



Modification Schedule (Local Centres) for the Inspector of the Northumberland National Park Local Plan

Policy DM3 - Part 3

For part 3, we consider that removing '*within a Local Centre*' and replacing with '*within a Named Settlement*' would allow us to seek affordable housing even if such schemes come forward outside a Local Centre. We believe that part 2 of Policy ST4 requiring development to '*be proportionate to the size of each settlement*' would ensure that any unsuitably large schemes are not acceptable.

Policy DM3 - Part 4

Part 4 pertains to reducing the proportion of affordable housing if the site is not financially viable. We believe that, should part 3 be modified as above, then part 4 should not be specific to a Local Centre either, as affordable housing could be delivered elsewhere.

We have considered whether this approach is also acceptable not in a Local Centre, and whether the full proportion should be sought for example in a Smaller Village. We have concluded that the delivery of homes remains the priority and the approach of part 4 should be applicable to any scheme above five dwellings. We also believe part 5 offers a satisfactory solution where on-site delivery would not be viable.

Policy DM3 - Part 5

Along with parts 3 and 4, we have also concluded that '*within a Local Centre*' should be removed from part 5 and replaced by '*within a Named Settlement*'. The Authority would be happy to accept payment of a commuted sum in lieu of on-site delivery of affordable housing where it would not be viable. This would be acceptable in any location, excluding Rural Exception Sites (covered in parts 1 and 2).

As above we propose the following changes to Policy DM3 (SoM44 has been left in at part 4):

Policy DM3: Affordable Housing

1. In order to meet specifically identified local affordable housing needs, the development of 100% affordable dwellings will be permitted as an exception to policy on appropriate sites:
 - a) Adjoining a Local Centre;
 - b) Adjoining a Smaller Village, provided a Sustainability Appraisal demonstrates that the homes will contribute to the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the settlement.
2. Proposals on exceptions sites will only be permitted where:
 - a) The need for the proposed number, type, size and tenure of affordable dwellings is supported by an up-to-date local housing needs assessment and the proposed rent and/or mortgage costs are affordable for local people;
 - b) The number, design, materials and proposed layout of the dwellings are appropriate to the size, form and character of the settlement;
 - c) There is no conflict with the NNP Landscape Character Assessment and the proposal is supported by an up-to-date visual impact assessment;
 - d) Robust arrangements are put in place to ensure that the dwellings remain affordable to the community in perpetuity;
 - e) Effective community engagement has been undertaken.
3. ~~Within a Local Centre (where~~ Where the site within a Named Settlement is capable of accommodating more than five dwellings, ~~50%~~ 50% of dwellings provided will be affordable.
4. Where a scheme is proposed ~~within a Local Centre~~ within a Named Settlement and there are exceptional circumstances which demonstrate that the delivery of the required proportion of affordable housing would not be financially viable, the Authority will consider ~~an element of~~ a larger proportion of principal residence housing as part of a ~~revised~~ proposal.
5. On sites ~~within a Local Centre~~ within a Named Settlement where between 6 and 10 dwellings would be provided, the Authority will accept the payment of a commuted sum in lieu of the on-site delivery of the relevant proportion of affordable housing required provided that it is demonstrated that on-site delivery (including any element of principal residence housing) would not be viable.
6. The occupancy of all affordable dwellings will be restricted to those in need of affordable housing who also have a local connection in accordance with the criteria set out in this Local Plan.

In light of the proposed changes to Policy DM3 above, we believe there is now very little policy difference between a Local Centre and a Smaller Village. Therefore we propose in Policy ST4 to remove this separation and instead have one category of 'Named Settlements' as follows:

Policy ST4: Spatial Strategy

~~1. Development will be guided in accordance with the following settlement hierarchy:~~

~~Local Centres Named Settlements~~

~~(Alwinton, Charlton, Elsdon, Falstone, Greenhaugh, Harbottle, Holystone, Ingram, Kirknewton, Lanehead, Rochester, and Stannersburn and Stonehaugh.)~~

~~Smaller Villages~~

~~Charlton, Ingram, Kirknewton and Stonehaugh.~~

~~2. 1. Development should support the service function of Local Centres and the sustainability of Smaller Villages the Named Settlements by providing additional small scale housing (principal residence or affordable) and employment premises, new facilities and services (including tourism and recreation) that would be proportionate to the size of each settlement.~~

~~Open Countryside (including farmsteads and hamlets)~~

~~3. 2. Development will only be permitted in Open Countryside in the following cases:~~

- ~~a) Where development reuses a building in a way that supports an economic use or meets the need for principal residence or affordable housing, and is also in accordance with Policy DM6;~~
- ~~b) Where there is an essential need for development to meet the needs of farming, forestry, tourism, recreation and other rural enterprise or land management activities;~~
- ~~c) Where it is essential to meet social or community needs and it can be demonstrated that there are no other suitable and available locations within the Named Settlements Local Centres and Smaller Villages;~~
- ~~d) Where the proposal is supported by other relevant Local Plan policies.~~

As a result of these policy changes, the supporting text requires amending as follows:

4.1 Local Centres Named Settlements: These settlements may have a 'self-contained' character, with ~~some~~ facilities serving the wider community. Some settlements may not have facilities at all and they may be 'shared' amongst groups of settlements. The Local Plan allows for small-scale development in or ~~adjacent adjoining to~~ these areas to meet local housing, employment and community needs, including 'principal residence' housing on infill sites. No development boundaries or limits are defined and the suitability of a site for development will be defined on a case-by-case basis.

~~4.2 Smaller Villages: The settlements included within this definition have more limited or no facilities at all, with any that are available often being 'shared' amongst groups of settlements and therefore a limited amount of new development may be forthcoming or is envisaged. The Local Plan allows for small scale development in or adjoining these areas to meet identified needs. No development boundaries or limits are defined and the suitability of a site for development will be considered on a case-by-case basis considering relevant factors.~~

4.3 Open Countryside: Outside of the Named Settlements Local Centres and Smaller Villages, the rest of the National Park is classed as 'open countryside' where

development will not be permitted, save in a very few circumstances. Open countryside is defined as areas with no development, sporadic development or isolated buildings. Whether a building is isolated will be determined on a case-by-case basis considering relevant factors.

- 4.4 The best location for most development is in or on the edge of settlements that already have a range of services and infrastructure, and that are more likely to offer access to public transport. The objective is to improve the long-term viability of local communities by supporting existing services through new development whilst protecting open countryside from development that does not need to be located there. Development will be permitted outside settlements where it supports farms and rural enterprises that derive their primary inputs from the land or where it provides public infrastructure, or would otherwise comply with specific policies in the Local Plan.

Consequential Changes

As a result of the changes proposed to Policy ST4 above, there are some further consequential changes, mainly addressing existing references to Local Centres and Smaller Villages. The first of these is contained in Policy ST5:

Policy ST5: New Housing

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3. New housing, providing Principal Residence occupancy, will be permitted:

a. Within Named Settlements ~~Local Centres and Smaller Villages~~ where it comprises conversion of an existing building or a small infill development providing principal residence or affordable housing.

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The second of these is Policy DM1:

Policy DM1: Community Facilities and Infrastructure

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3. The provision of new community facilities will be permitted:

a) Within one of the Named Settlements ~~Local Centres or one of the Smaller Villages~~;

b) In other locations, as an exception to Policy ST4, where it can be clearly demonstrated that there are no suitable sites in a Named Settlement ~~Local Centre or Smaller Village~~ and that this would be in accordance with other relevant local plan policies.

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The next change is the only remaining policy difference between a Local Centre and a Smaller Village, part 1 of Policy DM3, which requires a Sustainability Appraisal for a Rural Exception Site adjoining a Smaller Village (but not a Local Centre). The Authority considers amending part 1 of Policy DM3 as follows:

Policy DM3: Affordable Housing

1. In order to meet specifically identified local affordable housing needs, the development of 100% affordable dwellings will be permitted as an exception to policy on appropriate sites adjoining a Named Settlement,

~~a) Adjoining a Local Centre;~~

~~b) Adjoining a Smaller Village,~~ provided a Sustainability Appraisal demonstrates that the homes will contribute to the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the settlement where appropriate.

...

A Sustainability Appraisal may not be required in all cases but the addition of the wording '*where appropriate*' allows the Authority to seek one where it is deemed necessary on a case-by-case basis.

Finally, it would be proposed to rename 'Local Centres' as 'Named Settlements' in the glossary and remove the definition of 'Villages'.

Conclusion

We hope this approach to remove 'within in a Local Centre' from parts 3-5 of Policy DM3 is acceptable. Then as there would be little policy difference between a Local Centre and a Smaller Village, we would accept merging these into one category called Named Settlements in Policy ST4. As a result, references to Local Centres and Smaller Villages could then be modified as set out above.

After we have received your outline of main modifications we can incorporate the above changes into a single schedule if required.