



Local Plan 2017-2037

Preferred Options

Consultation Feedback Report

May 2019

Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Level of Response	5
3. Preferred Options Feedback	8
Appendix 1 – Youth Consultation Feedback.....	19

Tables

Table 1 – Total Attendees and Representations

Table 2 – Comments per Policy

1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1. Northumberland National Park Authority (NNPA) is in the process of reviewing its Local Plan. As part of the process the Authority has analysed the responses received and prepared this feedback report. The representations received have informed the preparation of the Publication Draft Local Plan document.
- 1.2. Local planning authorities are required by Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 to undertake effective discussion and consultation with local communities, businesses and other interested parties to inform key stages of the Local Plan preparation.

Previous Consultation

- 1.3. In the spring of 2017 an **Issues Paper** was consulted on in accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, hereinafter Regulation 18. This represented the first formal consultation stage in the development of the Local Plan. A Feedback Report (May 2017) was prepared to summarise the level of response to the Issues Paper consultation and the comments received.
- 1.4. Responses to the Issues Paper consultation together with emerging evidence, such as the Infrastructure Plan and Strategic Housing Market Assessment (May 2017), informed the production of a **Policy Options Paper**. NNPA consulted on this document for an eight week period from 16th October 2017 until 11th December 2017. This was also a formal consultation stage that met the requirements of Regulation 18. The Policy Options Consultation Feedback Report was published in Autumn 2017 providing analysis of the responses to the Policy Options consultation, including how this relates to the outcomes of the Issues Paper public consultation.
- 1.5. In July 2018, NNPA consulted on the **Preferred Options Draft Plan** document from 30th July 2018 to 24th September 2018 (8 weeks) in accordance with Regulation 18. This feedback report provides an analysis and summary of that consultation exercise.

Purpose

- 1.6. The purpose of the Preferred Options consultation was to set out in the form of a draft Local Plan the policies, proposals and supporting text for the types of development that would potentially be acceptable or otherwise in the National Park. The Preferred Options Draft Plan also set out the vision, strategic priorities and spatial objectives for planning for the future of the National Park over the plan period up to the year 2037. Feedback and responses to this draft document was then sought from local residents, businesses, visitors, statutory consultees and other relevant stakeholders.

Preferred Options Consultation Methodology

- 1.7. A total of four drop-in consultation events were held during the eight week consultation period (30th July 2018 to 24th September 2018). These were held at locations inside or bordering the National Park; at Wooler on the 21st August 2018, Falstone on 29th August 2018, Elsdon on 4th September 2018 and Bardon Mill on 11th September 2018.

- 1.8. In order to engage a wide audience at the public consultations, two shorter guidance documents were produced in addition to the Draft Local Plan:
 - A leaflet entitled “What is the Local Plan?” setting out a brief overview of the Local Plan and the process of reviewing it.
 - A frequently asked questions (FAQs) on the Preferred Options consultation.
- 1.9. NNPA also provided at the consultation events, for reference, an Interim Sustainability Appraisal Statement and a Habitats Regulations Assessment. A policies map was also displayed at the consultation events.
- 1.10. Consultees were encouraged to make a written representation during the consultation period. An open letter asking for representations to be made was published on the 27th July 2018 and sent to known stakeholders and statutory bodies on the consultee register. Those wishing to make a representation were asked to submit this via e-mail or post before the end of the consultation period. Comments were also noted at the public consultation events.

Publicity

- 1.11. NNPA has recently reviewed its Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system meaning that the database of consultees was largely relevant and up to date at the time the public consultation went ‘live’. In advance of the public consultation a total over one thousand letters and around five hundred emails were sent out to publicise the consultation using the contact details on the CRM system in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.
- 1.12. Furthermore, the public consultation was fully in accordance with the NNPA Statement of Community Involvement adopted in September 2017 and recipients of correspondence included:
 - All of the National Park’s households and those in parishes overlapping the National Park boundary;
 - Businesses (including farmers and land owners);
 - Parish councils;
 - Statutory consultation bodies;
 - General consultation bodies; and
 - Other relevant stakeholders.
- 1.13. To comply with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and Regulation 18, public notices were published in local press including The Journal (27th July 2018), The Hexham Courant (26th July 2018) and the Northumberland Gazette (2nd August 2018). Publicity was also directed down to a community level through notifications on the relevant village hall websites, the Hexham Courant “Village Notes” section and direct Officer/ Member engagement with communities. Posters listing each event were also put up in prominent public places in settlements across the National Park.

2. Level of Response

- 2.1. The aggregate number of attendees across the Preferred Options consultation events was 26. This shows a continuing decline from the first Issues Paper consultation events (a total of 98 attendees) and the second Policy Options consultation events (a total of 44 attendees), as shown in Table 1 below.
- 2.2. The level of written response was similar to the previous Policy Options consultation, but still considerably lower than the level received for the Issues Paper consultation (see Table 1 below).

<u>Consultation event</u>	Total no. of attendees	Average per event	No. of written representations
Issues Paper	98	8	27
Options Paper	44	6	18
Preferred Options	26	6	17

Table 1 – Total Attendees and Representations

- 2.3. Although NNPA publicised the consultation as widely as possible, lower levels of response could be due to a number of potential factors:
- Individuals/ organisations were involved in the previous consultation events and had no further contributions to make.
 - Individuals/ organisations were largely satisfied with the Authority’s approach and therefore less inclined to make a contribution.
 - Individuals/ organisations were unable or unwilling to take the time required to examine the consultation documents.
 - Individuals/ organisations did not feel like the consultation was relevant to them.
- 2.4. Nonetheless, NNPA did engage in discussions with event attendees and receive a number of detailed written representations. The following section of the report presents an analysis of the representations received. It should also be noted that whilst the feedback reports for the Issues Paper and Policy Options analysed comments by theme, the Preferred Options feedback has been analysed and summarised on a policy-by-policy basis to reflect the content and structure of the draft plan.

2.5. In all, approximately 183 individual comments were made through written representations and discussions between event attendees and Officers. Table 2 below shows the percentages of comments made in relation to each of the Draft Local Plan policies.

<u>Policy No.</u>	<u>No. of comments</u>	<u>Proportion of comments (%)</u>
1	8	4.4
2	12	6.6
3	7	3.8
4	5	2.7
5	11	6.0
6	2	1.1
7	3	1.6
8	7	3.8
9	5	2.7
10	5	2.7
11	2	1.1
12	1	0.5
13	2	1.1
14	1	0.5
15	4	2.2
16	1	0.5
17	1	0.5
18	5	2.7
19	1	0.5
20	12	6.6
21	2	1.1
22	8	4.4
23	5	2.7
24	7	3.8
25	4	2.2
26	14	7.7
27	5	2.7
28	2	1.1
29	7	3.8
30	7	3.8
31	7	3.8
32	7	3.8
Draft Local Plan generally	11	6.0
Habitats Regulations Assessment	1	0.5
Sustainability Appraisal	1	0.5
<u>TOTAL</u>	183	<u>100.0%</u>

Table 2 – Comments per Policy

2.6. The highest number of responses were received in relation to draft Policy 26: Renewable and Low-carbon Energy (7.7% of the total). Policy 2: General Development Principles and Policy 20: Accessibility and Connectivity received the next highest response rate level both with 6.6% of the total number of representations received.

- 2.7. Policy 26 perhaps received the most comments due to recent or planned wind turbine development close to the National Park boundary. This Policy also includes residential-use renewable energy which was mentioned several times at the consultation events. Similarly, Policy 20 contains several topics such as access, transport and mobile phone coverage within one policy which could however potentially explain the higher number of comments received in comparison to other draft policies.
- 2.8. In the previous consultations, the topic of Community Facilities and Infrastructure was most commonly raised (21%) at the Issues Paper stage and Housing and Employment most popular (17%) at the Policy Options stage. It is more difficult to compare the Preferred Options consultation as they have been listed by 32 policies rather than 10 topic areas. This could also explain the average lower proportions of comments per policy in addition to the potential reasons outlined above.
- 2.9. Of the Preferred Options feedback, 11 of these comments (6.0%) were generic, related to the entire document or the consultation process. Both the Habitats Regulations Assessment and the Sustainability Appraisal, which were supplementary documents to the Draft Local Plan, received 1 comment each (0.5%).

3. Preferred Options Feedback

- 3.1. The following paragraphs summarise the feedback received in relation to each policy. They are listed by policy number as per the Draft Local Plan.
- 3.2. The NNPA's response to the feedback and suggested potential policy implications are provided in Appendix 1. A Schedule of Modifications will be issued with the next publication of the Local Plan, which will detail policy changes from the Draft Local Plan.

Policy 1: Sustainable Development

- 3.3. This policy received 8 of the Preferred Options consultation comments. Respondents generally welcomed that the policy includes a greater level of detail than in the current policy and provides greater clarity on the meaning of sustainable development in the context of a National Park. The presumption in favour of sustainable development was also welcomed.
- 3.4. Several comments advocated specifying timber construction of houses as the most environmentally-friendly material compared to bricks, concrete blocks and steel for example.
- 3.5. One comment questioned the use of 'conserve or enhance' over 'sustain and enhance' which is also referred to in the NPPF. The respondent also asked for criteria over what constitutes 'overriding need'.

Policy 2: General Development Principles

- 3.6. Comments on this policy accounted for 12 from the total received. Residents largely backed better infrastructure and services, such as broadband, mobile phone coverage, mains electricity and community facilities. Indeed, residents consulted would be willing to sacrifice, to an extent, the special qualities of the National Park in order to have access to these 'essential' provisions.
- 3.7. Statutory consultees were supportive of the direction of the policy but asked that it more closely aligned with National Planning Policy Framework wording.

Policy 3: Major Development

- 3.8. The number of comments made on this policy was 7. The feedback for this policy was positive with few recommended changes.
- 3.9. Comments were made about the recognition of Otterburn Training Area within the Draft Local Plan. This policy does cite 'national' considerations and how this relates to the local economy and the special qualities of the National Park. It was suggested to reference the Otterburn Training Area specifically perhaps with its own designated policy or at least to better recognise the positive impact the Ministry of Defence site has.

Policy 4: Settlement Hierarchy

- 3.10. This policy received only 5 comments but all were found to be in favour of the policy direction and in recognising Local Centres and Smaller Villages explicitly within the policy.
- 3.11. Despite notionally being appropriate as a Local Centre, one of the comments questioned whether some of these locations actually had the necessary services to meet housing demand or met the definitions set out in the justification text of the policy. The respondent questioned whether the Local Centres should instead be determined on the service provisions currently in place such as bus services, shops and post offices.

Policy 5: Conversion of Buildings outside Settlements

- 3.12. Policy 5 accounted for 11 of the feedback comments submitted. Previously the policy had only accepted conversion for tourism use; however it has now been widened to residential, extended family and rural worker use. Comments were largely negative and did not support the policy.
- 3.13. It was considered that the policy would undermine the previous Settlement Hierarchy policy (Policy 4) to focus new development in the Local Centres and Smaller Villages. A lack of reference to Affordable Housing in this policy was also highlighted as an issue. It was suggested that the impacts of conversion on Agricultural buildings and Heritage Assets should also be given greater consideration.
- 3.14. Several comments were supportive of the extended family criteria whilst also suggesting that they could potentially be more flexible to help young people stay and live in the park.

Policy 6: Community Facilities

- 3.15. The policy on Community Facilities had a low number of responses with 2. However, community facilities were noted to be cross-referenced in comments on other policies.
- 3.16. This policy was supported but one comment added whether community facilities should be centred on Local Centres and Smaller Villages in the same way housing should be in other policies. This is because they provide 'the most sustainable locations for new development with the best integration of residential development, employment opportunities, other services and facilities and access to a variety of sustainable transport provisions'.

Policy 7: Local Green Space

- 3.17. Of the comments submitted, 3 of them related to draft Policy 7 on Local Green Space. The draft policy was not supported by the majority of respondents as it did not designate different types of Local Green Space with suggested potential categories being 'Visually Important Spaces', 'Community Spaces' or 'Key Species Habitats'.

Policy 8: New and Improved Infrastructure

- 3.18. Policy 8 received a relatively high proportion of responses with 7. A majority of these asked for specifying the type of infrastructure, although the reference to areas of impact in Point (b) were supported.
- 3.19. As with previous rounds of consultation, the lack of mobile phone and broadband coverage was raised as an important infrastructure issue for residents. The importance of this issue for both residents and visitors to the park is, in their view, comparable with the preservation of the National Park's special qualities. Two other comments had a more cautious approach on this issue and urged for consideration of the removal of the infrastructure if it becomes defunct or unused at a future date.
- 3.20. Comments also requested specific clauses for Flood Risk and Roads as their impacts could be more critical than the general infrastructure policy.

Policy 9: Provision of Green Infrastructure

- 3.21. This draft policy received 5 of the total comments. Most comments were supportive on this policy and its direction. Suggested amendments were largely around the wording of the supporting paragraphs.
- 3.22. Respondents suggested changes to the wording relating to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), Registered Parks and Gardens, references to the NPPF and national environmental policy. These suggested changes were to provide clarity, improve accuracy of the supporting text or better align the text with national policy.
- 3.23. One responses suggested changing the policy wording from 'should' to 'must' in order to guarantee Green Infrastructure provision. For a similar reason, it was suggested that 'or' be replaced with 'and' in the Green Infrastructure proposals (Point 2) to reap all the benefits rather than one point exclusively. This may make Green Infrastructure proposals unachievable if all the benefits must be met. Additionally, Point 3 encourages proposals that meet a range of benefits which acts as a fail-safe to the point raised. Another response suggested referring to 'blue' infrastructure as well as 'green' infrastructure.

Policy 10: Providing a Range and Choice of Housing

- 3.24. Of the written representations submitted, 5 related to housing.
- 3.25. Statutory consultees (such as Highways England and Northumberland County Council) were supportive of the policy approach and how it related to their strategic and policy approaches. Another supportive comment was received from a resident who agreed with encouraging younger families to live in the Park.
- 3.26. One negative comment was received in relation to the lack of reference to green infrastructure and wildlife corridors in the draft policy. However, this policy is specifically on a range and choice of housing and that issue is covered in other policies (such as Policy 9). Policies should not be considered exclusively in the context of development proposals.
- 3.27. Other respondents were concerned that new residential development could potentially depress the values of existing homes; however this is not a material planning consideration.

Policy 11: Residential Extensions

- 3.28. Only 2 comments were received on the Residential Extensions policy. One of the comments advocated the inclusion of Heritage Assets into the policy wording and the supporting text. The other representation wanted a block on future permitted development rights following a first residential extension, in order to prevent overextension of properties.

Policy 12: Affordable Housing

- 3.29. One comment was received in relation to affordable housing which was not supportive of the policy direction, particularly the line '*all dwellings will be, and will remain, available for people with a local connection*'. The respondent felt the policy was not welcoming or fair to new people, and would not allow for the evolution of places and was not viable due to demand. However, the fact that the response rate was relatively low (and support of wider aims for providing housing to meet identified needs within the Park) could potentially indicate that respondents were broadly supportive of the policy approach on this issue.

Policy 13: Rural Exception Sites

- 3.30. The policy on Rural Exception Sites received 2 comments. The feedback was entirely positive, receiving support on its direction, (particularly restricting to the availability of affordable housing to people with a local connection).

Policy 14: Rural Workers' Housing

- 3.31. One comment was received on the subject of Rural Workers' Housing which was supportive of the more flexible approach allowing residential development outside identified settlements.

3.32. The response also advocated restricting occupancy to relevant rural workers; but this is included in Part (a) of the policy. Ensuring good design and no detrimental impact on the landscape or special qualities of the National Park was also suggested; but any new development or conversion would have to adhere to other policies (including Policy 1 and Policy 23) in any event.

Policy 15: Principal Residence Housing

3.33. This policy received 4 comments, all of which were unequivocally supportive of the policy.

3.34. The new policy direction was described as a sensible and pragmatic approach, particularly in tandem with Policy 12 (Affordable Housing) and Policy 13 (Rural Exception Sites). Another was pleased that compared to an Open Market direction, it would prevent settlements becoming too large by the time the number of necessary permanent residences to support the community were delivered.

3.35. Although all the comments were supportive of the policy, the reasoning for one was dislike for tourism. Another comment, again supportive overall, questioned how Point 2 would be enforced and argued that without enforcement it would be pointless.

Policy 16: Gypsy and Traveller Housing

3.36. Only one comment was received on this policy.

3.37. This comment was from neighbouring Northumberland County Council and declared support of the policy, particularly the criteria-based direction and cross-reference to general development principles. Also appreciated was use of the County Council's *Northumberland Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show People Accommodation Assessment (2015)* as a source because of the regular north-south movement along the coastal strip of the county.

Policy 17: Replacement Dwellings

3.38. One response was received on Policy 17 for Replacement Dwellings.

3.39. The comment received had a negative outlook on the policy direction, particularly Point (a) that the dwelling being replaced should already have a residential uses prior to replacement. The respondent felt that opening this up to agricultural buildings such as barns would replace an unusable building and provide new homes on brownfield land.

Policy 18: Sustainable Local Economy

3.40. Policy 18 received a good number of responses comprising 5 in total. Generally the comments were negative seeing the policy direction as a missed opportunity.

3.41. Two of the comments can be considered neutral. One recognised the limitations of what can be achieved in terms of business and jobs creation via the policy. Another

was supportive of the policy and the aspiration for economic growth in sustainable locations that do not negatively impact on the special qualities of the National Park.

- 3.42. Of the negative comments received, two saw the policy as missing a huge opportunity to promote the importance of forestry to develop the environmental, social and economic potential of the National Park. The respondent believed that in addition to jobs and the local economy, forestry could also boost many other areas. Another comment described a fall in overall employment and defeatist tone of the policy could be reversed to encourage forestry which could create jobs and exponentially grow the economy.
- 3.43. Another respondent raised several issues relating to the local economy. They felt more could be done at a strategic level with sustainable energy providers to implement to properties across the park in accordance with Policy 26. There was also encouragement to create more local economy impact out of The Sill with only local companies contracted and use of local workers.

Policy 19: Home-based Businesses and Live/ Work Units

- 3.44. A single comment was received relating to Policy 19 on Home-based Business and Live/ Work units. The comment sent in simply acknowledged support of the policy direction but did not provide any further detail.

Policy 20: Accessibility and Connectivity

- 3.45. Policy 20 was one of the most commented on policies, receiving 12 in total. Only Policy 26 received more comments. As acknowledged in the summary of the Policy Options Feedback (Para 1.8) this could be due to the policy containing several topics such as access, transport and mobile phone coverage which could explain a higher number of comments.
- 3.46. One comment wanted to reduce the number of visitors accessing the National Park by car. Another believes that poor roads are a key challenge for the economy but the road network could be improved by funding through forestry. One respondent wants better bus services and another, more electric charging points.
- 3.47. A further comment believed that promoting public transport, walking and cycling was highly impractical in the National Park and that this would be more suitable in urban areas. Whereas another respondent was supportive of seeking to promote public transport, walking and cycling modes but acknowledged the need of significant development in order to deliver these provisions. A further comment again welcomed the support of sustainable travel choices, but felt there would continue to be a place for the private car in Northumberland National Park.
- 3.48. One respondent believed there were inaccuracies in brown signs on roads in and around the National Park which causes problems for tourists and on local identity for residents, however this is a matter for the Local Highway Authority. Another

respondent suggested a number of measures to improve ecological networks and green corridors to ensure the safe movement of species especially where new transport routes would be introduced.

- 3.49. On the topic of broadband infrastructure/connectivity a comment was received claiming rural jobs are absolutely dependent on broadband and that in their opinion no progress was made with the policy direction.

Policy 21: Farming and Rural Land-based Enterprises

- 3.50. Two comments were submitted as part of the consultation. Both of the comments were neutral in their support of the policy but offered only slight suggestions for amendment.
- 3.51. The first was to ensure that development around Farming and Rural Land-based Enterprises do not harm the Park's special qualities and even conserve and enhance, with a request to include this within the policy.
- 3.52. The second suggestion advocated that in Point (2) rather than dismantling and removing development from the site, there should also be restoration of the land to a better standard for Net Biodiversity Gain.

Policy 22: Wildlife, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

- 3.53. This policy received a good number of comments with 8 put forward during the consultation.
- 3.54. One comment wanted an amended to the policy to make it clear that enhancements to biodiversity cannot be used to justify development that has an adverse landscape or visual impact i.e. one benefit cannot offset negative impacts on the others. Another response was supportive of the policy but also highlighted the offsetting issue.
- 3.55. Two comments explained how sustainable forestry development could potentially be beneficial for wildlife, biodiversity and green infrastructure. A further response advocated a more ambitious policy promoting more pioneering approaches to wildlife, biodiversity and green infrastructure.
- 3.56. A respondent requested several wording changes to strengthen the weight given to the conservation and enhancement of wildlife, biodiversity and green infrastructure and align more closely with national policy.
- 3.57. Two of the comments were related to the introduction of the Lynx with one for and one against the proposal. The draft plan did not specifically mention this particular issue.

Policy 23: Landscape, Tranquillity and Dark Skies

- 3.58. This policy received 5 responses and all were largely supportive of the policy and its direction.

- 3.59. One respondent declared this issue the most important to them. Two more offered their support for the policy. Another detailed their support of new elements of the policy, specifically the removal of redundant development, clauses for moorland tracks/forest roads and stronger wording on tranquillity and dark skies.
- 3.60. Forestry was again promoted as a benefit to improving landscape, tranquillity and dark skies. Nonetheless the respondent acknowledged the emphasis on the importance of the National Park's special qualities in this policy.

Policy 24: Trees, Woodlands and Forests

- 3.61. Policy 24 received 7 comments in total.
- 3.62. Four of the comments emphasised the benefits of forestry and advocated a forestry vision to be included within the Local Plan. Particularly there was a request for adoption of a favour in presumption of productive woodland creation and the development of related businesses.
- 3.63. Two comments thought forestry should be restricted in order to protect the road network and landscapes such as peatland. Another wanted stronger protection of peatland.

Policy 25: Flood Risk

- 3.64. The policy on Flood Risk received 4 of the consultation comments.
- 3.65. Two of the comments welcomed the policy and particularly the requirement for Sustainable Drainage Systems. One of these went on to encourage further development requirements around drainage systems.
- 3.66. Another comment asked for no inappropriate development in areas of high-risk flooding in order to safeguard the development and prevent flood risk elsewhere. This is accounted for within the policy wording.
- 3.67. A response was submitted on the Water Framework Directive which advocates the prevention of the deterioration in the status of waterbodies. The National Park contains some of the only high status surface waterbodies in England. It was recommended to include reference to the WFD across the Local Plan including its objectives, benefits and policy clauses which help achieve its standards.

Policy 26: Renewable and Low-Carbon Energy Provision

- 3.68. Policy 26 was the most commented on policy of all with a total of 14 responses.
- 3.69. One supported the policy but wanted energy efficiency requirements reinstated. Another wanted climate change reinstated either to this policy or a standalone policy. Two responses state the benefits of forestry to providing a sustainable energy source. One asked for the protection of landscape from renewable energy development.

3.70. On the topic of Wind Farms two respondents asked for buffer zones around the Park (in the County area) as AONBs and Hadrian's Wall WHS currently have. Another resident reported considerable post-permission rearrangement of turbines in development. Two further respondents asked for greater support for small-scale renewables at residential properties and two were completely opposed to wind farms.

Policy 27: Historic Environment and Cultural Heritage

3.71. A total of 5 comments were received on this policy, all from statutory bodies.

3.72. Two of the comments were supportive of the policy but requested several changes to clarify or define technical terminology and better align with national policy. Another two comments specifically mentioned the World Heritage Site of Hadrian's Wall and asked for specific reference to it and its Buffer Zone in the policy wording.

Policy 28: Conserving Heritage Assets

3.73. Only 2 comments were received on the conservation of Heritage Assets.

3.74. Both of the comments requested enhanced protection for Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site and the Buffer Zone; with several points of reference in national and international planning policy to take account of. The fact this point was also raised for the previous policy (draft Policy 27) suggests a crossover of these policies. It was suggested in the comments to combine both draft Policy 27 and Policy 28.

Policy 29: Sustainable Tourism and Recreation Development

3.75. Of the comments received, 7 submitted related to draft Policy 29. The feedback towards the policy was mixed.

3.76. One comment speculated that there is a perception that tourism is welcomed but residential development is not, but offered no specific response to the policy. Another respondent was concerned over the ability for people to buy houses and later convert them into holiday lets.

3.77. Looking positively at tourism, one comment welcomed the new criteria for new sustainable self-catering development; and another expressed the need to spread tourism from the Northumberland coast inland.

3.78. One was unhappy with the assumption in the accompanying text of best enhancing access by providing for those arriving in car. The respondent wanted a change in the wording to provide for those not arriving to the Park by car.

3.79. Another acknowledged the need for infrastructure in order to support tourism; and how forestry offered opportunities to provide this sustainably. Finally, it was requested that environmental impacts are included within the policy wording.

Policy 30: Quarrying

- 3.80. The policy on quarrying received 7 comments with the responses largely negative toward the policy direction.
- 3.81. One respondent does not support the policy direction which advocates extensions to existing quarries on disturbed land. Another objects to the policy wording as it does not plan positively on the issue.
- 3.82. Alternatively, a further comment believes the policy limits further quarrying development whilst another suggests changing 'must' to 'should' in the policy clauses in order to ease restrictions on quarrying.
- 3.83. Another respondent questions how supporting the use of local stone can be achieved and demand can be met. Furthermore, one comment proposed referring specifically to Harden Quarry in the policy wording.

Policy 31: Mineral Safeguarding Areas

- 3.84. This policy gained a total of 7 comments. The feedback on this policy is mixed with most requesting further detail to the policy.
- 3.85. Many of the comments related to the Policies Map mentioned in the policy. The inclusion of surface coal resources on this map was requested in one comment. Another queried the Mineral Safeguarding Areas on the policy map. One resident queried whether there was fracking potential with the National Park.
- 3.86. Several suggestions to be included within the policy were; define mineral safeguarding area, encourage prior extraction, impact on biodiversity, impact on landscape, which minerals are safeguarded, clarity on which alternative developments can override the safeguard.

Policy 32: Waste Management

- 3.87. The final Policy of the Draft Local Plan received 7 comments.
- 3.88. Three of the comments related to Mineral Extraction and were pleased with the recognition; but felt perhaps it would be better suited in either Policy 30 or Policy 31.
- 3.89. On the topic of Waste Management, one respondent would like to see support for waste minimisation reinstated. More clarity on the approach to re-use, recycling and recovery with the National Park was also requested.
- 3.90. Another would like the policy to steer high risk waste and treatment facility away from sensitive locations (e.g. housing). Conversely, it has been suggested that the distance waste is transported is reduced and located near settlements where it is created.

Draft Local Plan

- 3.91. A total of 11 comments were related to the Draft Local Plan generally or the Preferred Options Consultation process.
- 3.92. Two comments supported the overall vision, priorities and policies of the Draft Local Plan. One felt it was too content heavy and another would prefer a plain English version which would engage the public better, but accepted it may not be robust enough in planning that way.
- 3.93. Northumberland County Council felt the overall strategy fits well with that set out in the County's own Draft Local Plan. Particularly in the areas of strategic priorities, spatial objectives, sustainability and general development principles; reflecting the key role of the National Park in terms of the rural economy, tourism, ecology, landscape and the historic environment. The recognition of the interdependence of the Gateway settlements was supported. One suggestion was a fuller explanation of the relationship between neighbourhood plans and the Local Plan, especially where there is overlap between the local planning authority areas.
- 3.94. One comment asked for clarification on the consistency of the use of the terms 'Historic Environment' and 'Cultural Heritage' and whether one encompasses the other. A request to add a definition of 'Disturbed' and 'Undisturbed' land, and separately 'Natural Capital', into the glossary was also received. Another suggested updates to references with the NPPF.

Supplementary Documents

- 3.95. Two additional comments were submitted on the supplementary documentation, namely the Habitats Regulations Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal.
- 3.96. The comment on the Habitats Regulations Assessment agreed with the conclusions of this assessment, particularly as no housing sites are allocated for development within the National Park.
- 3.97. The sole feedback on the Sustainability Appraisal considered that it provided an appropriate framework for the assessment of the Preferred Options Draft Plan – with no further comments.

Appendix 1 – Youth Consultation Feedback

We talked to approx. 15 young people at each session with age ranges from 9 – 14/15.

Bellingham:

Group 1:

Positives about living in Bellingham:

Good broadband

Enough housing

Late night shopping in the town hall

Bus service is ok

Negatives:

Need another version of the co-op

Play Park needs updating with more facilities for older children; this could include film screenings in the hall

Not enough parking in the village; exacerbated by tourists

Parking on paths is dangerous

Bellingham needs tourist but its also a negative if too many

Group 2:

Positives:

Like countryside and being surrounded by nature

Good plays park

Negatives:

Parking on double yellow lines

Not enough activities and focus on young people stuff i.e. in the town hall. Ideas include indoor sot play, gymnastics club, swimming pool and trampolines

Don't like school changes (three tier to two); little consultation and rushed in timescales.

More shops would be good with a bigger range pf produce

Group 3:

Negatives:

No nets for goal posts (West Woodburn)

Bellingham Play Park could do with a better climbing frame

Too many cars and too many visitors

No bus service in West Woodburn

Miss out on some activities etc due to lack of transport

Otterburn:

Group 1:

Positives about living in Otterburn:

Living in the countryside

Transport is ok, but still usually reliant on parents/car for journeys

Swimming pool at Riverdale

Hexham ok for leisure centre and forum for pictures

Local litter picks

Negatives:

Litter left by visitors in the main (see last comment above which is done to counteract this)

Group 2:

Positives:

Lots of wildlife

Youth group and local park

Visits to Hexham

Local shop is good

Some (limited) children's activities in the hall i.e. Halloween and Christmas

Happy with what we have

Negatives:

Play equipment in the park is more for younger children, so could do with more for older children

No films in hall and more year round activities/opportunities for young people in hall would be good

Cars parking on the pavement since Le Petit Chateau opened. Not enough village parking

Group 3:

Positives:

Countryside; sheep and trees etc

Broadband is ok but downloading can be a bit slow. Worst in Kielder

Still able to access out of school activities as can use service bus rather than school bus to get so far home

Negatives:

Have to be driven everywhere, no buses to Kielder and Otterburn isn't great for buses either

Parking is an issue

More healthy competition for shops would be better

Limited facilities; pool would be good or Go Ape or drive in cinema

Public loos aren't clean at Otterburn

Not allowed to use the school field outside of term time