

Northumberland National Park Authority



## **Local Plan**

### **Local Development Scheme 2018-2020**

**Approved March 2018**

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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 (2018-2021) is a statement of NNPA's local development document preparation programme and replaces the previously approved LDS (2017-19). 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 table 2.

## **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. The stages of the Local Plan preparation process can be found in table 1.

## **3. Components of the Local Plan Review**

### **Statement of Community Involvement**

**3.1** The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that LPAs produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and a local plan must be prepared in a way consistent with the approach set out in the 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 the Localism Act. Following a review and public consultation undertaken in 2016 a fully updated SCI was adopted by Northumberland National Park Authority in September 2017. The Local Plan review is being undertaken in compliance with the updated SCI.

### **Local 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 that the policies contained within it need to be reviewed.

**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' document 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 states that 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). The Authority is currently scoping the review of these existing SPDs within the timescales 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 table 3. 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 one local community in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for their local area.

## **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** An interim monitoring framework will be set out in the Authority's next Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) to be published in 2018. A State of the Park Report will also be prepared in 2018 which will report on the delivery and monitoring of the National Park Management Plan (2016-2021). This will be a useful source of monitoring information, evidence and material that will compliment that of the AMR.

**4.4** A key point to note is that two key stages of formal consultation<sup>1</sup> have already been undertaken in accordance with the previously approved LDS (2017-19). These were the Issues Paper public consultation that occurred between 27<sup>th</sup> February and the 28<sup>th</sup> April 2017 and the Policy Options Paper which took place between 16<sup>th</sup> October 2017 and the 11<sup>th</sup> December 2017. The outcomes from both of these consultations will inform the production of the Preferred Options Draft Plan which is scheduled for publication in the summer of 2018.

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<sup>1</sup> Under regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

**Table 1: Local Plan Preparation Process<sup>2</sup>**

Plan Preparation Stage	Key tasks
<b>Initial evidence gathering</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formulate initial aims and objectives for local plan.</li> <li>• Begin evidence gathering process.</li> <li>• Identify relevant environment, economic and social objectives to inform Sustainability Appraisal.</li> </ul>
<b>Initial consultation on scope and content plus continued work on evidence gathering</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement with local communities, businesses and other interested parties (Regulation 18).</li> <li>• Take into account representations received from consultation process in line with (Regulation 18).</li> <li>• Engage with Duty to Cooperate partners.</li> <li>• Ensure compliance with the SCI.</li> <li>• Continue evidence gathering.</li> <li>• Test emerging options through Sustainability Appraisal.</li> </ul>
<b>Publication</b>	Draft plan published for representations for a minimum of 6 weeks (Regulations 17 and 19).
<b>Submission</b>	Plan submitted for examination, along with Sustainability Appraisal, evidence base and a statement of representations and main issues (Regulation 22).
<b>Examination of submitted plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Local Planning Authority can ask Inspector to recommend main modifications to make plan sound or comply with other legal requirements.</li> <li>• Inspector issues report at end of examination.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
<b>Adoption</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft plan formally adopted by the local planning authority in line with section 23 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.</li> <li>• Monitoring of implementation of Local Plan policies required in line with Regulation 34.</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

**Table 2: NNPA Local Development Scheme Programme 2018 – 2020**

<b>Local Development Plan Document</b>	<b>Public participation on scope and content<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Publication</b>	<b>Submission</b>	<b>Adoption</b>
Local Plan Document	July-August 2018 (Preferred Options Draft Plan)	March-May 2019 (Publication Draft Plan)	June - August 2019	December 2019

**Table 3: Example key evidence base documents<sup>4</sup>**

<b>Evidence</b>
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
Economic Futures and Employment Demand Study

<sup>3</sup> Including consultation with the statutory bodies on the scope of the sustainability appraisal/habitat regulations assessment.

<sup>4</sup> This list is neither exclusive nor exhaustive