the impact of the proposed development on that significance.
Minerals and Waste

Minerals

4.174 Minerals are essential to provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods which may be needed locally, nationally or internationally. 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 extraction.69

4.175 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.

4.176 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 protection. Not all of the deposits shown on the policies map are of sufficient thickness, or appropriately located, to ever be realistically workable.

4.177 Minerals development differs from other types of development in that minerals are a finite natural resource which can only be worked where they are found. Furthermore minerals operations may go on for many years, with potential benefits and impacts seen both during and after the mineral working. Mineral development includes exploration, minerals extraction, the extension of existing workings, extensions of time for working, ancillary minerals operations, or alterations to rates of extraction, mineral waste tipping, and re-working of tips.

4.178 The following policies will be used to decide applications for minerals development in the National Park. Importantly, whilst this section constitutes the Minerals Local Plan for the National Park, these policies are not the only considerations for minerals applications, and a range of other policies in this Plan will likely be relevant, this includes in particular those policies relating to landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, heritage, tranquillity, traffic, and amenity. Major Minerals development applications would be considered to be major development and have to comply with Policy ST3.

New or Extended Minerals Operations

4.179 Major minerals development can have a significant and irreversible impact and is not considered appropriate in the National Park other than in exceptional circumstances. The environmental impact of minerals operations has improved significantly in recent years, though, and where existing infrastructure and mitigation is in place the extension of existing operations can be the most efficient and reasonable approach to sustaining a source of minerals. It is important in considering applications for extensions (in time or scale) to carefully assess the ongoing impact of the operation and the need for it to take place within a National Park.

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69 Joint Local Aggregate Assessment for County Durham, Northumberland and Tyne & Wear (April 2018).
4.180 There exists within the National Park a resource of different building stones which have had significant use, within the National Park and more widely, in the past. This resource can support the positive conservation and design strategies for the National Park, as well as having economic benefits. In particular the reopening of an old quarry, operating at a small scale, to provide materials for the conservation of historic buildings and structures, and supporting high quality modern design in the National Park may be possible without having a significant impact.

Minimising the Impact of Minerals Operations

4.181 Parts of the National Park’s landscape has been characterised by the exploitation of its natural resources in the past. This includes a legacy of historic small-scale minerals workings such as whinstone, limestone and sandstone, granite quarrying, which now form part of Northumberland’s historic landscape character. Historic minerals sites could potentially offer opportunities for new commercial uses, recreation or habitat restoration as well as gradual reclamation by flora and fauna and return to a more natural state.

4.182 Minerals sites which are no longer in use should therefore be the subject of a restoration and aftercare strategy which identifies the most appropriate use for that site. That after-use will be depend upon a number of factors, including the location of the site and surrounding land uses, its scale and form, its hydrology, and risks relating to stability or contamination.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DM17: Minerals Development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Major minerals development will not be permitted other than in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the proposal is in the public interest. In assessing proposals the National Park Authority will consider:</td>
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<tr>
<td>a) the demonstrable wider need for the development;</td>
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<td>b) an objective assessment of alternatives outside the National Park;</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) the impact upon the special qualities of the National Park; and</td>
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<tr>
<td>d) strategic aims and objectives for the management of the National Park.</td>
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| 2. The small scale expansion of existing quarries, or extension of time for minerals operations, will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the socio-economic benefits of the development outweigh any impact upon the National Park’s Special Qualities and where the proposal would accord with other relevant local plan policies. |

| 3. Small scale quarrying of traditional building stone will be permitted where it is demonstrated that there is an identified local need for the stone which will conserve, maintain or enhance the fabric or character of the National Park. |

| 4. In all cases: |
| a) all reasonable mitigation measures must be provided for in the proposal, in order to minimise environmental and socioeconomic impacts and ensure the proposed operations do not have unacceptable adverse effects on the natural and historic environment or human health; and |
| b) the proposal must be consistent with other relevant policies in this Local Plan. |

| 5. For all proposals for new or extended mineral operations, planning applications must be supported by: |
| a) evidence of the presence of the mineral; |
| b) Information relating to the need for the mineral, at a local, regional and/or national level; |
| c) Details of the proposed working methods; |
| d) Details of any proposed mitigation measures; and |
| e) An assessment of the effects of the proposal on: |
| i) assets of natural or cultural value; |
| ii) levels of noise, dust and vibration; |
| iii) amenity and a loss of privacy; |
| iv) dark night skies and tranquillity; |
| v) landscape character and visual intrusion; |
| vi) habitats and species and geodiversity; |
| vii) traffic and air quality; |
| viii) water quality, quantity, flood risk and drainage; |
| ix) land resource, including agricultural land, access land and public rights of way; |
| x) soil, contamination and land instability; and |
| xi) the economy. |

| 6. Applications must include a proposed restoration and aftercare strategy which sets out: |
| a) how the proposed after-use responds to the site and its surroundings; |
| b) the removal of plant and other infrastructure, final landform and retained features, reinstatement of soils, and landscaping and planting proposals; |

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70 As set out in the NNP Management Plan 2016-2021
c) where applicable, any use of waste or other imported materials for restoration purposes;

d) phasing arrangements including avoidance of sterilisation of remaining resources; and

e) a programme of aftercare and monitoring of the site for a minimum of five years following completion of restoration.

Safeguarding Northumberland National Park’s Mineral Resources

4.183 Minerals are a finite resource and it is the role of the planning system to manage the demand for land and different development types sustainably. Minerals Safeguarding Areas are shown on the policies map. The purpose of a Minerals Safeguarding Area is to ensure that the ability remains to extract a minerals resource, by ensuring that non-minerals development does not take place where it may sterilise or constrain potential future minerals working. Safeguarding of minerals should not be taken as a presumption that permission would be granted in the future for minerals development. It does however ensure that the opportunity for minerals development is not prejudiced through inappropriate land uses or development.

4.184 In considering proposals for non-mineral use of these areas we will take into account opportunity for prior extraction (where reasonable and feasible), potential non-sterilising land uses, or may decide not to grant permission where development may prejudice future minerals extraction. The following areas are identified on the Policies Map as Minerals Safeguarding Areas:

- Harden Quarry
- Cop Crag Quarry

4.185 The designation as MSAs 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).
Policy DM18: Minerals Safeguarding Areas
1. Important mineral resources and reserves, as identified on the Policies Map, shall be safeguarded from development which, by virtue of its siting or nature, would prevent or obstruct potential future mineral development or associated operations at that site should a clearly justified need arise to extract them.

2. Planning permission will be granted for non-mineral development within Minerals Safeguarding Areas where:
   i. the location of the proposal relates to a settlement recognised by Policy ST4; or
   ii. the proposal can demonstrate that it will not affect the overall value of the mineral resource; or
   iii. the mineral can be extracted satisfactorily prior to the development taking place; or
   iv. the development is of a temporary nature, can be completed and the site restored to a condition that does not inhibit extraction within the timescale that the mineral is likely to be needed; or
   v. there is an overriding need for the development.

Waste

4.186 Northumberland National Park Authority is the waste planning authority for the National Park. Responsibility for waste management within the National Park rests with Northumberland County Council. There is also a close cross-boundary relationship with the County Council as the surrounding waste planning authority. Given the small population and level of economic activity within the National Park compared with Northumberland as a whole, waste arising within the National Park is accounted for in the Northumberland Waste Plan. There is policy provision for sufficient waste facilities to be delivered outside the National Park to meet its waste needs.

4.187 There are no operational waste disposal sites in the National Park and little evidence of demand or need. 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 DM7), but could also be part of other commercial operations, subject to the scale restrictions set out in Policy DM14 (Renewable Energy).

4.188 Whilst this is the case it is still appropriate that within the National Park all opportunities are taken to prevent waste and enable re-use and recycling in accordance with the waste hierarchy. The following waste policies will be used to decide applications for waste development, or larger scale development with opportunities for the prevention of waste. The design of new development needs to include space for the storage of waste and recycling, in accordance with the latest regulations and guidelines. Importantly, whilst this section constitutes the Waste Local Plan for the National Park, these policies are not the only considerations for waste development, and a range of other policies in this Plan will be relevant. This includes in particular those policies relating to landscape, tranquillity, biodiversity, cultural heritage, transport, and amenity. Waste applications may also be considered to be major development in respect of Policy ST3 (Major Development).

71 North East England Waste Arisings and Waste Management Capacity Study (2012)
Policy DM19: Waste Prevention

1. All new development should seek to prevent waste, and must identify sufficient and convenient space for storage of waste and recycling.

2. Applications for major development must include a waste audit statement demonstrating how the demolition, construction and operational phases of the development will minimise the generation of waste and provide for the management of waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy, including:
   a) sustainable procurement in construction phase; and
   b) methods for limiting the generation of waste and maximising recycling in construction phase.

Policy DM20: Waste Disposal and Recycling Facilities

1. New waste management facilities or disposal sites will not be permitted unless they can demonstrate significant environmental benefits for Northumberland National Park.

2. Small scale community-based reuse, recycling and composting facilities will be supported where they are located on a site within or adjoining the community they serve, and provide principally for waste arising in that community. Facilities should maximise the opportunity for the use of previously developed land.

3. In all cases development must mitigate against environmental and socioeconomic impacts.
## Glossary of Terms

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<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. <strong>Social rented housing</strong> 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. <strong>Affordable rented housing</strong> 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). <strong>Intermediate housing</strong> 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. <strong>Homes that do not meet the above definition of affordable housing, such as “low cost market” housing, may not be considered as affordable housing for planning purposes.</strong></td>
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<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>
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<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.</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>

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72 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)
### Cumulative landscape effects
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.

### Curtilage
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’.

### Development Plan
This includes adopted Local Plans and neighbourhood plans and is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

### Designated heritage assets
Heritage assets formally designated under relevant legislation including: conservation areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments, and historic parks and gardens.

### Disturbed Land
Area of land where vegetation, topsoil, or overburden has been removed, or where topsoil, spoil and processed waste have been placed (e.g. as a result of mining activity).

### Duty to co-operate
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.

### Ecological Zone of Influence (EZI)
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).

### Ecosystems
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.

### Ecosystem services
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.

### Employment Land Review
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.

### Farmstead
A clear grouping of farm buildings with an existing dwelling.

### Flood Risk
Identified probability of flooding from any water sources including fluvial, tidal, surface and ground water flooding.

### Green infrastructure
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.

### Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)
A legal requirement to assess the impact of plans and proposals on the nature conservation importance of designated European habitats.

### Hamlet
An established, closely grouped number of dwellings within a contiguous built form, and separate from other named settlements.

### Heritage assets
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).

### Historic environment
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.

### Housing Market Area (HMA)
Geographic areas defined by household demand and preferences for housing. They reflect the key functional linkages between places where people live and work.

### Infrastructure
A collective term for services such as roads, electricity, sewerage, water, schools, health facilities and types of green infrastructure.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)</th>
<th>Sets out the critical infrastructure that is required to support the objectives, policies and spatial strategy set out in the Local Plan.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landscape character type</td>
<td>A defined geographical zone with distinct types of landscape that is relatively homogeneous in character.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape character area</td>
<td>Single unique areas within landscape character types, which have their own individual character and identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape sensitivity</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>Local Aggregate Assessment</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>Local Centres</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>Local Green Space</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>Local needs affordable housing</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>Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)</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>Major development</td>
<td>The Local Plan contains a policy (3 Major Development) that 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>Material planning considerations</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>Named settlement(s)</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>National Nature Reserve (NNR)</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>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</td>
<td>The Government’s planning policies for England and how they should be applied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Capital</td>
<td>The stock of natural resources (including geology, soils, air, water and all living organisms), as considered using a framework derived from economics. In the same framework, ecosystem services are considered to be flows.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood Plans</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...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*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.*
neighbourhood in a local referendum.

**Open Space**
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.

**Planning Obligation**
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 74.

**Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)**
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.

**Policies Map (formerly proposals map)**
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.

**Principal Residence housing**
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.

**Regionally Important Geological Site (RIGS)**
Local, non-statutory sites identified for their geological and geomorphological interest – also referred to as Local Geological Sites.

**Registered Provider**
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.

**Rural communities**
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.

**Rural exception sites**
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.

**Rural land based enterprises**
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.

**Rural workers**
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.

**Section 3 Land**
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 75.

**Sequential visual effects**
The recurrence of developments when moving through a landscape, and how these are experienced along transport routes, public rights of way and access land.

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75 As amended by the Wildlife and Countryside (Amendment) Act 1985
| **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)** | 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 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, tranquillity, 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. |