



Northumberland National Park Authority

Local Plan

Local Development Scheme 2017-2019

September 2017

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1. Introduction & Context

1.1 The 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act ('the 2004 Act') brought in 'Local Development Framework' as a new structure to local planning. Local Development Frameworks include:

- *Development Plan Documents 'DPDs'* (containing formal policies, for example the Core Strategy);
- *Supplementary Planning Documents 'SPDs'* (more 'informal' advice which adds to adopted policy, such as Design Guidance)
- *Other documents, including Local Development Documents* (including more 'procedural' documents such as the Local Development Scheme or Statement of Community Involvement).

1.2 Whilst the current government prefers the term 'Local Plan' to 'Local Development Framework' (LDF) the overall structure remains the same. Regional Spatial Strategies (brought in by the 2004 Act) have since been removed through 2011 Localism Act ('the 2011 Act') which also brought forward key provisions relating to the Duty to Co-operate and the Neighbourhood Plans. Government guidance has also been streamlined, with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) replacing the portfolio of Planning Policy Statements in 2012. Additional online National Planning Practice Guidance was published in March 2014 which is frequently updated. Importantly, the government considers that the National Parks Circular (2010) should set the context for the local plans within English National Parks.

1.3 Under section 67(1) of the Environment Act 1995, Northumberland National Park Authority (NNPA) is the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for the entire area of the National Park. Those responsibilities include the mineral and waste planning functions for the area. The Authority also prepares the Northumberland National Park Management Plan; the over-arching strategic document for the National Park that sets the vision and objectives to guide the future of the Park. The adopted Northumberland National Park Management Plan 2016-2021 '*Distinctive Places, Open Spaces*' establishes important principles for consideration in local planning policy.

1.4 This LDS is a statement of NNPA's local development document preparation programme. Whilst the LDS includes commentary on the range of documents the Authority intends to prepare and review, it is important to note that Statements of Community Involvement (SCIs) and Supplementary Planning Documents do not need to be included. Key milestones for the production of the Local Plan are set out in appendix 1.

2. Current Local Plan for Northumberland National Park

2.1 The current local plan for Northumberland National Park comprises the Core Strategy and Development Policies document (2009), which is supported in its implementation by the Building Design Guide SPD (2011), Landscape Strategy SPD (2011) and Otterburn Camp SPD (2007). These documents currently set the strategic spatial planning policies and guidance for the National Park for the plan period up to 2024. Government guidance stipulates that a Local Plan should be reviewed at least every five years (from adoption) which means that the current suite of development plan documents are out of date and need to be reviewed.

3. Components of the Local Plan Review

Statement of Community Involvement

3.1 The 2004 Act requires that LPAs produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). Northumberland National Park Authority adopted its first Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in 2006 and updated it in 2010 prior to the National Planning Policy Framework and most importantly, the Localism Act. The local plan must be prepared in a way consistent with the approach set out in the SCI. The Authority is preparing a revised SCI for consultation, which will be adopted in 2016/17. The basis for the review of the SCI will include any changes in national policy and feedback received on the methods of previous community engagement and public consultation exercises (e.g. the Management Plan Review 2015-16).

Local Plan (Development Plan Document)

3.2 The Authority recognises the statutory requirement to maintain an up to date development plan. The Authority's Core Strategy & Development Policies document was adopted in 2009 which means some of the policies contained within it are out of date and not in tune with the significantly changed national policy context.

3.3 The review of the local plan will likely focus upon strategic housing policy, strategic economic development policy, and settlement strategy matters. The scope and extent of other potential areas of change will be determined through early engagement with stakeholders. The review will lead to a consolidated single 'local plan' for the National Park. This document will cover the whole of Northumberland National Park.

3.4 Northumberland National Park Authority is the Minerals Planning Authority for the National Park and as such this is a statutory function. The NPPF says Minerals Planning Authorities should "identify and include policies for extraction of minerals resource of local and national importance" and "define Minerals Safeguarding Areas". The local plan will include as necessary, minerals policies for the whole of Northumberland National Park.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

3.5 The Authority has three adopted SPDs, the Building Design Guide (2011); Landscape Strategy SPD (2011) and the Otterburn Camp SPD (2007). It is not anticipated that these will require review within the timeframe of this LDS as relevant elements will be incorporated into the emerging policies within a more consolidated Local Plan document. However, should the Authority consider their revision necessary at a future date this would be consistent with the approach set out in the SCI and the appropriate regulations. The Authority does not intend to prepare any SPDs within the timeframe of this LDS.

Evidence Base

3.6 A key process of the Local Plan review will be to gather reliable, relevant and up to date information to form an evidence base which will inform our development policies. For an example of likely key evidence base documents please see appendix 2. This list is not exhaustive and some studies may be relevant to, and coordinated alongside others.

Joint working

3.7 Although joint development plan documents can be prepared with other planning authorities, there is no intention to prepare joint planning documents. The Authority is in close liaison with Northumberland County Council, which is the Local Planning Authority for the rest of Northumberland. The NPA responds to DPDs produced by the County Council in the interests of 'joined up' planning and to ensure that the special qualities of the National Park are protected. The Authority also recognises the importance of the Duty to Cooperate and will continue to work positively with stakeholders in the preparation of the local plan.

Strategic Environmental Assessment/Sustainability Appraisal

3.8 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local development documents to be prepared with a view to contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. Local planning Authorities must also comply with a European Union Directive on the Strategic Environmental Assessment of certain plans and programmes that are likely to have significant effects on the environment. The National Park Authority will continue to take a robust approach in the preparation of an environmental report which informs and supports the different stages in the preparation of a DPD.

Neighbourhood Planning

3.9 The Localism Act 2011 introduced a new tier of development plan, enabling a Town or Parish Council, or a designated Neighbourhood Forum, to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan (Neighbourhood Plan) for its area. Although not a statutory requirement to include within the Local Plan, these documents will hold significant weight in the making of planning decisions once formally 'made' (adopted). They must be in general conformity with both the NPPF and the Local Plan for the Authority area. At the time of writing, the National Park Authority is supporting three communities across the National Park in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for their local area. The designated Neighbourhood areas are; Tasset and Greystead; Mid Coquetdale, and Wooler.

4. Monitoring and Review

4.1 Legislation requires local planning authorities to produce an annual monitoring report to assess progress on the implementation of the LDS. The Authority will produce a Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) to assess the extent to which development plan policies are being implemented. It will:

- Assess whether policies in local development documents are being implemented effectively, and whether targets or milestones are being met.
- Assess the impact of the policies with regard to national, regional and local targets (where applicable).
- Assess the effectiveness of the policies and proposals with regard to the achievement of strategic objectives, and whether modification or replacement is required.
- Indicate where policies or proposals need to be changed, and how this would be achieved.
- Assess how the Authority is performing against the timescales set out in the current LDS and updating the document as appropriate.
- Identify where policy review / revision is necessary.
- Provide an up to date list of background documents and other relevant publications.

4.2 In accordance with national guidance, Development Plan Documents will be reviewed every five years, with Supplementary Planning Documents (when produced) being reviewed on a 5-10 year timescale or in both cases, as required in response to other material matters arising from ongoing monitoring.

4.3 A robust monitoring framework will be set out in the Authority's next Annual Monitoring Report to be published in Spring/Summer of next year (2018) and each year thereafter. A State of the Park Report is also prepared as a supporting element of the Management Plan, which will also be a useful source of monitoring information, evidence and material for assessing and the documents in the local plan.

Table 1: Local Plan Preparation Process¹

| Plan Preparation Stage | Key tasks |
|--|--|
| Initial evidence gathering | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulate initial aims and objectives for local plan. • Begin evidence gathering process. • Identify relevant environment, economic and social objectives to inform Sustainability Appraisal. |
| Initial consultation on scope and content plus continued work on evidence gathering | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with local communities, businesses and other interested parties (Regulation 18). • Take into account representations received from consultation process in line with (Regulation 18). • Engage with Duty to Cooperate partners. • Ensure compliance with the SCI. • Continue evidence gathering. • Test emerging options through Sustainability Appraisal. |
| Publication | Draft plan published for representations for a minimum of 6 weeks (Regulations 17 and 19). |
| Submission | Plan submitted for examination, along with Sustainability Appraisal, evidence base and a statement of representations and main issues (Regulation 22). |
| Examination of submitted plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Inspector assesses plan to determine whether it has been prepared in line with the Duty to Cooperate, other legal requirements and whether it is sound in line with section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Regulations 23/24. • Local Planning Authority can ask Inspector to recommend main modifications to make plan sound or comply with other legal requirements. • Inspector issues report at end of examination. • Exceptionally, the Inspector will recommend the draft plan is withdrawn if it has not been prepared in accordance with the Duty to Cooperate or if it is likely to be found unsound. |
| Adoption | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft plan formally adopted by the local planning authority in line with section 23 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. • Monitoring of implementation of Local Plan policies required in line with Regulation 34. |

¹ In accordance with the *Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012*

Table 2: NNPA Local Development Scheme Programme 2017 – 2019

| Local Development Plan Document | Public participation on scope and content ² | Publication | Submission | Adoption |
|---------------------------------|--|--------------------|--------------|------------|
| Local Plan Review (DPD) | February - April 2017 (Issues) October - December 2017 (Policy Options) | July – August 2018 | October 2018 | March 2019 |

Table 3: Example key evidence base documents³

| Evidence |
|---|
| Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Register |
| Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) |
| Housing Needs Survey |
| Business Needs Survey |
| Population and household growth projections |
| Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) |
| Infrastructure Plan |
| Landscape Character Assessment |
| Strategic Flood Risk Assessment |

² Including consultation with the statutory bodies on the scope of the sustainability appraisal.

³ This list is neither exclusive nor exhaustive