



Northumberland National Park Authority

Infrastructure Plan

September 2017

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1. Executive summary

- 1.0. Northumberland National Park Authority is preparing a Local Plan that will set the framework for planning decisions in the National Park over the next 20 years. As part of preparing the Plan, the Authority is required to consider infrastructure issues associated with development.
- 1.1. Infrastructure is a wide-ranging term but in essence it is the physical network of services and facilities that are required for an area to function properly. It includes:
- Public transport & roads;
 - Flood defences;
 - Schools and other education/childcare provision;
 - GP surgeries and other healthcare facilities;
 - Community meeting places and facilities;
 - Social care facilities;
 - Energy supply and distribution;
 - Telecommunications,
 - Water and wastewater supply/disposal;
 - Key retail outlets;
 - Emergency services;
 - Sports and recreational facilities;
 - Cultural institutions like libraries and museums;
 - Waste processing & disposal facilities.
- 1.2. Following public consultation from February to April 2017, this document sets out the Authority's conclusions regarding the infrastructure that currently exists, its quality and capacity, and whether it is capable of serving the amount, type and distribution of new development over the next 20 years.

2. Approach

2.0. The document is divided into sections that deal with:

Current infrastructure quality and capacity

2.1. What the key infrastructure types are and whether they are fit for purpose at the present time.

Development planned for

2.2. How much development will the new Local Plan result in, where is it likely to go, and what infrastructure issues is this likely to prompt.

Proposed approach to requiring developers to address infrastructure issues

2.3. How the Authority intends to ensure that developers address any infrastructure shortfalls arising from new development.

3. Consultation

3.1. An Infrastructure Plan Consultation Draft document was subject to public consultation from 27th February 2017 until the 28th April 2017. The Authority also consulted on the Local Plan Issues Paper Consultation Draft document during the same period.

3.2. The consultation solicited responses to some key questions from the key infrastructure providers (Appendix 1) and other members of the public:

1. What is the current state (**overall quality & capacity**) of infrastructure in the National Park? What are the particular stresses and pinch points? *Do you agree with the analysis set out in this section and Appendix 2?*

2a. Are there **any key infrastructure issues that will arise as a result of future development?**;

if yes, proceed to 2b;

2b. Will these infrastructure issues be **addressed by existing** investment plans and other strategies, funding or policy interventions?;

if yes, please identify the relevant interventions;

if no, or partly no, please proceed to 3;

3a. Can any remaining key infrastructure gaps/issues be resolved by **requiring developers to address shortfalls** as part of the Authority's proposed planning-obligation led approach, or would a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) be a more appropriate vehicle?

3b. What would be the approximate **cost of these key infrastructure improvements?**

- 3.3. Representations received, and conclusions from these questions have informed this revised Infrastructure Plan. This document will form part of the evidence base that supports the Local Plan. It is important in allowing the Authority to demonstrate that the Local Plan will be deliverable and therefore sound; a key part of passing the independent public examination of the Local Plan and the policies contained within it.

4. Context and Background

- 4.1. In preparing a Local Plan, Northumberland National Park Authority is required by national policy to address infrastructure issues. This is done in both a general sense – an assessment of the **overall type and quality of infrastructure** – but also in a more specific sense – the infrastructure that is **directly related to and required in order to deliver development** permitted under the Local Plan’s policies. This is an important distinction. Infrastructure requirements do not only stem from new development. They can stem from a wide range of other causes, for example:

- pre-existing deficiencies (infrastructure shortfalls that already exist even before new development is considered);
- changes in the demographics of the area (for example an older population requiring ever increasing social care provision);
- shifts in technology and lifestyles (for example the technological revolution associated with the internet and mobile communication and alternative transport modes like the electric car);
- economic cycles affecting investment decisions and government policies that require or incentivise certain developments;
- climate change, in particular physical infrastructure and emergency response associated with more extreme weather events.

- 4.2. It is important that the Authority looks at the infrastructure requirements whatever their cause, as they fundamentally affect the overall social and economic wellbeing of communities and the ability to deliver National Park purposes. This means looking beyond the planning system and toward wider strategies and investment plans of all bodies involved in infrastructure provision.

- 4.3. The National Park Management Plan sets out ambitions for the area between 2016 and 2021. The Management Plan is a partnership Plan with communities, organisations, government agencies and landowners and as such reflects joint priorities, including objectives to improve or safeguard infrastructure. The list is not exhaustive, but the National Park Management Plan particularly highlights a need to:

- Achieve a high standard and broad range of facilities, information and services within the National Park (Objective 1.2.1)
- Improve information and infrastructure with more sites in the National Park accessible to all (Objective 1.2.3)
- Use the resources of the National Park to provide increased access to learning and educational opportunities for young people (primary, secondary, higher and further education) (Objective 1.3.1)
- Encourage the production of renewable energy from sources compatible with the National Park’s distinctive qualities (Objective 3.2.2)

- Ensure a balanced range of housing that meets local needs (Objective 4.2.1)
 - Ensure the retention of rural services (objective 4.2.2)
 - Enable an integrated transport network which offers an attractive alternative to the car (Objective 4.2.3)
 - Have more young adults and people of working age living in the National Park (Objective 4.3.1).
 - Reduce the impact from commuting out of the National Park or its gateway communities and encourage more home working (objective 4.3.3).
 - Sustain the natural, cultural, social and economic infrastructure of the National Park through its use as a local and regional asset (Objective 5.1.2).
- 4.4. Some of these and other infrastructure ambitions will be delivered by the spending programmes of private, public and charitable sector organisations, as part of their own existing investment plans or specific and projects.
- 4.5. The planning system cannot however rely on the infrastructure required simply materialising in response to developments as and when they happen. Instead, a planned approach is needed so that infrastructure requirements are understood, and a means of addressing shortfalls identified from the outset.
- 4.6. The more specific concern in relation to the Local Plan is therefore whether the development anticipated as a result of the Plan’s policies will give rise to the need for new or improved infrastructure. Further than this, there also needs to be an understanding of whether there is a realistic prospect of any shortfalls being provided for. This in turn will inform the Authority’s approach to deriving developer contributions to help fund infrastructure requirements.

5. Current infrastructure quality and capacity

- 5.1. National planning policy requires the Authority to *“assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure for transport, water supply, wastewater and its treatment, energy (including heat), telecommunications, utilities, waste, health, social care, education and flood risk”*.
- 5.2. Appendix 2 summarises the current baseline position in relation to existing infrastructure in the National Park.
- 5.3. It is unsurprising to find that the National Park’s infrastructure has limitations. This is a legacy of its intrinsic remoteness, which imposes physical limitations on infrastructure deployment, but which also results in small supply markets, making deployment of extensive and advanced infrastructure economically unviable for many providers.
- 5.4. As a result there needs to be a certain amount of realism regarding the potential for significantly improved infrastructure provision in the National Park, while at the same time highlighting and addressing those areas that are a fundamental constraint on the area’s social and economic development.

- 5.5. The key infrastructure issues identified to be inadequate within the National Park are:
- A decline in healthcare services within the National Park and resultant distance to and pressure on medical care facilities in surrounding settlements;
 - Limited public transport provision throughout the Park;
 - Distance to educational facilities;
 - Limited broadband and mobile phone coverage.
- 5.6. The impact of such deficiencies could be mitigated by a number of factors including high car ownership, good public transport, high speed broadband and efficient mobile phone services.
- 5.7. However, whilst car ownership is high and roads in the Park are mostly uncongested, the price of fuel is volatile and the road network is not conducive to rapid movement. Furthermore the improvement of the Park's public transport services remains a key challenge, with uncertainty around future funding.
- 5.8. Broadband and mobile phone services in the National Park remain patchy and poor compared to more populous areas, although the Management Plan 2016-2021 includes a commitment by the Authority to advocate for their improvement (see objective 4.3.3).
- 5.9. The provision of energy is an essential part of infrastructure provision. Nevertheless fuel poverty remains a particular issue affecting communities in the National Park. All properties are off mains gas and 10% of the Park's properties are not connected to the mains electricity supply. The resultant effect of such a high percentage of deficiency is the reliance of many residents and businesses on more expensive fuel sources and less efficient forms of heating.
- 5.10. Perhaps the two biggest overall infrastructure issues will be responding to the growth needs of an ageing population; and overcoming access to services that are increasingly being centralised and moved further away from the Park's residents.

6. Development planned for

- 6.1. The emerging Local Plan for Northumberland National Park has a 20 year timeframe from 2017 - 2037. Its aim is to deliver social and economic objectives for the Park's very rural communities, within the context of a particularly sensitive environment that is protected for its significant landscape, scenic, wildlife and cultural heritage values.

6.2. Overall approach to planning development

- 6.2.1. The government requires that a Local Plan is "positively prepared". This means that it must be able to deliver sustainable development that meets local needs and national priorities.
- 6.2.2. 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.

- 6.2.3. 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.
- 6.2.4. This means that, for the purposes of the infrastructure plan, it is difficult to provide absolute certainty about exactly what amount/type of development will go where and when. Infrastructure providers therefore need to respond to the expected absence of specific land allocations by acquiring a more generic understanding of windfall development trends in the National Park. The overall aim is to allow the Authority to develop an understanding of the strategic infrastructure issues that may arise in relation to expected development resulting from the Local Plan.

6.3. Spatial Portrait & Strategy

- 6.3.1. The National Park is deeply rural in its nature. With a resident population of fewer than 2,000 spread over 1,094 square kilometres, its population density is the lowest in England at 2 persons per square kilometre (ONS).
- 6.3.2. The largest single settlement is Elsdon, located in the east of the National Park, with a population of around 240 across the Parish (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'.
- 6.3.3. The larger 'gateway' settlements, including Bellingham, Haltwhistle, Rothbury and Wooler are more populous, however these towns are predominantly outside the National Park boundary and so only a fraction of their populations are resident within the Park.
- 6.3.4. The current Core Strategy has an overarching spatial approach based on a settlement hierarchy which seeks to ensure that new development will be located within the most sustainable locations. Policy 5 focuses new development, such as housing and new business premises, in the 8 largest local centres, then the smaller villages with Policy 6 advocating a sequential approach to site selection focusing development on previously developed land and sites located adjacent to existing built up settlements.
- 6.3.5. The approach places an expectation that the Local Centres within the Park be the focus for new local needs development. Clearly the National Park has a wide variety of different settlement types, so the spatial strategy requires that any development is of a scale that reflects the character and function of the settlement. It should also not impinge on the special qualities of the National Park.
- 6.3.6. Although much of the National Park's population resides in the Local Centres and smaller villages, the development needs of smaller nucleated hamlets, as well as more isolated farmsteads cannot be ignored. However there is an expectation that particular justification for new development to happen in such locations be given. Consequently, for the purpose of this assessment, the particular focus of infrastructure capacity is around the Local Centres and small villages.

6.4. Baseline

6.4.1. As aforementioned, the emphasis on windfall, as opposed to planned development via land allocation, creates difficulties when predicting development types and rates. That said, the new Local Plan is likely, to continue the approach of the 2009 Local Plan Core Strategy, but with some key differences in approach that are discussed in more detail below. With this in mind, the starting point is development trends during the lifetime of the current policies which have applied between April 2009 and the present day. The table below sets out what planning applications have related to, between 2010 and 2016.

Type of applications	% of applications
Neighbouring Authority Consultations	19.7
Other minor forms of development (commercial alterations and extensions including farm and rural estate buildings / infrastructure and visitor attractions/accommodation, micro-renewable and infrastructure provider developments)	18.6
Householder developments (domestic extensions and alterations)	14.1
Discharge of conditions	12.0
Applications for prior notification of agricultural / forestry development	10.0
Electricity / Telecommunications notifications	6.0
Change of use of existing buildings to new uses (including residential)	5.9
Heritage proposals (predominantly alterations/extensions to listed buildings)	4.6
New housing (Minor, under 10 dwellings)	3.1
Non-material amendments	2.4
Applications to confirm the lawfulness of developments (typically retrospective)	1.1
Quarry / mineral related developments	0.3
Tree Preservation Orders	0.1

6.4.2. This list demonstrates how the Authority receives a small number of a large range of development proposals.

6.4.3. Over the same period, just 1.4% of all applications have been classed as ‘major’¹, those approved being made up of:

- Ministry of Defence Forward Operating Base developments.
- Variations to the Sill (Landscape Discovery Centre) application.
- Development to facilitate timber processing.
- Holiday accommodation.

6.4.4. Clearly, major developments in the National Park are rare, and when they do occur, they seldom raise significant infrastructure issues. Many of these major developments represent ‘one-off’ proposals, often redundant or under-utilised sites that offer the opportunity for redevelopment, sometimes including change of use, or developments in relation to an established business or operation. This is not to say such developments do not raise infrastructure issues, but that they are very much a

¹ 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 (NNPA Core Strategy, 2009)

minority, although classed as major, are towards the very bottom end of the major development spectrum, and rarely involve the development of greenfield sites requiring significant new infrastructure.

- 6.4.5. There is a quite separate concept of major development in national planning policy. This isn't clearly defined in relation to certain thresholds (as in the Development Management Procedure Order), but requires that development that would be of a scale likely to have a lasting harmful impact should be avoided in protected landscapes, other than in exceptional circumstances of national interest. Major development would include very large infrastructure projects such as new reservoirs, roads, high voltage lines, power stations and airports. Whilst the test of major development dates back to the late 1940s it will be observed that almost every National Park in England and Wales has at least one example. The current Local Plan Core Strategy states that '*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.*' (see NNPA Core Strategy 2009 page 23).
- 6.4.6. There are no current proposals for major development on this scale in Northumberland National Park. The likelihood is that future large scale infrastructure such as new roads, high speed railways or upgraded utility networks will tend to locate in the strategic corridors outside the Park. Other infrastructure, for example in relation to the drive to extract more shale gas and oil, will be allowed in protected landscapes only in 'exceptional circumstances'. However, the geology of Northumberland makes hydraulic fracturing or 'fracking' highly unlikely as a recent study has found².
- 6.4.7. Very few planning obligations have been sought in relation to the provision of a specific item of infrastructure required as a result of a development in the National Park. It is relatively common to require developers to undertake certain infrastructure improvements themselves, usually incorporated within approved schemes, rather than secured by a planning obligation. These items are generally predictable and so are incorporated into overall development costs, for example providing accesses and roads to highway standards, mitigation measures to deal with noise, dust and other environmental disturbances, most notably in relation to quarrying and other intensive commercial uses. Far less common are planning obligations requiring a financial contribution to provide for new/upgraded infrastructure in the wider area.
- 6.4.8. It can be seen that the small scale of development typical of the Park does not generally require the provision of significant new infrastructure, to make it acceptable. Whilst the majority of development is unplanned it is at a scale that can be accommodated by the Park's existing infrastructure without overwhelming it. In some cases, development permitted will actually support existing infrastructure, for example a housing development that boosts the viability of a local school with declining pupil numbers. This is however the historic experience, so it is necessary to look at the extent to which the new Local Plan might change this situation. The following section explores the potential implications of proposed potential policy changes on future infrastructure needs.

² From national to frackational: will fracking come to Britain's National Parks? Durham University (March 2015)

6.5. Potential implications of emerging policy options

6.5.1. This Infrastructure Plan has evolved alongside the Local Plan Issues Paper Consultation Draft document (February 2017) and the emerging Policy Options Paper. We have attempted to clarify the likely consequences of the potential options, while accepting that the flexibilities within the proposals make it difficult to be absolutely confident of the outcomes at this early stage.

New employment developments

6.5.2. 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.

Land based business/enterprises

6.5.3. Agriculture and rural land management are a key part of the National Park economy, alongside tourism. The existing Local Plan already encourages diversification of farm enterprises and the new Local Plan could continue this approach. However, there is a likely need for constraint in relation to the proportion of proposals and the effect of development on the existing core land management business, as well as the usual landscape and environmental constraints on development in such a sensitive area. Although it is impossible to predict exactly what forms of development may come forward under such a potential policy option, the scale of proposals would likely to be moderated somewhat by these requirements.

6.5.4. Furthermore, it is likely that proposals could often be absorbed within the existing infrastructure capacity of holdings, or make provision for additional requirements as part of the proposal, often backed up by other statutory requirements such as the Water Framework Directive and attendant regulations.

6.5.5. Some projects may however be outside of mainstream planning control, benefitting from permitted development rights, which limits the Authority's ability to intervene in those particular infrastructure issues.

6.5.6. Any major development of an agricultural nature has the potential to place more exacting diffuse infrastructure demands that are not able to be addressed simply through on-site mitigation. This might include highway safety and capacity considerations, for example through additional vehicle movements to process and deliver feed and transport livestock, together with processing and disposal of additional animal waste. Such proposals would therefore need much greater scrutiny above and beyond site specific factors in order to ensure infrastructure issues are addressed adequately, although it would be anticipated that any issues would be adequately dealt with through planning obligations incumbent on the applicant.

Housing

- 6.5.7. Housing is one of the most infrastructure-intensive development types so is particularly crucial to this study. Evidence of housing need in the National Park is emerging through other evidence base studies, based on population projections and other factors that influence housing demand.
- 6.5.8. Although national policy requires local planning authorities to maintain a rolling housing land supply during the first 5 years of the plan period, it is expected that no such figure will be applied to the Local Plan given the likelihood that the plan will not allocate specific sites for housing development. Instead it is expected that unplanned windfall sites will make up a proportion of future housing supply alongside the provision of housing in larger settlements and sustainable locations just outside the Park boundary, for example in gateway settlements such as Wooler.
- 6.5.9. Going forward, the emerging Local Plan and its housing evidence will allow the Authority to have a clear view on where its housing supply is likely to come from which should be the focus for an initial infrastructure assessment and subsequent reviews later in the plan period.

Extra care residential

- 6.5.10. The population is getting older over time with a total of 23% of the Park's population being over the age of 60 (2011 Census). Although many older people live perfectly healthy and active lives, inevitably there are some who have care and support needs that may not be adequately catered for by mainstream housing.
- 6.5.11. Exact housing needs of the older population will be established through evidence base studies such as the Housing Needs Survey and Strategic Housing Market Assessment. Current county-wide trends signal a potential shift towards "at-home" or "extra" care; self-contained homes with design features and support services to enable self-care and independent living. Some existing residents of the National Park may have elderly residents who would need to move closer to them.
- 6.5.12. Whilst an extra care model could relieve the burden on stretched health and social care services, it may lead to an increase in development proposals like home adaptations/extensions or separate annexes. It is unlikely that there will be new build extra care development within the National Park.

Crushed rock quarrying

- 6.5.13. Quarrying is one of the few continuing forms of large scale development in the Park. It is therefore an area of policy that could potentially have an impact on existing road infrastructure. One of the emerging options for the Local Plan minerals policy is to broadly continue the current approach set out by Core Strategy Policy 23. There may however also be an option to include an approach to safeguard areas of mineral extraction to prevent them from being sterilized by future non-mineral related uses. At this moment in time the full implications for infrastructure provision remain unclear.

Visitor accommodation & attractions

- 6.5.14. The infrastructure requirements of visitors are sometimes forgotten, perhaps because they are transient rather than resident. So for example, mobile phone coverage is poor in the Park perhaps because the operating companies have up to now targeted more densely populated areas and strategic road corridors. Yet in 2014 the National Park attracted 1.69 million visitors which indicates the scale of potential demand.
- 6.5.15. Visitors to the Park and travellers passing through it have an expectancy of mobile phone reception and connection to the internet. Since one of the objectives of the Management Plan is to make the Park more attractive to visitors it should be expected that new development will deliver reasonable broadband connections.
- 6.5.16. The National Park Management Plan also has an objective to increase the overall number of visitors to the National Park (objective 1.2.1). Therefore potential flexibilities around emerging policy options in the Local Plan will aim to achieve an increased and better range of visitor accommodation and facilities in this respect.
- 6.5.17. It is anticipated that the emerging Local Plan policy approach will support the improvement of visitor facilities. This will continue the existing approach that has already led to the approval and construction of the Sill National Landscape Discovery Centre. An emerging policy option could be to explore the opportunities to support the provision of Sill 'satellite' developments in suitable locations to further improve visitor facilities throughout the National Park in accordance with Management Plan objective 1.2.3. There would also be associated implications for public transport provision that will also have to respond to additional visitor demand through increased bus passengers. The Local Plan will support this type of development to help facilitate increased provision but this will be challenging.
- 6.5.18. Additional visitors could also increase use of the footpath, public rights of way and bridleway networks. Outside of certain bottlenecks at certain times of year there seems to be remaining capacity, so it is not anticipated that emerging Local Plan policies could potentially lead to substantial additional infrastructure costs for the public rights of way network³. Increased visitor usage may generate additional revenues e.g. through car parking, that could potentially support improvement of the existing network.
- 6.5.19. Visitors also support infrastructure that is used by residents, e.g. shops, pubs, post offices, recreational facilities and car parks. The emerging Local Plan will support attracting more visitors which should generate more spending in the economy and help maintain infrastructure of use to our local communities.
- 6.5.20. Whilst we have attempted to tease out the potential implication of the emerging policy options it is important to note that at this stage no policies have been finalised. More detailed policies will be included in the draft Local Plan to be published for further public consultation in the summer of 2018.

³ Including bridleways

7. Addressing infrastructure issues

7.1. Planning obligation approach

- 7.1.1. The current Core Strategy does not explicitly use a planning obligation-based approach to gain the necessary infrastructure provision to support new developments. Policy 28 supports the development of projects subject to a number of criteria. This is typically secured through a planning obligation, typically under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act. However, in practice the Authority has struggled to secure a commuted sum payment to enable a third party to address any shortfall, particularly in relation to local needs housing. This is something which we will need to explore with our partners at Northumberland County Council (the Local Housing Authority) to potentially use existing pots of section 106 or CIL money for the provision of infrastructure within the National Park particularly from developments permitted within the gateway settlements and their hinterlands.
- 7.1.2. Where a landowner or developer seeks to make changes to the road network in order to serve a particular development or to implement a planning permission, they are usually required to enter into an agreement with the highway authority make changes. Where it applies to the Strategic Road Network⁴ (SRN), this is usually in the form of an agreement as defined in Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980 (as amended), referred to as a s278 agreement.
- 7.1.3. An emerging policy approach could be to explicitly stipulate that a development should be adequately served by the necessary infrastructure, for the benefit of its own users, and without detriment to other users of pre-existing infrastructure. This would mean that where an infrastructure issue was highlighted, a developer would either need to address this themselves (typically through direct provision of services on or off site), or through a commuted sum payment.
- 7.1.4. The level of contribution required would vary depending on the type of development and its location; however we would take advice from the relevant infrastructure body (Northumberland County Council) on what would be a suitable requirement. Northumberland County Council produced an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (November, 2016). This covered a range of infrastructure types that are the responsibility of the County Council, often with indicative thresholds to show the scale of development that might be expected to make a contribution. However this evidence is not currently available due to the County Council's decision to withdraw their Local Plan Core Strategy from independent examination⁵. For the majority of infrastructure types, the thresholds set significantly exceed the scale of individual development likely to be seen in the National Park.
- 7.1.5. In addition the Government has reduced the ability of Local Planning Authorities to apply planning obligations to some developments and infrastructure projects⁶.

⁴ Motorways and all-purpose trunk roads in England.

⁵ <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/planning%20policy/Core%20strategy/CS-Withdrawal-StatementofWithdrawal.pdf>

⁶ These restrictions only apply to Section 106 planning obligations. Section 278 obligations relate to highway matters (minor highway realignments, roundabouts, traffic signals, turning lanes, passing bays etc) and aren't affected.

Pooling contributions

- 7.1.6. From April 2015, financial contributions to fund larger strategic infrastructure items cannot be pooled over more than 5 separate Section 106 agreements. Since the Authority's proposed approach is to continue to use Section 106 agreements to derive financial contributions from developers, it needs to be confident that being restricted to limited pooling won't compromise its ability to address any key infrastructure gaps.
- 7.1.7. So in engaging with those bodies and organisations responsible for infrastructure provision, we would like to understand whether there are any larger scale or cumulative infrastructure projects where this restriction might cause a problem. This will depend partly on the nature of the infrastructure project itself, but also on the degree to which there is reliance of developer contributions to finance it, as opposed to other sources of match funding.

Small housing developments

- 7.1.8. In November 2014 the Government announced that, on small housing developments, it should no longer be possible to derive tariff-style developer contributions towards general infrastructure funding pots. In the National Park, this means that on housing sites of 1-5 units, Section 106 agreements may only require financial contributions for site-specific infrastructure items. Since then this policy has been challenged and overturned. It has then since been reinstated after a successful appeal by the government. However, some ambiguity still remains surrounding its exact practical application with Planning Inspectors making decisions where specific local policies or circumstances were given priority over the ministerial statement⁷.
- 7.1.9. This represents an additional restriction, specific to housing developments, above and beyond the general pooling restriction set out above. It will be important therefore to look closely at the degree to which the National Park's housing supply is likely to be derived from smaller housing sites, and whether this is likely to give rise to a funding gap given the Authority's inability to require payments for cumulative or combined infrastructure projects.

⁷ <http://plan.scambs.gov.uk/swifftlg/MediaTemp/1134420-658589.pdf>

7.2 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

7.2.1. The alternative to a planning obligation-based approach is the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). CIL is a tariff-based charging system payable by specified developments on a £/square metre floorspace basis. Payments derived from CIL are pooled in a general infrastructure pot and committed to specified projects that have been identified through an infrastructure plan. Not all developments are liable to pay CIL. Most notably, exempt developments include:

- minor new build developments (excluding dwellings) where the floorspace created is less than 100 square metres;
- social housing – developments of social housing by charitable registered providers;
- changes of use of buildings or land where the building/land already has a lawful use;
- new build developments involving demolition or change of use of existing buildings – these developments are charged according to net additional floorspace i.e. the gross floorspace of the development minus the floorspace of pre-existing buildings. Mezzanine or new floors created within existing buildings are exempt;
- buildings that people don't ordinarily enter, or only enter intermittently (e.g. to inspect fixed plant or machinery). While this could potentially make agricultural buildings liable, most charging authorities are taking the view that agricultural buildings should not be liable.
- structures which are not buildings (e.g. roads, pylons, turbines). Includes caravans and lodges within the statutory definition of caravan.

7.2.2. These exemptions form part of the Authority's reasoning for continuing the current Local Plan approach and not pursuing a Community Infrastructure Levy. It is only possible to crudely analyse development trends in the National Park to assess the degree to which CIL would be applied, but the general message is clear in that few development proposals in the previous 5 year period would have been liable to make a CIL contribution, by virtue of type of application (e.g. householder development, other minor development, discharge of conditions etc.).

7.2.3. The main types of development where the Authority could charge CIL are:

- Larger (>100 sq m) commercial new build developments (light industrial/workshops/manufacturing proposals) – these proposals are rare in the National Park;
- Dwellings – CIL is chargeable even on single dwelling proposals, as opposed to the recently announced restrictions on the use of Section 106 agreements for general infrastructure items on developments of 5 or less. This is where charging CIL might make more sense for the Authority, were it not for the fact that the Authority's housing strategy is primarily driven by an attempt to boost the supply of housing for local needs through a combination of affordability requirements and occupancy restrictions.
- Social housing is exempt from CIL levies, however the main purpose of any residual market housing permitted is to cross-subsidise delivery of the affordable element. So a CIL requirement would leave greater reliance on accessing public money to provide affordable housing which, at a time when public finances are squeezed and rural communities are under threat, represents a significant risk.
- Minerals – it is considered that CIL is too crude a tool to derive developer contributions for mineral-related development. The applications received are few and far between. Issues are generally specific to the particular circumstances of individual quarries so that specific mitigation and provisions can be more suitably negotiated on a case by case basis via planning obligations.

- 7.2.4. In overall terms it is considered that CIL is essentially a strategic tool for resolving infrastructure issues. It allows a planned release of money to cover infrastructure issues often spread over multiple agreements. In the National Park, infrastructure issues are thought to be far more specific to individual developments, but may, on occasion, warrant pooling within the specified restrictions so will more likely be dealt through s106 agreements rather than the application of CIL.
- 7.2.5. Further, although we will not likely be charging a Community Infrastructure Levy on new development, we will be contacting infrastructure providers to assess capacity issues so that we can anticipate where developments, individually or cumulatively, might give rise to the need for improvements. If we become aware of the potential of any serious or recurrent infrastructure shortfalls, we will review our approach to CIL in the National Park. We will also explore with the County Council the potential for using existing pots of section 106 or CIL money for the provision of infrastructure within the National Park particularly from developments permitted within the gateway settlements and their hinterlands.

8. Conclusions

8.1 At the beginning of the new Local Plan period in 2017 the National Park has some fundamental infrastructure deficiencies, most of which are historic and indicative of its very low population density, socio-economic profile and its avoidance by strategic infrastructure corridors. Public transport and telecommunications services are recognised barriers for residents and workers in the National Park. Furthermore, an ageing population is making it increasingly difficult for education and health services to operate viably and the loss or threatened loss of such facilities is exacerbated by the physical distance to urban centres outside of the National Park.

8.2 Reliance on the private car can have a damaging environmental impact and high fuel costs and poor road quality is a significant barrier for car owners. Although increasing the use of electric vehicles is a national priority, the inadequacy of charging points within and around the National Park would be merely a single factor which could slow local uptake. Whilst many, particularly urban, areas of the country suffer from overpopulation, road congestion and water shortages, the National Park has infrastructure capacity in these areas. In some other forms of infrastructure, such as access to green spaces, open countryside or public rights of way, it has overwhelming capacity.

8.3 Although the level of additional development predicted during the Local Plan period is likely to be modest and spread thinly compared to most other local authority areas and even other National Parks, it is difficult to project exact numbers of units or floor space that can be expected. This is by reason of the new Local Plan continuing the current approach to planning for all future development coming forward as windfall, as opposed to setting targets and allocating sites for particular uses.

8.4 Providing the necessary infrastructure to support new developments will therefore be largely based on site specific proposals with the occasional pooling of funding, where possible and appropriate. This approach does however have its limitations and there will need to be a high level of engagement throughout the planning process with the key infrastructure bodies and organisations identified in appendix 1.

Appendix 1 – Key infrastructure bodies and organisations

Infrastructure theme	Body/organisation
TRANSPORT	
Roads & car-related	Northumberland County Council NNPA Parish Councils responsible for car parks Highways England
Bus services	County Councils (subsidised services) Bus operators (commercial & subsidised services)
UTILITIES	
Water supply	Northumbrian Water Ltd Private suppliers
Wastewater & sewage	Northumbrian Water Ltd
Energy & heat	Northern Powergrid National Grid
Telecommunications	BT Openreach County Council (broadband rollout) Mobile Operators Association
Waste & recycling	Northumberland County Council
HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELLBEING	
Health	Clinical Commissioning Groups
Social care	Northumberland County Council
Emergency services	Ambulance Trusts Northumbria Police and Fire & Rescue NNP Mountain Rescue services
Community meeting places	Parish Councils, Town/Village Hall Trusts/Management Committees
Education	County Council Independent Schools
Shops, Post Offices & Banks	Parish Councils Business Associations Chambers of Commerce
Other cultural facilities and services	NNPA Museum Trusts
Sport, recreation & open space	Leisure Trusts Sport England Northumberland County Council
OTHER	
Flood risk	Environment Agency County Councils
Green infrastructure	Natural England Local Nature Partnerships NNPA Northumberland County Council

Appendix 2 – Overview of existing infrastructure quality & capacity

	Existing Infrastructure	Quality and Capacity
TRANSPORT		
Roads & car-related	<p>Roads: At its periphery, Northumberland National Park is served with two National Primary Routes. The A697 provides a link between the northernmost area of the Park and key urban centres of Northumberland County (including Morpeth, Ashington and Blyth) and Newcastle. Similarly the A696 serves as a connection between these areas of Northumberland, Newcastle and Gateshead, and the central areas of the National Park. This route links to the arterial A68 road stretching diagonally through the centre of the park; north/eastwards to Edinburgh and south/westwards to Corbridge.</p> <p>The road network supporting the southern area of the National Park benefits from the A69, which forms part of the County's Strategic Road Network; providing vital connectivity with Cumbria and North-west England. All of these roads stem from the A1, as the main trunk road in the region.</p> <p>Notable subsidiary B-roads include the B6351 (forms the northern most Park boundary from Akeld to Mindrum); B6341 (Alnwick to Otterburn); B6320 (Otterburn to Chollerford); B6318 (Military Road from Heddon on the Wall to Langholm). An extensive network of 'C' and 'U' roads is also present in the National Park.</p> <p>There are also a number of private roads throughout the National Park, the maintenance of which is the responsibility of the respective land owner.</p> <p>Fuel stations / electric vehicle charging: There are no petrol filling stations within the National Park. Immediately outside the park boundary, the A68 is served with a filling station at Byrness. The reopening of Kielder filling station in 2012 has represented an important facility for residents and</p>	<p>Roads: For National Park residents, the road network is essential for accessing local centres within the Park and key services beyond the Park boundary. This reliance is reflected in high levels of car availability in Northumberland National Park, with 94% of households having access to one or more cars (ONS, 2011), the highest across all English National Parks. Furthermore, most visitors - 88% (SOTPR, 2015) use a car to get to the National Park.</p> <p>The network is considered to be generally adequate; nonetheless it is understandably constrained by the topography of the area and National Park designation, making significant upgrades problematic. Even so, at peak times when the network is subjected to additional pressures from visitor traffic it copes relatively well. The more significant pinch points being where significant volumes of visitor traffic have to be accommodated on lesser B, C and U roads.</p> <p>Although issues with maintenance and winter treatment are encountered from time to time, these are generally short term. At a site-specific scale, improvements to, or the creation of new accesses are a commonplace part of development proposals, particularly given the limited width and visibility associated with many carriageways in the Park. Traffic calming measures may also be required in association with significant journey generating developments. Significant journey-generating developments will be required to provide a full Transport Assessment and Travel Plan to assess their impact on, and identify mitigating measures for, the highway network.</p> <p>The County Council produces an Infrastructure Delivery Plan that includes proposals of how the highway network will be managed and improved. This document does not set out any significant planned capital investment schemes for the National Park, but routine maintenance and targeted improvements will still take place.</p>

	Existing Infrastructure	Quality and Capacity
	<p>visitors alike.</p> <p>The only other petrol filling stations available to vehicle users within the National Park are those in the gateway settlements of Bellingham, Rothbury and Wooler, some distance from parts of the Park.</p> <p>There is a network of 12 electric vehicle charging points at 8 locations around the National Park: Alwinton, Catcleugh, Ingram, Falstone, Stannersburn and at three car parks along the Military Road (Walltown, Cawfields and Housesteads). The facilities at Alwinton, Cawfields and Housesteads car parks are currently out of service (August 2016). Most of the gateway settlements provide electric vehicle charging facilities however some of these are also currently out of service.</p> <p>Car parking: There are a number of formal public car / coach parks in the park which vary in size and capacity. Notable parking facilities are located at: Ingram (x2), Alwinton, Brocolitia, Bulby's Wood, Cawfields Quarry, College Valley Hillforts, Housesteads, Lordenshaws Hillfort, Steel Rigg, Walltown Quarry and Wedder Leap. Other smaller car parks can also be found, for example, in Falstone, Greystead and Harbottle.</p>	<p>Furthermore, ongoing and planned upgrades to the A69 and A1 would improve capacity on approaches to the Park (Infrastructure Delivery Plan, NCC, June 2016).</p> <p>Car parking: Car parks in the National Park, especially those serving the key visitor attractions along Hadrian's Wall, are prone to capacity issues at peak times. Road side parking has been a particular problem, particularly at Housesteads however an extension to this car park was completed in 2016. Road side verge management at Steel Rigg has also been implemented alongside management of an overflow car park.</p> <p>A review of the charging structure for car parks run by the Authority is being undertaken to ensure income generation which allows for cost-neutral provision and maintenance of recreational sites across the Park.</p>
Railways	<p>There are no railway services in operation within the National Park however the Tyne Valley line between Newcastle and Carlisle (operated by Northern Rail) can be used in conjunction with the seasonal AD122 bus service for accessing key sites along Hadrian's Wall. In particular, stops at Haltwhistle and Hexham allow for a transition from rail to the bus service.</p>	<p>Train services around the National Park are largely outwith the Authority's control and investment in the Tyne Valley line has been limited in recent years. However, an emerging policy in the County Council's Core Strategy seeks to safeguard rail infrastructure for passenger use. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan for the county demonstrates engagement between the County Council and the Northern Rail Franchise operator and identifies a need to increase frequency on the Tyne Valley line.</p>

	Existing Infrastructure	Quality and Capacity
Bus services	The Hadrian's Wall corridor is served by a seasonal bus service (AD122) which is run by Go Northeast and subsidised by the National Park Authority. This service operates from the end of March until the end of September.	The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) highlights the need to promote more sustainable modes of transport, of which public transport plays a key role. In such a rural context as the National Park however, it is not always feasible to offer options for sustainable travel. Bus services have been under increased threat, although a reduced Hadrian's Wall Bus service has been retained and Spirit Buses have been established in Coquetdale. Bus services are also often outwith the Authority's control, however the Authority continues to subsidise the AD122 service.
UTILITIES		
Water supply	<p>Northumbrian Water is the main water supplier throughout the National Park. This supply area is served in part by the Kielder Water Resource Zone (KWRZ), and also by the Berwick and Fowberry WRZ in the north of the National Park.</p> <p>Mains water supply is available across much of the National Park, however some individual properties or small groups of properties in the National Park are served by private spring water supplies.</p> <p>The County Council maintains a public register of those properties served by private water supplies and applies the Private Water Supply Regulations to ensure the supply is suitable.</p>	<p>Northumbrian Water prepares and maintains a Water Resources Management Plan to show how the balance between supply and demand will be maintained over the next 25 years. Rolling investment programmes by the body have seen a number of improvements made or planned to the supply of water in the Park.</p> <p>Included in the Northumberland IDP (June 2016), the five-year period from 2016 – 2020 will see a programme to refurbish and better maintain each borehole in the WRZ undertaken. This work will improve the output of each source and improve the resilience of the WRZ which will benefit properties in the National Park served by this supply. The IDP recognises that the Kielder WRZ will be in surplus by 2040. Moreover, the anticipated scale of development within the National Park over the next 20 years would likely place no requirement to plan for additional water resource to supply new development.</p> <p>Perhaps most vulnerable are those properties with a limited private supply, particularly in the event that infrastructure fails and proves costly to repair, or where water supply is unreliable, particularly in dry weather, which may worsen as a result of climate change.</p>

	Existing Infrastructure	Quality and Capacity
Wastewater and sewage	<p>Mains waste (foul sewage or grey water) and rain water disposal from individual properties in the National Park is the responsibility of Northumbrian Water. Public sewer networks and wastewater treatment facilities are currently operational in eight of the National Park's Local Centres and smaller villages.</p> <p>Rainwater runoff from highways is the responsibility of the County Council as the Highways Authority.</p> <p>Many more isolated properties, and in some cases whole settlements, are reliant on non-mains drainage by virtue of being remote from the mains network. These facilities for foul drainage are typically septic tanks or package treatment works.</p> <p>For surface water, soakaways or drains into watercourses predominate. There are known surface water flooding issues in parts of the National Park, often associated with topography and exacerbated by poor drainage, with particular concentrations where surface water is drained along highways and tracks.</p>	<p>Northumbrian Water operates 171 wastewater treatment works within the Northumberland area, of which eight facilities are identified in the Local Centres and smaller villages of the National Park. Currently there are no known capacity issues in these areas of the National Park. NNPA awaits the conclusions of further assessments of these facilities being undertaken by Northumbrian Water.</p> <p>There is a general presumption in favour of connecting to a public sewer for foul sewage unless there are clear reasons why this is not possible. The network is such that connection is possible in most key settlements in the park however outlying and isolated settlements are often forced to rely on non-mains solutions. Where there are capacity issues with non-mains drainage, this can pose a significant environmental threat should facilities become overloaded (for example this can be of high risk during peak times at caravan sites).</p> <p>It is noted that water companies are funded in five-yearly investment cycles which could limit their ability to respond quickly to windfall developments. This reiterates the importance of engaging with Northumbrian Water to assess infrastructure requirements on a case by case basis throughout the planning process to limit the impact of additional development on small wastewater treatment works.</p> <p>It is predicted that water drainage provisions will be developed on a case by case basis. Utilities companies have in recent years increasingly sought to discourage drainage of surface water into public sewers, even where available, due to capacity issues and the risk of flooding as a result of severe rainfall events. Since April 2015, changes to national planning policy have placed requirements on all major applications to provide Sustainable Drainage Systems.</p>

	Existing Infrastructure	Quality and Capacity
Energy and heat	<p>Gas: All properties within the National Park are off mains gas. Use of electricity to provide heating and cooking facilities is more prevalent, however many properties are also dependent on oil, LPG or solid fuels.</p> <p>Electricity: Electricity distribution across the park is undertaken by Northern Powergrid. The network consists of low voltage 240V overhead lines with some higher voltage (20 - 24kV) lines entering the Park at its periphery. 10% of properties are however off-grid and dependent on alternative sources such as generators run on fuel.</p> <p>Renewables: A variety of micro-renewable technologies have been deployed in the Park, the most popular being solar. Deployment of even small scale wind turbines can be problematical in the rural context, but many have been supported, with proposals for hydro and air/ground source heat also received in recent years.</p>	<p>Gas: Relative high costs of non-fixed energy resources, often combined with energy inefficient traditional buildings, makes fuel poverty an issue in the National Park. This has, in part, led to increasing interest in renewable technologies.</p> <p>Electricity: Northern Powergrid is continually investing in the electricity network to make improvements. In the National Park this has particularly centred on mitigating the impact of overhead cables on the protected landscape, notably through undergrounding. Government funding has been made available in recent years enabling the National Park Authority to work with Northern Powergrid to facilitate undergrounding or other mitigation measures in a number of prioritised locations. To date, six undergrounding schemes (totalling 4465m of cable) have been completed, with the remaining ten projects anticipated to be delivered by 2017.</p> <p>New developments that require new connections to the distribution network will need to meet the relevant costs, which vary according to distance from the network and associated building and electrical operations.</p> <p>Renewables: Although the majority of renewable and low carbon energy technologies in the Park are deployed at the level of single properties to supplement conventional power sources, there remains some capacity for more significant schemes without conflict with the Park's special qualities.</p>
Telecommunications	<p>Fixed telephony: BT Openreach manage the fixed telephony infrastructure within the Park. The network is extensive and serves the vast majority of domestic and commercial premises.</p> <p>Broadband: In 2011 80% of households had internet access with 71% having broadband access. Only 29% of residential internet users have a broadband speed greater than 2Mbs. The iNorthumberland scheme, being delivered by the County Council is progressing in its ambition to provide internet speeds in excess of 24Mbps to 95% of the county by the end</p>	<p>Fixed telephony: While the network is, in places, ageing and prone to faults, it is generally adequate for basic telephony needs.</p> <p>Broadband: Broadband is a vital resource given the limitations of mobile communications connectivity (see below). Despite the County-wide project to connect over 95% of properties, the reality is that 63% of National Park properties could remain deprived of reliable internet access.</p> <p>Mobile phone & communications: There remain large areas that have no mobile reception coverage whatsoever, or where services are</p>

	Existing Infrastructure	Quality and Capacity
	<p>2017. The first phase of the project saw 36% of properties in the National Park connected with only a further 1% due to be included in the second tranche of the roll-out.</p> <p>Mobile phone & communications: Mobile phone transmitters are located in various locations across the Park, the majority of which are operated by Vodafone, O2 and EE. Some of these sites are shared between the mobile companies, or with BT/Radio/Television masts, however mobile reception is variable.</p> <p>There are also currently 11 phone boxes within the National Park with a further 3 just outside the boundary.</p>	<p>patchy or limited to 2G functionality. The Government-backed Mobile Infrastructure Project and an accord between the Mobile Operators Association and National Parks England signed in 2014 will see significant mobile reception improvements over the coming years. Details of delivering these improvements have yet to be identified in operator rollout plans.</p> <p>National Parks England is also collaborating with the Home Office to rollout a programme which explores the possibility of sharing masts / sites within the emergency service network to broaden mobile coverage. The aim is to develop an efficient mobile network which will benefit visitors, residents and businesses operating in National Parks while minimising adverse landscape effects and ensuring commercial viability for mobile operators. Northumberland National Park Authority will engage with the Home Office and its Delivery Partners through pre-application discussions to identify potential new telecommunications sites.</p> <p>There is currently an element of uncertainty around the future operation of most of the phone boxes in the National Park.</p>
Waste and recycling	<p>There remain no operational landfill / waste processing sites in the National Park, whether household or municipal. There are 6 historic sites, with notable historic landfill facilities in Elsdon used until 1974 and Great Tosson used until 1988 (Environment Agency).</p> <p>Recycling and household waste disposal sites are limited to small scale glass/paper etc banks usually in the larger villages of the Park. Larger household waste sites are only available in gateway settlements outside of the National Park.</p> <p>It is believed that the vast majority of organic agricultural</p>	<p>The North East Model of Waste Arisings and Waste Management Capacity report (July 2012) did not identify the need for any additional disposal sites within the National Park. In summary the report identified that, to 2030, recycling facility capacity across the region is considered significant with a potential concentration of capacity in Northumberland (and County Durham). Regional capacity for hazardous waste is also considerable (with a significant concentration in Tees Valley). It did however identify the need to develop regional non-hazardous landfill capacity further.</p> <p>Although since December 2013 Site Waste Management Plans (SWMP) are no longer compulsory for developments in England, these documents are still a useful tool to assist in reducing the amount of waste and increasing the amount of recycling associated with a development scheme. The production of a SWMP will continue to be encouraged in relation to significant waste generating developments.</p>

	Existing Infrastructure	Quality and Capacity
	waste continues to be processed on farm holdings through spreading practices.	A potential increase in the diversification of agricultural activity may lead to a reduction in the amount of agricultural waste although this could be balanced against any increases as a result of some agricultural waste becoming “controlled waste”.
HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELLBEING		
Health and social care	<p>GP services: GP services are currently provided in only one location within the National Park (Harbottle - the future of this practice is however uncertain). Residents of all other settlements within the Park are reliant on services provided outside of the Park, in some cases up to 12 miles away. The Local Facilities Survey at appendix 3 of this report includes a snapshot of GP provision available for each of the main settlements.</p> <p>Dental services: There are no dental practices which operate in the National Park.</p> <p>Social care: Adult social care is predominantly delivered through the County Council through partnership agreements with NHS Trusts. Provision is supported by the voluntary sector and some private business.</p>	<p>As with all the County Council’s budgets, health and social care is facing significant financial strain. This places greater emphasis on capacity building through prevention, rehabilitation and resilience, which is promoted through the joint health and wellbeing strategies of partnerships of health-related bodies.</p> <p>The County Council’s IDP (2016) recognises that there are likely to be fewer opportunities or the need for significant capital investments in built infrastructure for health and social care across the county. There is also likely to be a focus on seeking to optimise space utilisation, flexibility and efficiency.</p> <p>The ageing population remains a huge long term challenge for the National Park however, made all the worse by remoteness and the general nature of the housing stock. This is likely to put pressure on both healthcare and social care services.</p> <p>GP services: A Private Members Bill was introduced to Parliament in October 2014 to seek the establishment of a strategic fund to support rural practices threatened by withdrawal of MPIG, but as things stand, the remaining surgery in the National Park faces an uncertain future in light of the difficulty in finding commercially viable business models in rural areas.</p> <p>Dental services: As a result of the absence of any dental practices in the Park, access to non-private and private dental care is poor and involves lengthy journeys for many.</p>

	Existing Infrastructure	Quality and Capacity
Emergency services	<p>All police stations, fire stations (both retained and crewed) and ambulance / non-emergency patient transport which serve the National Park are based outside of its boundary with the gateway settlements of Bellingham, Rothbury and Wooler each having access to all three facilities. Haltwhistle is serviced with an ambulance and fire station but lacks a police station.</p> <p>The Northumberland National Park Mountain Rescue Service, provided under the North East Search and Rescue Association, provides a specialist emergency service, trained to carry out search and rescue in the most remote locations.</p>	<p>Police: The National Park is a safe place to live, with generally low levels of crime and anti social behaviour. Rural theft, especially from farms, wildlife crime and heritage crime do still cause problems and often demand a specialist response from the Police and other agencies.</p> <p>Given the huge geographical area, there is increasing reliance on Community Safety Partnerships in taking a strategic and multiagency approach to tackling rural crime and anti social behaviour.</p> <p>Fire: Biggest fire risks in the National Park come from moorland fires during prolonged dry spells, often initiated when managed burning gets out of control or where campfires and barbecues get out of control. Industrial fires are rare given the lack of such premises, but agricultural holdings also present a degree of risk. Reliance on retained crews is believed to be generally adequate for the scale of incident typically encountered in the National Park, but does result in a limited capacity to respond to larger scale incident. Given the remoteness of many properties, and the fact that incidents may coincide with particularly challenging weather conditions (most notably in times of flood where key roads are cut off), this results in a degree of vulnerability for the Park's communities.</p> <p>Ambulance: A recent increase in ambulance response times across the county has affected the rural north in particular. It is clear that response times can be compromised when multiple incidents occur or when geographical spread make logistics more difficult. The Air Ambulance service is better equipped to respond to severe incidents in remote locations in the Park and has become essential to emergency responses. However this service is a charity. It relies on donations and strong relationships, including the secondment of paramedics, from the core ambulance services. Both services are well established but remain vulnerable to a dip in public support or lack of resources in the core Ambulance services.</p>

	Existing Infrastructure	Quality and Capacity
		<p>Mountain Rescue: The Northumberland National Park Mountain Rescue service is operated on a voluntary and charitable basis, but still maintains an excellent and highly valued service. They are however in a similar position to the Air Ambulances and vulnerable to a dip in public support through donations.</p>
Community meeting places	<p>9 settlements in the National Park benefit from a meeting place, typically a village/town hall, institute or reading room. These are located at Byrness, Elsdon, Harbottle, Falstone, Lanehead, Kirknewton, Rochester, Ingram and Stonehaugh.</p> <p>8 settlements in the National Park (including those split by the boundary) are served by at least one place of worship, including Church of England or Methodist, and United Reform denominations.</p>	<p>These facilities vary greatly in scale and facilities but are generally commensurate with the size of the settlement/community they serve. Most of the smaller facilities are limited to simple single room meeting spaces, usually with associated catering facilities, but others incorporate stages for productions, indoor sports facilities (bowls/badminton etc), subsidiary meeting rooms etc. They typically date from the mid-19th to mid-20th century and so most need a rolling programme of investment in repair and upgrading, in particular as regards energy efficiency and disabled access, which can act to limit the use they are put to. A range of grants and incentives have been available which continue to enable improvements.</p> <p>There has been a long term trend of slow but continued contraction in the number of active places of worship in the National Park in line with generally smaller active faith congregations. Many do however continue to thrive despite these pressures and some have diversified into occasional alternative uses to support viability.</p>
Education	<p>Early years: Early years childcare provision in the Park consists of various services including childminders (largely based at their home address); nursery groups which are generally provided in conjunction with, or adjacent to first school sites; and play groups provided in other multi-use meeting places notably village halls.</p> <p>Primary/First School: The only school facilities available in the National Park are at a first school level, of which there are 2 (located at Harbottle and Greenhaugh). Most other settlements are served with a first school facility within the Parish, outside of the Park boundary with notable facility at, Branton Community First School.</p> <p>Secondary/Middle School: No secondary / middle schools</p>	<p>Primary/First School: There is currently a net capacity of around 77 school places available at the two first schools within the National Park and in 2015, 56 of these were filled (73%).</p> <p>The viability of many rural schools is dependent on the funding allocated to them by the County Council according to a national formula. This formula includes provision for a basic lump sum, and also a 'scarcity factor', to ensure small rural schools are not prejudiced by a purely pupil-led approach to funding. The school funding formula continues to be reviewed year on year so this is a rapidly changing picture.</p> <p>Given the unavailability of secondary education or college education anywhere within the Park, long travel distances mean there is a need for suitable transport options. The withdrawal of subsidised transport</p>

	Existing Infrastructure	Quality and Capacity
	exist within the National Park.	for children of 6 th form age travelling to sixth form courses has placed significant financial burdens onto the families of young adults.
Shops, Post offices & Banks	<p>Post office: There are 3 fixed post office services within/immediately adjacent to National Park. These are located at Falstone, Holystone and Kirkwhelpington.</p> <p>Shopping: The National Park is well served by online supermarket delivery, with all Local Centres having access to at least one supermarket delivery service. However, the nearest large supermarkets and comparison shops are located far outside the Park or some distance beyond. Some settlements do have access to a mobile van and other services available to some, but not all, settlements, include a milk man, grocer, fish van, butcher, baker and Ringtons. The Local Facilities Survey, updated in 2016, provides an overview of the shopping facilities available to each Local Centre.</p> <p>Banking: No banks or ATM machines are situated within the National Park.</p>	<p>Post office: The Post Office has made a commitment to maintain the number of branches nationally at around its current level and also has a £20m programme of investment in branches that are the last retail outlet in their community so that sub-postmasters can develop and sustain the business.</p> <p>Although Local Plan policies seek to protect community facilities, including commercial ones that provide a crucial public service, the Use Classes Order and associated permitted development rights mean that preventing the loss of bank and post office branches to alternative uses is not always possible.</p> <p>There is the potential that anticipated higher numbers of visitors to the National Park will benefit the local economy and support the retention of community services and facilities.</p>
Other cultural facilities and services	<p>Library: Mobile library facilities are more commonplace than fixed services in the National Park. The majority of settlements have access to the bi-weekly mobile service run by Active Northumberland.</p> <p>Museums: There are 3 museums in the National Park, all located along the Hadrian's Wall corridor and centred on promoting an understanding of local cultural heritage. These include Carvoran Roman Army Museum, Housesteads Roman Fort and Museum and Vindolanda Roman Fort. Other notable museums outside of the National Park include Chesters Roman Form and Museum, The Heritage Centre at</p>	<p>Library: Although most settlements in the National Park have access to the mobile library service, this facility has its limitations in that it does not allow for flexible visiting hours. Home Library Services are offered by the County Council on request but this relies on a network of volunteers.</p> <p>Museums: Most museums, whether public sector, private or voluntary basis, are subject to financial pressure, but the quality of their offer remains very high.</p>

	Existing Infrastructure	Quality and Capacity
	<p>Bellingham, Hexham Moothall and Gallery, Hexham Old Gaol, the Fenton Centre, Wooler, Mr George’s Museum of Time and Tower Knowe Visitor Centre.</p> <p>Local culture Performance venues are typically local community meeting places like village halls. Celebrations of local culture, food and art, are the focus of Local Shows hosted annually in a number of villages throughout the park, for example, Alwinton, Falstone and Harbottle.</p> <p>There are also a number of informal exhibition / event spaces in the National Park, such as a small open air amphitheatre at Rochester and facilities for temporary exhibitions at Walltown.</p>	<p>Local culture Local shows are generally well established, popular and attract a high standard of contributors.</p>
Sport, recreation & open space	<p>There is no formal public leisure centre to speak of in the Park. For the most part, built facilities comprise village halls or school related facilities that are available for varying levels of public use, often by hire arrangements.</p> <p>There are around 6 town or village halls in the National Park (including settlements split by its boundaries). In all but the larger settlements these are modest facilities providing limited scope for sports activities, and are generally regarded more as communal meeting places. They vary in age, size and condition, but very few are modern constructions.</p> <p>School facilities within the Park are limited in the extent to which they can be shared by the community.</p> <p>The National Park has an abundance of open space, however the vast majority is in private ownership, typically land managed for agriculture and shooting. This is still an invaluable recreational resource, however activities are confined to rights of way (a mixture of walking, cycling, horse riding, but also off road vehicles on certain routes), although in areas of open upland, there is open access across large swathes (75% of the National Park) of moorland and fell,</p>	<p>The National Park’s communities are largely reliant on settlements beyond the Park boundary for formal leisure facilities.</p> <p>A separate study of sport and recreation facilities, their supply, quality and demand for improved, new facilities is being undertaken in fulfilment of national policy requirements. This will supplement the Infrastructure Plan as part of the final evidence base for the Local Plan.</p> <p>The National Park is well served by Green Infrastructure (see section below), albeit there are improvements to be made in terms of connectivity and multi-functionality.</p>

	Existing Infrastructure	Quality and Capacity
	<p>subject to use restrictions imposed by the CROW Act. This provides an abundance of semi-natural green space, albeit usually not well connected to population centres.</p> <p>Within settlements, the majority of open space would fall into the category of ‘amenity greenspace’, generally village greens. Semi natural greenspaces are occasionally found within settlements too. Most village greens will accommodate some form of young people’s provision, although this is generally confined to basic playground provision. These spaces are typically managed by Parish Councils, with some managed directly by the County Council.</p> <p>Picnic facilities are often provided at car parking sites throughout the Park with public toilets available in most of the local centres.</p> <p>There is one registered Park and Garden within the National Park itself.</p> <p>Cemeteries are few and far between, with a clear predominance of conventional graveyards associated with individual places of worship, of which there is typically one in each village.</p> <p>Allotments are again limited, with just a handful in the Park, which are small in scale.</p>	
OTHER		
Flood risk	<p>Of the key settlements in the National Park, Elsdon, Falstone and Holystone have previously been identified at risk of flooding. The built area of Elsdon is however only partially within flood zones 2 and 3 and does not have any flood defence infrastructure. In Falstone, the majority of the area lies within zones 2 and 3 and defences have been installed to provide Standard of Protection (SOP) of up to 25 years. Defences are also located near Holystone and in Westnewton in the north of the park.</p>	<p>A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the National Park is being undertaken which will inform the identification and assessment of broad locations in the Local Plan’s settlement hierarchy. Historically, the Park has been affected by flooding in a number of locations. Most common events have been surface water (flash) flooding due to the steep topography and low permeability soils.</p> <p>In 2009, the Environment Agency produced Catchment Flood Management Plans, three of which covered areas of the National Park.</p>

	Existing Infrastructure	Quality and Capacity
	<p>The risk from flooding in other areas of the Park is generally low with the majority of settlements lying within floodzone 1. (NNPA Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, 2007/08)</p> <p>Aside from hard engineered defences, the National Park Authority embraces other alternative flood risk mitigation measures.</p>	<p>The CFMPs identify a broad policy approach for long-term (50-100 years) sustainable flood risk management.</p> <p>The reports propose a varied approach across the sub-areas that overlap the National Park but broadly conclude that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short lead times mean that emergency response and raising flood awareness are important to manage risk to people and property. • Level of spending on river maintenance needs to be proportionate to flood/economic risk in the local area. • Where feasible and identified as appropriate, identify opportunities to allow the river system to operate naturally and encourage biodiversity. <p>A hard engineered response to flood risk is unlikely to be justifiable or appropriate, so the emphasis will remain on managing risks in less infrastructure-intensive ways, notably through reducing run-off and allowing flood water storage.</p> <p>The County Council is the lead local flood risk body and will be setting out more detail responses to flood risk issues through its plans and strategies.</p>
Green Infrastructure	<p>Green infrastructure embraces a range of open spaces (including village greens, cemeteries, allotments, sport pitches), parks, woodlands, waterways, play areas, and recreational footpaths/bridleways. The idea is that it provides multiple benefits by virtue of being multi-functional. It originated as an urban concept, but has a rural dimension too.</p> <p>750 square kilometres (75% of the National Park area) is Open Access land, much of this also being nationally or internationally designated for wildlife importance. The remainder of the National Park, while not having open access, is very accessible via a well maintained public right of way network, including 707km of public footpath, 422km of public bridleway, 38 km of byway open to all traffic and 50km</p>	<p>As a very rural area of upland and pastoral farmland, the National Park is naturally very 'green' and benefits from protection through a number of designations and statutory measures. It is also very accessible.</p> <p>Nonetheless, the green infrastructure concept is centred on multi-functionality and connectivity, so there is always room for improvement, for example in reducing conflicts between different functions (e.g. where pressure on a recreational route damages habitats or archaeological remains), or ensuring gaps in important habitat networks are filled to enhance resilience. This goes to the heart of National Park purposes and is promoted through the National Park Management Plan and aligned strategies such as the local Biodiversity Action Plan and other initiatives like the Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership, established in 2012. It is also recognised that Green Infrastructure has the potential to improve flood risk</p>

	Existing Infrastructure	Quality and Capacity
	<p>of restricted byway.</p> <p>The National Park benefits from 2 key named long distance, multiday routes: The Pennine Way and Hadrian's Wall Path (National Trails). Other notable long-distance routes include St. Cuthbert's Way and St. Oswalds Way and a number of cycle-ways including the Pennine Cycleway, Reivers Cycleway and Hadrian's Cycleway. A further route of regional significance is The Sandstone Way, opened in 2014 and developed specifically for mountain biking.</p>	<p>management and provide accessible green space, climate change adaptation and biodiversity enhancement, Any policy approach to landscape structuring and defining settlement boundaries will further influence provision of green infrastructure.</p> <p>Anticipated increased usage of the Rights of Way network is unlikely to place substantial extra costs on the network and may otherwise generate additional revenues through, for example, car parking.</p>

Appendix 3: Local Facilities Survey 2016

Settlement	Public House / Café	Church	Village Hall	School		Doctor		Post Office		Provisions									Public transport		Broadband enabled	Mobile coverage ⁸	Mobile library	
				1 st School	School bus	Doctor	Nearest Doctor (miles)	Post Office	Nearest Post Office (miles)	General Store	Online supermarket delivery	Coalman	Milkman	Grocer	Fish van	Butcher	Baker	Ringtons	Bus	Bus to gateway settlement				
Alwinton	Rose and Thistle	✓			✓		1.4 – Harbottle		3.1 – Holystone	2 Mobile Vans	Asda	✓	✓	✓ ⁹	✓	✓	✓ ¹⁰	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Additional services available in Alwinton parish		✓			✓						Asda	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓ ¹¹	✓
Elsdon	Bird in the Bush ¹² 1 Café	✓	✓		✓		12 - Bellingham 12 – Rothbury 12 – Scots Gap Prescriptions are delivered		6 – Kirkwhelping-ton		Tesco Asda Sainsburys Waitrose	✓			✓			✓	✓ ¹³	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Additional services available in Elsdon parish											Tesco Asda Sainsburys Waitrose	✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Harbottle	Star Inn		✓	✓	✓	¹⁴			2.4 – Holystone		Asda	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Holystone		✓			✓			✓			Asda	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ ¹⁵		✓		✓	✓
Additional services available in Harbottle parish		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ ¹⁶		✓			Asda	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

⁸ Please note that although mobile phone operators indicate that 100% of the National Park has coverage, our research indicates that it is very patchy and in some places not available at all.

⁹ Mobile van

¹⁰ Mobile van

¹¹ Patchy coverage

¹² Pub currently closed (July 2017) but may be reopened in the near future

¹³ By request only

¹⁴ Currently operating a limited service on an interim basis. Surgery could be re-opened as a branch surgery of another Northumberland GP Practice.

¹⁵ Weekly shopping bus

¹⁶ Currently operating a limited service on an interim basis. Surgery could be re-opened as a branch surgery of another Northumberland GP Practice.

Settlement	Public House / Café	Church	Village Hall	School		Doctor		Post Office		Provisions										Public transport		Broadband enabled	Mobile coverage ⁸	Mobile library
				1 st School	School bus	Doctor	Nearest Doctor (miles)	Post Office	Nearest Post Office (miles)	General Store	Online supermarket delivery	Coalman	Milkman	Grocer	Fish van	Butcher	Baker	Ringtons	Bus	Bus to gateway settlement				
Falstone	Blackcock Inn	✓	✓		✓		7.2 – Bellingham	✓		✓ ¹⁷	Tesco Asda	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ ¹⁸	✓		
Stannersburn	Pheasant Inn				✓		7.2 – Bellingham		0.6 – Falstone		Tesco Asda	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Additional services available in Falstone Parish					✓					✓ ¹⁹	Tesco Asda	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓ ²⁰	✓		
Greenhaugh	Holybush	✓		✓	✓		6.9 – Bellingham		6.9 – Bellingham		Tesco Asda	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓		✓		
Lanehead			✓		✓		4 – Bellingham		3 – Falstone		Tesco Asda	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Additional services available in Tarsset Parish		✓	✓	✓	✓						Tesco Asda	✓	✓	✓				✓		✓				
Kirknewton		✓	✓		✓		5.5 – Wooler		5.5 – Wooler		Tesco Asda	✓	✓	✓				✓ ²¹	✓ ²²	✓		✓		
Additional services available in Kirknewton Parish		✓	✓		✓						Asda	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓		✓		

¹⁷ Seasonal opening hours

¹⁸ Patchy coverage

¹⁹ Lealish Shop, Kielder – seasonal opening hours

²⁰ Patchy coverage

²¹ Once a week on a Wednesday

²² One service per week to Wooler and return on a Wednesday

Settlement	Public House / Café	Church	Village Hall	School		Doctor		Post Office		Provisions										Public transport		Broadband enabled	Mobile coverage ⁸	Mobile library
				1 st School	School bus	Doctor	Nearest Doctor (miles)	Post Office	Nearest Post Office (miles)	General Store	Online supermarket delivery	Coalman	Milkman	Grocer	Fish van	Butcher	Baker	Ringtons	Bus	Bus to gateway settlement				
Rochester		✓	✓		✓		12 - Bellingham		8.0 – West Woodburn / 12 - Bellingham		Tesco	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Additional services available in Rochester Parish	Redesdale Arms	✓	✓		✓						Tesco	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Ingram	1 Café	✓	✓	✓	✓		7.9 – Wooler		3.1 – Powburn		Asda	✓		✓							✓	✓	✓	
Additional services available in Ingram Parish		✓	✓		✓						Asda	✓		✓							✓	✓	✓	
Stonehaugh	Social Club		✓		✓		5 – Wark	✓	5 – Wark		Tesco	✓									✓	✓	✓	
Additional services available in Wark Parish	Battlesteads Grey Bull Black Bull	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	Tesco	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Charlton					✓		2 – Bellingham		2 – Bellingham			✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Additional services available in Bellingham Parish	Rose and Crown Cheviot Black Bull Riverdale Hall Hotel	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		Co-op Chemist Hard- ware store	Tesco	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	