

Issues for the Examination of the NNPA Core Strategy

During the formal consultation period responses were received from 24 organisations/ individuals. Within these responses there were 114 individual comments, of which 72 were either supporting particular elements of the Core Strategy or stated they had no comments to make. Of the other 42 objections, it is considered that 19 could be addressed by making minor changes to wording. Table 1 summarises the main issues where no changes are proposed and the NNPA reason for this decision and Table 2 suggests the changes necessary to overcome objections. Appendix 1 contains a list of organisations objecting to an element of the Core Strategy.

Given the number and complexity of the issues raised through the consultation it is hoped that there will not be a need for a hearing element to the examination and that any issues can be resolved through written representations. None of those submitting comments have requested that their comments be discussed at a hearing.

Table 1: Objections, where no change is proposed to the Core Strategy.

| Ref | Issue | NNPA Response |
|---|--|---|
| Core Strategy Spatial Vision | | |
| 009/02 | Should the spatial vision contain an explicit reference that the phrase 'make best use of, and support existing services and facilities...' extends to water supply and sewage treatment infrastructure? | It is not considered necessary to specifically identify water supply and sewage treatment as 'services and facilities'; clearly they will be covered in this statement. There are specific policy criteria set out within policy 29. |
| Overall Spatial Development Strategy | | |
| 009/03 | Policy 1 - Is the requirement to prepare a Sustainability Statement for all development proposals excessive, should it only apply to major development? | The process of preparing a Sustainability Statement will ensure planning applicants demonstrate how their proposal will deliver Sustainable Development. It will not be an onerous process and detailed guidance will be prepared. The requirements of a Sustainability Statement will be combined with the requirements for a Design and Access Statement. |
| 021/01 | Policy 3 – Is criteria 'b' to prescriptive? | It is considered that this policy is appropriate and not overly prescriptive. It will provide guidance to enable the consistent application of LDF policies. |
| 023/02 | Policy 4 – Does this policy provide the necessary measures with regard to the consideration of environmental damage (biodiversity and geological conservation) in line with PPS9 and other legislative provisions to protect and enhance biodiversity? Should the Core Strategy include a requirement to address the impact of major development within the National | Section 3.4 - 3.10 of the Core Strategy clearly states that biodiversity and geodiversity are two of the special qualities of Northumberland National Park, and the NNPA has a statutory duty to protect them. As such, criteria 'c' of policy 4 requires an applicant to demonstrate any detrimental impacts on the special qualities and the extent to which these could be |

| | | |
|--------|--|--|
| | Park on biodiversity interests outside the plan area? | mitigated. It is considered that this is in accordance with PPS9 and other legislative provisions which do not need to be repeated within the Core Strategy. Further specific guidance on assessing impact on biodiversity and geodiversity is covered in policy 18. |
| 007/06 | Policy 5 – Should the policy or supporting text include criteria to set out how "a sense of tranquillity" can be assessed and state that although much development detracts from tranquillity, some sympathetic development could enhance tranquillity? | Policy 20 sets out the means of assessing tranquillity - no change required. With regard to the additional text to explain that sympathetic development could enhance tranquillity, it is considered that this is rather vague and would confuse the reader without specific examples of the type of development that could enhance tranquillity. |
| 018/01 | Policy 6 – Will the removal of the requirement to define settlement envelopes lead to the unclear, ambiguous and inconsistent application of LDF policies, protecting villages from inappropriate development? Should the requirement be removed across the National Park, or should villages that identified a need for envelopes be able to define them e.g. Elsdon? | <p>The consultation on the Core Strategy Further Preferred Options document highlighted considerable objection to the identification of settlement envelopes across the National Park. The identification of settlement envelopes was not only discussed with Parish Councils but also at a number of workshop sessions - at which over 140 members of the local community attended. Only a very small proportion of residents considered envelopes to be a good approach and where there was support the main reason was to prevent further development. Most residents were concerned that drawing envelopes too tightly would restrict development that may be needed in the future and drawing them too wide may encourage speculative development which is not actually needed by the local population.</p> <p>It is recognised that settlement envelopes do have a positive role in allowing for the consistent application of planning policies. However, given the number and type of applications received by the National Park Authority and the clear policy framework set out within the Core Strategy it is considered that not having envelopes will not have a negative impact on the special qualities of the National Park. As the Core Strategy provides a policy framework for the whole of the National Park it would not be appropriate only to draw a settlement envelope around Elsdon.</p> |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 018/02 | Policy 6 – Is there a robust and credible evidence base to justify the removal of the proposal to define settlement envelopes? Was this decision based on anecdotal evidence, impressions and opinions of a few parish councils and a handful of individuals at poorly attended drop-in sessions? | The evidence for the removal of the proposal to define settlement envelopes is set out within the Statement of Consultation - appendixes 37 - 40. The decision was not founded on 'anecdotal evidence, impressions, and the opinions of a few Parish Councils and a handful of individuals at poorly attended drop in sessions'. The NNPA wrote to all Parish Councils across the Park and invitations were received from 8 to attend their meetings (with a total of 50 PC members in attendance). With regard to the drop in sessions, 19 people attended, and 140 attended the settlement sessions - this is not considered to be 'poorly attended'. |
| 021/02 | Policy 6 – Is criteria 'b' unresponsive to changing circumstances by stating that new buildings will only be permitted if they are replacing an existing building? | Criteria 'a' provides flexibility. Criteria 'b' provides guidance specifically for the replacement of buildings. As the Core Strategy encompasses Development Control policies it is not considered that the policy is too prescriptive. |
| 014/01 | Section 6.22 – Is it necessary to cite development on the Otterburn Training Area as an example of where new development may take place outside identified settlements? | No change required; the types of development referred to in section 6.22 are examples, not an exhaustive list. |
| 021/03 | Policy 8 – Should this policy be more flexible to allow for conversions of outbuildings to residential use, where they are already part of the curtilage of an existing dwelling? | If a conversion of an existing building was proposed where the building to be converted was already part of the curtilage of an existing dwelling this would be considered an extension to the dwelling and therefore would be assessed using policy 3, General Development Principles. |
| 023/03 | Policy 8 – Should the policy or the supporting text address the issue of the impact of building conversions on protected species? | It is not considered necessary to repeat the provisions set out within Policy 18 which protects protected species. |
| Thriving Communities | | |
| 011/14 | Policy 13 – Should the policy or supporting text refer to the need to develop innovative public transport initiatives? | This reference is included in section 7.20. |
| A Sustainable Local Economy based on the Special Qualities | | |
| 011/19 | Policy 16 – Should the policy include a cross reference to policy 6 (general location of new development) for clarity? | It is not considered necessary to cross refer to policy 6. |
| A Richness of Biodiversity and Cultural Heritage | | |
| 011/21 016/07 | Policy 18 – Should the supporting text refer to Biodiversity Target Zones to ensure greater consistency with RSS? | It is not considered necessary to refer to Biodiversity Target Zones as these were identified in RSS as a result of the work |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | undertaken on the preparation of the Northumberland National Park BAP - which is the focus for the policy. |
| A True Sense of Tranquillity | | |
| 012/05 | Policy 20 – Does the policy and supporting text provide adequate flexible guidance to assess the impact of developments on tranquillity? Will the policy allow flexibility for example permitting occasional temporary sporting events or allowing the development of new playing fields? Will the policy prevent the local community from having access to local sport developments and deny them the opportunity to partake in sports locally? Should the policy be amended to allow, in special and exceptional circumstances, certain noise generating activities depending on their nature, history and heritage and community need of the particular sporting event? | It is considered that as the policy provides criteria against which to assess a proposal it does therefore offer guidance on how developments will be assessed. As the policy states there will be an 'assessment of impact' this assessment will obviously consider issues such as the length and nature of any apparent disturbance to tranquillity, not automatically ruling out sporting events or developments such as new playing fields which are clearly supported in policy 9. It is considered that by adding a clause to 'allow in special and exceptional circumstances certain noise generating activities' would not provide further clarification as this statement is particularly vague. However, it is proposed that the following is added to the end of section 10.12 'Other temporary disturbances to tranquillity may include sporting or cultural events. This temporary disturbance will not automatically make such development unacceptable as there will be an assessment of the impact of the proposal.' |
| Environment and Resource Protection | | |
| 001/01 | Policy 26 – Should the requirement for embedded renewable energy be higher than 10%? | No change required as policy 26 identifies that 10% is a minimum requirement |
| 011/32 016/09 | Policy 26 – Should the policy include a reference to Eco-homes, BREEAM rating and the Code for Sustainable Buildings to ensure greater consistency with RSS policy 38? | As Eco-homes, BREEAM and the Code for Sustainable Homes are clearly set out in RSS it was not considered necessary to repeat it in this policy. |
| 023/05 | Policy 26 – Should the policy state that only small scale renewable energy development is suitable in the National Park | National Planning Policy, contained within PPS22, clearly establishes that large scale renewable energy development should not take place in National Parks. There is no need to repeat national policy within the Core Strategy. |
| 016/11 | Policy 27 – Is the policy overly restrictive by limiting waste facilities to those required for the management of waste produced by communities in the National Park? Should a household waste recovery centre be considered major development? | Section 12.8 highlights that any waste disposal/ recycling facilities would be expected to be of a small scale, to meet only local needs. If the waste recovery centre was required to serve a need that was wider than local needs it would therefore be defined as major development and therefore assessed |

| | | |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| | | against policy 4, in line with national and regional planning policy. |
| Sustainability Appraisal | | |
| 022/02 | SA Matrix – Was the impact of flood risk taken into account when identifying settlements? | Flood risk was taken into account when identifying settlements. All of the settlements identified have land within them that is not at risk from flooding. |
| Omission | | |
| 016/13 | Has the Core Strategy had regard to the ‘Putting the Learner First’ initiative and should it contain a policy on educational facilities? | Schools are identified as an important community facility. Policy 9 seeks to support both the creation of new community facilities and resist the loss of existing facilities. In addition, policy 6 allows for the development of appropriate education facilities outside settlements. It is considered that these policies will address the protection and creation of education facilities needed in the National Park and a separate policy is not required. |

Table 2: Objections, suggested change to overcome objection

| Ref | Objection | NNPA Proposed Change |
|---|--|--|
| The Northumberland National Park | | |
| 007/01 | Section 3.7 - Concern that the suggestion that tranquillity is "difficult to assess" may discourage it's consideration in practice. The methodology developed by the LRG may be complex, but it is robust and by no means vague. | Add footnote to 3.7, after 'standard methods' - footnote to state 'A methodology has been developed to assess tranquillity, this can be viewed at www.cpreleics.org/national-campaigns/tranquillity/pdf/Methodology.pdf ' |
| Core Strategy Spatial Vision | | |
| 020/01 | Spatial Vision - Concern at the promotion of ‘balancing’ - this has the potential to undermine the otherwise sound policy approach. ‘Balancing’ implies that a trade off is being made. Suggest that this is replaced with a reference to ‘integration’. | Section 4.1 - replace 'There will be balance...' with 'Aiming to achieve a balance...' |
| Overall Spatial Development Strategy | | |
| 023/01 | Policy 2 - Recommend inclusion of an new point (with h. - j.) in policy 2: ‘promoting and enhancing the conservation of peat as a carbon store in the National Park to conform with RSS policy 3 and supplement to PPS1. | Add new criteria to policy 2 'promoting and enhancing the conservation of peat as a carbon store within the National Park'. |

| Thriving Communities | | |
|---|--|---|
| 011/11 016/04 | Policy 10 - The supporting text should include a reference to PDL targets and should cross refer back to Core Strategy policy 7 on the sequential test and the maximisation of previously developed land. This would ensure greater consistency with the adopted RSS (July 2008) Policies 4, 6 and 29. | Add the following text to the end of section 7.10 'In order to monitor the effectiveness of the sequential approach, set out in Policy 7, the National Park Authority has set targets for development on Previously Developed Land. These are included within the Implementation and Monitoring section'. |
| A Sustainable Local Economy based on the Special Qualities | | |
| 011/17 | Policy 15 - Request the term "farm diversification" be amended to "rural diversification" to better reflect a variety of rural interests. | All development within the NNP is rural. Amend policy 15b - replace 'farm' diversification with 'other types of diversification'. |
| A Richness of Biodiversity and Cultural Heritage | | |
| 023/06 | Section 9.4 - The final sentence regarding protected species is not in line with Government policy. Suggested change: 'Proposals likely to affect protected species such as badgers and bats will be considered in the context of relevant legislation and will only be permitted where the developers demonstrate how impacts will be avoided or mitigated.' | Amend final sentence of 9.4 to: 'Proposals likely to affect protected species such as badgers and bats will be considered in the context of relevant legislation and will only be permitted where the developer demonstrates how impacts will be avoided or mitigated.' |
| 023/04 | Policy 18 - The Authority should not be 'supporting' proposals, we would suggest they can 'encourage' proposals which meet the policy criteria. 'd' add 'in line with Natural Area, local Biodiversity Action Plan and Geodiversity Action Plan objectives' 'e' should allow species and habitats to respond to the impacts of climate change. 'f' citing only one function of soil and soil resources here is miss leading, as these functions are many and diverse including agricultural use, sustaining habitats etc. Last paragraph: this paragraph is of considerable concern and allowing the benefits of development to override environmental issues will not meet government policy. We suggest that the 1st sentence could end: 'will only be permitted where the requirements of relevant legislation can be met.' The emphasis of the final sentence is misplaced, we would suggest it is rephrased: Where adverse effects cannot be | Amend first sentence - replace 'support' with 'encourage'. Add to the end of criteria 'd' 'in line with Natural Area, Northumberland National Park Biodiversity Action Plan and Geodiversity Action Plan objectives. Amend criteria 'e' to include species 'and habitats'. From criteria 'f' delete 'particularly the storing, transporting and filtering of water'. Final paragraph, re order words to read '...will only be permitted where the requirements of relevant legislation can be met. Where adverse effects cannot be avoided planning conditions, agreements or obligations will be used to secure appropriate mitigation measures or compensation. Adverse effects on habitats or species outwith the National Park should be avoided. |

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| | avoided planning conditions, agreements or obligations will be used as appropriate to secure appropriate mitigation measures or compensation. This policy should also make clear that adverse effects on these interests outwith the NNP should be avoided. | |
| A True Sense of Tranquillity | | |
| 007/05 | Section 10.3 - The list of threats to tranquillity is useful, but it would be useful to have a parallel list of contributors to tranquillity as well. These include local landscape, the sound of running water and low level "natural" sound (e.g. bird song). | Amend 10.3 to read, '...(factors detract from feelings of tranquillity). Contributors to tranquillity include, the local landscape, the sound of running water and low level 'natural' sound such as bird song. The CPRE have identified...' |
| 007/06 | Policy 20 - The criterion for impact assessment "quiet enjoyment of the landscape" is key but could be interpreted as being non-quantifiable and subjective, and therefore disregarded in practice. Reference back to the LRG methodology might usefully demonstrate how this impact assessment could be practically carried out. | Add an additional sentence to the end of 10.4 'Further guidance on the assessment of tranquillity is provided by the CPRE' add link to website as end note www.cpreleics.org/national-campaigns/tranquillity/pdf/Methodology.pdf |
| A Living, Working Landscape | | |
| 013/01 | Policy 23 - Could be better worded to refer to encouraging woods to be "sustainably managed": i.e. a wood should only be used for wood fuel if it is part of a regime of sustainable management, preferably certified by a recognised body such as the Forest Stewardship Council. | Amend policy 23d to read 'develop sensitively located and sustainably managed woodland for...' |
| 019/01 | Section 11.17 – This paragraph is too negative. It presumes that the existing resources are not economically viable, therefore not offering flexibility. Suggested improvement would be to replace paragraph 11.17 to read: "Coal resources are found in the southern and central areas of the park. Some resources have been previously exploited. The remaining resources are of variable quality with some thin seams. However, changes in the energy market may influence the economic viability of some of these resources and it will be necessary to keep this solution under review." | Delete existing 11.17 and replace with 'Coal resources are found in the southern and central areas of the Park. Some resources have been previously exploited. The remaining resources are of variable quality with some thin seams. However, changes in the energy market may influence the economic viability of some of these resources.' |
| 015/01 | Section 11.17 - The international price of coal has risen approximately six-fold over the past four years. If current prices are maintained, or even if they fall back considerably, deposits | Delete existing section 11.17 and replace with 'Coal resources are found in the southern and central areas of the Park. Some resources have been previously exploited. The remaining |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | previously considered to be of no economic interest may now have value. This may include deposits in the Park. Some qualification to para.11.17 is necessary to recognise the changed economic circumstances. | resources are of variable quality with some thin seams. However, changes in the energy market may influence the economic viability of some of these resources.' |
| 019/02 | Policy 24 - It should be acknowledged that mineral extraction may not always be large scale. Furthermore the definition of large scale is often difficult to quantify. As presently written this policy would prejudice small or medium scale proposals,. Suggested improvement: Delete the reference to "larger scale" mineral extraction removed from the last sentence of policy 24. This amendment would remove any potential prejudice against future small or medium scale mineral extraction proposals from being thoroughly and duly assessed against both Regional and National Planning Policy for surface mining. | Delete reference to 'larger scale' from last sentence of policy 24. |
| Environment and Resource Protection | | |
| 022/01 | <p>Policy 28 - Conflicts with Policy 6 (General Location of New Development) and Policy 7 (The Sequential Approach). A robust flood risk policy would be sufficient to ensure that proposals are placed at lower flood risk area through the sequential approach. The unique circumstances of the National Park with the limited number of development and settlements only partially within flood zones is acknowledged. The document should not therefore be required to undertake the sequential test nor extensively replicate national planning policy as there is no described allocation however, principally development is being directed to settlements at risk of flooding and the policy 28 should address this.</p> <p>Policy 28 highlights the importance of 'mitigation' which is a valid and acceptable measure, however the sequential approach should be acknowledged as the leading process to steer development away from areas at risk of flooding. Although the preamble to this policy has acknowledged the principles of the sequential approach under PPS25, this should however be embodied in the main policy text. The policy could</p> | Amend the final sentence of policy 28 to read 'The NPA will require that new development is directed away from areas at the highest risk of flooding and that appropriate measures are...' |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | also be simply reworded to just clarify that developments should conform to the principles established in PPS25. The present policy considers mitigation is the principle requirement and is therefore contrary to PPS25. | |
| 006/01 | Policy 29 - For clarity and consistency with the policies on major development, and in recognition of the different roles played by electricity transmission and distribution assets, National Grid request that the word "transmission" in policy 29c is replaced with "distribution". It is electricity distribution lines which directly serve local community and business needs. | Policy 29c should be amended - replace 'transmission' with 'distribution' |
| Implementation and Monitoring Framework | | |
| 020/03 | Query whether some of the indicators of success will enable the Authority effectively to monitor the policies in the DPD. While some indicators will be helpful in this respect (e.g. the indicator for policy 1), others will not. Some indicators may be useful for more general monitoring purposes (e.g. the indicator for changes in average annual rainfall and temperatures will provide useful data but will not necessarily assist in monitoring Policy 2 on climate change). Most of the suggested indicators would appear to have a more general application. It is therefore suggested that the implementation and monitoring framework is revisited in order to distinguish between indicators which will help monitor the DPD and its policies and those which will provide baseline information of more general use. | Include an additional column in the Implementation and Monitoring Framework to distinguish between background data and monitoring information. |
| Appendixes | | |
| 019/03 | Appendix 1 - Minerals Planning Guidance 3 is missing from the list of National Planning Policy. This should be included within the list. | Add MPG3 to appendix 1. |
| Proposals Map | | |
| 014/02 | The Proposals Map shows OTA but also shows it as Access Land - whilst this is technically correct it is also excepted land as it is covered by MOD Byelaws (most of it) and as such there is a risk that the public think it is Access Land and could wander where they think is safe when it is not. The Byelawed | Amend proposals map to highlight the Byelawed part of the Access Land. |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | part of the Access Land should be hatched or shown in some other way and included in the key to show that it is excepted land under the Act. | |
|--|--|--|

Appendix 1 Organisations Objecting to an Element of the Core Strategy

| Reference | Organisation |
|-----------|------------------------------------|
| 001 | The Byre Vegetarian B&B |
| 006 | National Grid |
| 007 | CPRE |
| 009 | Northumbrian Water |
| 011 | North East Assembly |
| 012 | Sport England |
| 013 | The Woodland Trust |
| 014 | MoD/ Defence Estates |
| 015 | Confederation of UK Coal Producers |
| 016 | Northumberland County Council |
| 018 | Elsdon Parish Council |
| 019 | The Coal Authority |
| 020 | Campaign for National Parks |
| 021 | Jennifer Lampert Associates |
| 022 | Environment Agency |
| 023 | Natural England |