



YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority

Annual Monitoring Report 2008-9



Clockwise: Langcliffe Paper Mill; Scott Hill, Bainbridge; Sedbergh Auction Mart; Swinden Quarry.

Yorkshire Dales Local Plan Yorkshire Dales Development Framework

November 2009

Abbreviations

Abbreviations used in main body of the report only are as follows:

AMR	Annual Monitoring Report (measures of the impact of planning policy)
DPD	Development Plan Document (a part of the Yorkshire Dales Development Framework that sets out policy and is subject to examination by a Planning Inspector)
LDF	Local Development Framework (the local development plan that replaces Local Plans and County Structure Plans)
LDS	Local Development Scheme (the Authority's project plan for the YDDF, giving target dates for delivery of various policy and procedural documents)
PPS	Planning Policy Statement (National Planning Policy that the Authority's policies are required to conform with)
RSS	Regional Spatial Strategy (The regional plan for Yorkshire and the Humber that the Authority's policies are required to conform with)
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement (The Authority's strategy to engage the public in planning policy and planning applications)
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document (detailed guidance and explanation that builds upon established policies)
YDDF	Yorkshire Dales Development Framework (the LDF for the National Park)
YDNPA	Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

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Executive Summary & Conclusions

The Annual Monitoring Report

- The Authority is required to publish an Annual Monitoring Report each December to review how planning policy is being implemented in the National Park. The Annual Monitoring Report has been adapted to the Authority's particular circumstances whilst still fitting within the format intended by government guidance. The report covers the period 1st April 2008 to 31st March 2009.

The Yorkshire Dales Development Framework

- The 2006 Local Plan continues to form the development plan for the National Park. As it is now three years since the Plan's adoption, the Authority was required to apply to 'save' its policies beyond this period. An assessment was made of the various policies in the Plan to determine those that continued to be relevant and necessary. In total, 90 out of the 98 original policies have been saved, with the remainder omitted on the grounds that they were either outdated or no longer necessary. The volume of policies saved is illustrative of the continued relevance of the majority of 2006 Local Plan policies, and of their suitability for use in planning decisions.
- Work on replacing the Local Plan has begun with a review of housing policy. A Housing Development Plan Document is being progressed and significant steps have been taken towards the objective of improving local and affordable housing supply through proactive allocation of sites.

General Planning Monitoring

- The number of planning applications received & processed by the Authority has fallen to its lowest level in recent years. The planning application approval rate in the National Park during the year was 86%, and remains higher than corresponding percentages for other National Park Authorities and England as a whole. The Authority has continued to meet statutory targets for the determination of minor applications within statutory timescales, and only narrowly missed the target for major applications.
- The Authority has initiated important structural changes to its development control and enforcement functions, with the objective of providing a more efficient customer-orientated service. This has involved the transition towards a team-based approach, with improved integration between development control and enforcement, together with a better system for dealing with enquiries.

Local Plan Monitoring

- Housing issues remain very prominent in the Authority's planning remit. The impacts of the change in the Local Plan's housing strategy are beginning to be felt. Of particular note is the reduced emphasis on unrestricted market housing, which has fallen from 75% of all housing approvals under 1996 policies to 35% under 2006 policies. There have been corresponding gains in the proportion of affordable and local needs housing permissions.

- The monitoring year itself has seen 19 affordable housing completions, however there is concern about the continued supply of this housing due to a lack of schemes coming forward. Slight drops in average house prices have done little to address affordability problems, particularly when income levels and strict lending regimes are taken into consideration. There is a growing supply of local needs occupancy restricted housing in the Park, and while mindful of the difficulties caused by the downturn in the housing market, the Authority remains committed to maintaining this resource in the longer term interests of community vitality.
- Two high profile applications have been considered during the year for the redevelopment of the former Langcliffe Paper Mill and Sedbergh Auction Mart sites. Each proposal has raised important policy considerations, notably the merits of 'live-work' units and the need to protect town centre vitality. Meanwhile, an important study of employment trends in the National Park has identified a series of opportunities and threats to the rural economy, and will be influential in shaping future policy.
- There are growing signs that design issues, above and beyond the more conventional responses accustomed to in the Park, will become more and more relevant in the future. The capacity of the Park to accommodate more contemporary designs, together with the sustainability of new buildings, is already being tested by development proposals. The Authority is seeking to adopt a pro-active approach to these issues through a revised Design Guide.
- Visitor facility issues have featured prominently during the monitoring year, with two key themes emerging. The first concerns the ability of the Authority to protect what already exists, by maintaining a suitable range of facilities that will promote opportunities for all sectors of society to enjoy the Park's special qualities. The second concerns the potential to accommodate new forms of visitor accommodation. Both issues have been exposed by proposals during the monitoring year, and have brought into question how Local Plan policies and the Authority's wider objectives can be brought to bear on proposals that go to the heart of National Park purposes.

Ongoing Developments

- A major review of rural housing and economic policy – 'the Taylor Report' - was completed during the monitoring year. This report has already proven to be very influential in shaping attitudes on how rural issues of housing affordability and economic prosperity can be tackled. This runs alongside a number of important reviews of national government policy that will be influential in shaping the direction of this Authority's own development plan.

1. Introduction

Annual Monitoring Report

- 1.1 The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) is one of the documents forming part of the LDF. All local planning authorities are required to produce an AMR, incorporating the principles set out in government guidance¹.
- 1.2 In broad terms, AMRs are reflective of the growing emphasis upon effective delivery of planning policy objectives. The AMR allows planning authorities to review the progress they are making in preparing LDFs. They also allow the impact of existing policies to be measured and ensure that an assessment is made in terms of whether they are achieving their objectives, are in conformity with emerging regional and national guidance and are contributing to sustainable development. This in turn allows policy areas in need of amendment to be identified.
- 1.3 This is the fifth AMR the Authority has produced. The requirement for AMRs was enacted along with the new planning system under the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and is therefore aimed at documents forming part of the LDF. The Authority has not yet adopted policies under the new LDF system, and therefore none are at the stage where they can be monitored.
- 1.4 Policies contained within the current Local Plan are automatically saved for 3 years from the date of adoption (April 2006) and the Authority may apply to the Secretary of State to extend this period. The process of saving the policies has now duly taken place, and details are contained later in this section. The saved Local Plan policies will form part of the LDF until they are superseded. As a result, the AMR is currently being used to monitor existing adopted Local Plan policies until such time as they are replaced.
- 1.5 The Authority is required to submit its AMR at the end of December. It covers the financial year 1st April 2008 to 31st March 2009. This lag can be problematical, since events move on. Consequently information after 31st March 2009 is included where it is deemed to be helpful. Notable examples are found in sections dealing with progress against the Local Development Scheme (LDS) and the review of policy development.

¹ Section 35 Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act (2004); Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning (2008), para 4.47; Local Development Framework Monitoring: A Good Practice Guide (2005).

2. Monitoring Methodologies

- 2.1 As in previous years, the Authority has adopted a pragmatic approach to monitoring that is best suited to its particular circumstances. While government guidance recommends an approach based around objectives, targets and indicators, this is not considered the most appropriate approach for this Authority at this particular point in time.
- 2.2 The AMR has been developed as a tool for monitoring LDFs. The YDDF is still in its formative stages of development and therefore cannot be meaningfully monitored. While it is equally legitimate to monitor the impact Local Plan policies are having, there are no predetermined targets or indicators against which to do so. Furthermore, only very modest levels of development are encountered in the National Park, partly a function of material development constraints, but also of deep rurality. This makes indicators and targets problematical, particularly on an annual basis, where figures can be skewed markedly by individual developments.
- 2.3 As a result, longer term trends are often more reliable indicators of the impact of planning policy. The report therefore relies largely on a general commentary of particular cases of note and other trends that have been noted. The report does however incorporate the core indicators required by the government together with a number of other local indicators that are considered suitable in this Authority's particular circumstances. Further information about the use of indicators in this AMR is given below.
- 2.4 Once again the report has been widened out beyond a review of planning policy to encompass the whole planning function, since development control and enforcement form a vital part of the implementation of planning policy. Also included are elements of the overall departmental function which have obvious knock-on impacts on the level of service and policy implementation achieved.

Indicators

- 2.5 While indicators can be problematical in a National Park context, they have been employed where necessary according to government guidance. The types of indicators recommended by government guidance are:

Contextual Indicators

- 2.6 These provide an overall picture of the social, economic and environmental characteristics of the Park, presenting a backdrop against which to assess the impact of policy.
- 2.7 The contextual indicators have been drawn from the 2008/9 Corporate Plan and are included in Appendix 1. There has been little change in many of these indicators from previous years' AMRs, since many are only monitored periodically. Where important changes have occurred, these are noted in the main body of the report.

Core Output Indicators

- 2.8 These are the statutory indicators the Authority is required to collect and report to the government. These are listed in Appendix 2. The information contained in these core indicators is of limited relevance to National Parks given the levels of development encountered.
- 2.9 In providing information of the Core Indicators, in previous years the Authority has been wholly reliant on data relating to permissions, rather than completions. During the monitoring year the Authority has instituted a housing monitoring system so that far more reliable housing information is now available, including completions information.

Local Indicators

- 2.10 These indicators can be established by the Authority to suit its own circumstances. They are included within the main body of the report where it has been deemed useful to do so, and particularly in the sections dealing with housing and general planning reporting.

Significant Effects Indicators

- 2.11 Significant effects indicators are developed alongside the sustainability appraisal. They seek to establish the broader, more substantial and longer term impacts of policy upon some of the fundamental characteristics of the National Park. Since the current sustainability appraisal is being developed alongside emerging policies forming part of the YDDF, it is not considered appropriate to apply its indicators retrospectively to Local Plan policies. Full details of the proposed significant effects indicators can however be found in the sustainability appraisal scoping report².

² Refer to Appendix 4 of the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report - http://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/appendices_-_sa_scoping_report.pdf

3. Local Development Framework Progress

Approach to the LDF

- 3.1 This Authority is in a slightly different position from many other planning authorities by virtue of the relatively late adoption of the Local Plan (2006). A Core Strategy would normally form the central point of reference for the LDF, and it is this document that the majority of planning authorities have prepared first. Given the recent adoption of the Local Plan, the Authority elected not to pursue a wholesale review of local planning strategy. While the content and processes of Local Plan and LDF systems are different, it would be difficult to envisage that a Core Strategy prepared now would yield a markedly different overall strategy from the current Local Plan.
- 3.2 During the monitoring year the Authority applied to have the majority of the existing Local Plan policies saved where it was considered that they were still necessary and justifiable. The Authority proposed that the vast majority – 91 out of 98 – of these policies be saved, and the Government Office subsequently ratified the saving of 90 of the 2006 Local Plan policies. Further detail of the process of saving Local Plan policies are contained in the dedicated section below.
- 3.3 This decision is demonstrative of the continued relevance and applicability of the vast majority of the 2006 Local Plan policies, and the limited benefit in a wholesale review of policy at this time. It is accepted that the need to review the saved policies will increase over time, and this report will note where gaps in policy have emerged, or where departures from adopted policy are warranted. These instances are however very much in the minority, and the Local Plan continues to provide a robust and contemporary basis for planning decisions in the National Park.
- 3.4 The Authority's appeal record (see Table 7 in following section) also reveals that no appeals have been lost on the fundamental principles of Local Plan policy, and so Inspectors are continuing to give significant weight to the saved policies. This should not detract from the fact that, in a number of instances, Inspectors have applied an interpretation of these policies that is not shared by Officers or Members. Where applications have been patently contrary to policy, appeals have consistently been dismissed. This all acts to reinforce the message that the Authority's policies continue to be fit for purpose when subjected to independent analysis.

Housing DPD

- 3.5 At the Local Plan Inquiry, the Inspector's report suggested that it would be advantageous to review housing policy early on in the new LDF process to take account of emerging regional strategy and the dynamism of this particular area of policy. While a Core Strategy could have achieved some elements of a review of housing policies, it could not have reviewed some of the more detailed areas, for example specific site allocations. By reviewing housing policy alongside all other areas of policy, delays would inevitably have accrued, not least as a result of the extensive evidence gathering the Authority would have needed to carry out. A Core Strategy would also have lacked the necessary detail to inform many development control decisions.

- 3.6 As a result, the Authority decided to prioritise a review of housing policy, and began preparation of a Housing DPD in the summer of 2007. This started with initial consultation on 'Issues & Options' for the future of housing policy. This included five public meetings where the discussion and comments received were lively, informative and influential.
- 3.7 Following this consultation, a working group of members and officers met on a number of occasions to discuss which of the options presented should be selected as the Authority's preferred approach. It was clear from the consultation exercise that there was a general consensus in favour of a more pro-active approach to the provision of affordable and local needs housing. As a result, the Authority has elected to pursue the allocation of land for affordable and local needs housing as part of its new policy approach.
- 3.8 Before land can be allocated, the Authority has to be satisfied that any sites will be deliverable in the future. This is fundamentally dependent upon whether developments were capable of being economically viable, and whether suitable land for development was likely to be available. Both of these areas required further investigation.
- 3.9 In terms of economic viability, housing developments must generate enough revenue to cover the various costs associated with development, including land costs, build costs, professional fees, developer profit etc. Since the Authority is only concerned with allocating land for affordable and local needs housing, it should be expected that the development will generate much more modest revenues than open market housing would. Consequently, it was necessary to understand the relative proportions of local needs and affordable housing that would be required to generate sufficient revenue to cover development costs. This is a specialist area, and so, at the start of 2008, the Authority commissioned some research by a team of consultants. The consultants conducted workshops and interviews, involving developers, landowners and housing associations, to determine the various factors that would influence viability of housing sites. They subsequently made a recommendation to the Housing Working Group, which has now decided that a mix of 50% affordable and 50% local needs housing would constitute a feasible mix.
- 3.10 Land availability is dependent upon the willingness of individual landowners to release their sites for housing development. To this end, the Authority conducted a 'call for sites' in January & February 2009, in order to gain an insight into the range of sites that may be available for development. The call for sites was publicised widely, and resulted in a total of 118 expressions of interest being received. The Authority then invited public responses on the range of sites suggested during March & April. This has subsequently been followed by a shortlisting process, omitting those sites that were clearly unsuitable for housing development, and taking those sites that have greater potential forward for further technical investigation.
- 3.11 While site allocation forms the cornerstone of the review of housing policy, the Authority has also been working on other areas of policy. This includes determining those settlements in which new build and conversions will be permitted, appropriate

definitions of local need, Gypsy & Traveller Policy and a number of other areas. It is intended that a draft Housing DPD incorporating all areas of housing policy, together with the site-specific allocations, will be made available for public consultation during the New Year.

Minerals & Waste DPD

- 3.12 The Authority had intended to produce a Minerals & Waste DPD alongside the Housing DPD in light of the fact that the Minerals and Waste Local Plan (1998) was becoming somewhat dated.
- 3.13 Subsequently the Authority consulted on initial Issues and Options paper for minerals and waste policy. It became apparent from consultation responses that there were very few strategic minerals planning options left to consider, since national and regional planning policy already provided a clear direction on these issues. Additionally, selected policies from the Minerals & Waste Local Plan were saved in September 2007, and will remain in force until such time as they are no longer in conformity with national or regional policy.
- 3.14 The Authority also has, or will shortly, determine applications that will decide the future of quarrying operations at a number of the National Park's largest quarries, while there have also been a number of closures in recent years. This will mean that the future of a large contingent of the National Park's quarries will be determined in advance of any review of policy.
- 3.15 Consequently, in May 2009 the Authority took the decision to cease progression of a separate Minerals & Waste DPD, but to take forward this review of policy as part of a future Core Strategy.

Statement of Community Involvement

- 3.16 The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is the Authority's strategy for engaging the public in local planning policy and consultation on planning applications. Following consultation, a final version was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in July 2008. In September 2008, the Planning Inspectorate declared the SCI to be a 'sound' document that is fit for purpose, and the document was subsequently adopted by the Authority in November 2008.

Supplementary Planning Documents

- 3.17 The Authority is currently preparing a revised Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to replace the current one published in 2002. A draft for consultation is anticipated later this year. Further information on the development of this document, and some of the issues it will consider, are contained later in this report. The Authority is also considering an additional SPD document covering Landscape Character, a decision on which will be taken in due course.

LDS Timetable

- 3.18 The LDS is a programme management tool to guide the production of the LDF. It sets out timescales and milestones for the production of the various constituent documents. The most up to date version of the LDS was produced in April 2007. As noted in last year's AMR there had been slippage against the targets set out in this version of the LDS.
- 3.19 A revised version of the LDS has now been approved by the Authority and will be submitted to Government Office for Yorkshire & the Humber in due course. This will take account of delays in the preparation of the Housing DPD and Design Guide SPD, together with the cessation of the Minerals & Waste DPD.

Saved Local Plan Policies

- 3.20 Local Plan policies are automatically 'saved' for 3 years from the date of adoption, and thereafter by agreement with the regional Government Office. The 3 year 'saved' period in respect of the Yorkshire Dales Local Plan expired in April 2009, and so during the monitoring year, the Authority undertook the process of applying to save the policies beyond this period.
- 3.21 The 2006 Local Plan contained 98 policies. In November 2008 the Authority resolved to apply to have 91 of these policies saved. Those policies that the Authority elected not to save, and the reasons for doing so, are listed in Table 1 below:

Table 1 – Local Plan Policies (2006) not saved beyond April 2009

Policy No.	Description	Reason for not saving	Instances used April 2006 - March 2008
F4	Important Agricultural Land	Repeats national policy (PPS7)	0
U3	Development by Water and Sewage Undertakers	Policy is superfluous. Proposals could be judged against normal material planning considerations.	5
NE2	International Sites of Nature Conservation Importance	National policy (PPS9) and guidance (Circular 06/05) provides adequate coverage.	9
B2	Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Other Nationally Important	Scheduled monument consent is regulated outside the planning system and national policy provides adequate coverage (PPG16).	8
EP2	Flood Risk	Policy superseded by PPS 25	14
EP3	Contaminated and Unstable Land	Repeats national policy in PPG 14 and PPS 23.	1
SR3	Recreational Development	This is interpretation and not really policy.	2

- 3.22 The reasons for not saving policies typically relate to the fact that they didn't contribute added value above and beyond national planning policy or guidance. The government are also keen to ensure that unnecessary repetition of national policy does not occur. It can also be seen from the table above that these policies have seldom been cited in planning decisions in the recent past.
- 3.23 The Government Office for Yorkshire & the Humber has subsequently confirmed that 90 Local Plan policies should be saved, including the omission of the 7 policies requested by the Authority (listed above). In addition, a further one policy - U5 (Large Scale Renewables) – was omitted by GOYH. This policy has never been used in a planning decision, as all renewable proposals to date have been small scale. The Authority nonetheless believed that the policy was worthy of retention, since it provided explicit protection for the valued landscape of the National Park against intrusive large scale technologies. Furthermore, it also defined what was considered to be 'large scale' in the context of wind turbines, and thus provided clarity on what would certainly not be acceptable. National planning policy³ does however make it clear that policies that are considered to be unduly restrictive on renewable energy proposals will not be allowable, and in the instance of Policy U5 the Government Office has interpreted this to be the case.
- 3.24 The decision not to save this policy does raise some concerns about the degree to which the National Park's special qualities will continue to be protected against large scale renewable proposals. It is clear that the wording of policy U5 very much stemmed from that contained in national planning policy, which emphasises that renewable energy proposals will only be permitted in National Parks where it can be demonstrated that the objectives of the designation will not be compromised and adverse effects are clearly outweighed by other benefits. Consequently much the same safeguards still exist, albeit that there is no longer clarity over what will be considered to be 'large scale'.
- 3.25 The remaining 90 Local Plan policies will continue to be saved until such time as they are replaced by the LDF, or are no longer in conformity with national or regional policy.

³ Planning Policy Statement 22 (2004) – para 1 (iii)

4. General Planning Monitoring

4.1 This section relates to the Authority's development control function, and seeks to highlight the trends revealed by the number and type of planning applications received, and the way in which they have been dealt with. It also embraces the Planning Committee and enforcement functions of the Authority.

Application Caseload

4.2 The number of planning applications received and determined by the Authority has fallen to the lowest level seen in recent years. This is not a phenomenon that is peculiar to this Authority, as can be seen from the comparative figures for England as a whole (Table 2). Planning application caseloads also only represent a proportion of the department's overall workload, which also embraces a substantial commitment to informal pre-application enquiries, and the monitoring of developments after the grant of planning permission.

*Table 2 – Planning Applications Received & Determined – England & YDNPA.
Source: CLG/ONS Statistical Releases; YDNPA Records.*

Year	England		YDNPA	
	Received	Determined	Received	Determined
1998/9	501000	466000	678	636
1999/00	521000	479000	664	680
2000/01	545000	498000	748	733
2001/02	583000	534000	768	731
2002/03	635000	586000	743	786
2003/04	675000	625000	852	813
2004/05	689000	645000	804	763
2005/06	643000	599000	776	841
2006/07	644000	587000	680	732
2007/08	649000	595000	710	672
2008/09	507000	489000	600	634

Application Approval Rates

4.3 Planning application approval rates have dropped slightly in 2008/9 as compared to the previous two years. Approval rates in the National Park do however exceed the average for all National Park Authorities and across all of England (Table 3). The generally minor nature of most development in the National Park, together with the Authority's commitment to negotiation and pre-application advice, are likely to be influential factors in this approval rate.

Table 3 – Planning Application Approval Rates – England, National Parks & YDNPA. Source: CLG/ONS Statistical Releases; YDNPA Records.

Quarter	England	National Parks	YDNPA
Apr – Jun 2006	82%	85%	89%
Jul – Sep 2006	82%	84%	
Oct - Dec 2006	82%	84%	
Jan – Mar 2007	82%	86%	89 %
Apr – Jun 2007	83%	85%	
Jul – Sep 2007	82%	86%	
Oct – Dec 2007	82%	86%	
Jan – Mar 2008	81%	83%	86%
Apr - Jun 2008	82%	85%	
Jul - Sept 2008	83%	84%	
Oct - Dec 2008	82%	84%	
Jan - Mar 2009	83%	83%	

Determination Targets

- 4.4 All planning authorities across the country are required to meet statutory targets for the determination of applications within agreed timescales. For the majority of applications this timescale is 8 weeks, however 13 weeks are afforded for particularly significant applications. The Authority continues to meet targets for 8 week applications, albeit that performance has dropped slightly compared to the previous year (Table 4).
- 4.5 The Authority fell short of the target for the determination of major applications. As in previous years, these particular targets pose a problem for the Authority given that relatively few applications of this scale are received. Just 8 major applications were determined during the year, so the margin by which the Authority failed to meet the statutory target is just one application. A performance review into the handling of major applications has now been instituted to consider how this issue can be addressed, and will report its findings to Audit & Review Committee in due course.

Table 4 - Applications determined within statutory timescales. Source: YDNPA records (Corporate Plan 2008/9)

Application Type	2007/8	2008/9	National target
Major (13 week)	44%	50%	60%
Minor (8 week)	76%	69%	65%
Other (8 week)	90%	82%	80%

Policy Usage & Development Types

- 4.6 Policy usage and application types closely correspond with trends seen in previous years, and is strongly linked to prevailing development types seen in the Park (Table 5). The vast majority of proposals are relatively small scale, and continue to be dominated by domestic alterations and extensions. The volume of listed

buildings in the National Park is also influential on the profile of application types processed.

Table 5 – Applications Determined by Type 2008/9. Source: YDNPA records

Application Type	Number	Percentage
Householder	243	38.3%
Other minor development	155	24.4%
Listed Building	84	13.3%
Dwellings	57	9%
Change of Use	41	6.5%
Lawful Development Certificates	28	4.4%
Conservation Area	7	1.1%
Advertisements	7	1.1%
Retail	6	0.9%
General Industry	3	0.5%
Minerals	2	0.3%
Office/Research	1	0.2%
Total	634	

- 4.7 Given the importance of aesthetic considerations and the historic environment within a National Park context, it is not surprising to see design and heritage themes featuring highly in the list of commonly used policies (Table 6). By the same token, there are a number of Local Plan policies that are seldom used. Those policies that were considered superfluous were not been saved beyond April 2009, however those that are rarely used, but nonetheless perform a potentially useful function, have been retained beyond this period (see section 3 above).

Table 6 – Policy usage 2008/9. Source: YDNPA records

Policy	Title	Instances used
GP2	General Design Policy	388
B14	Extensions and Alterations to Buildings	225
B7	Building Design	174
B13	Listed Buildings	136
GP1	National Park Purposes	113
B8	Conservation Areas	112
B15	Conversion of Traditional Buildings	51
TA1	Protection of Public Rights of Way	34
NE7	Protection of Species	33
TA12	Access from the Highway	30
F1	Agricultural Buildings and Structures	27

Appeals

- 4.8 As in 2007/8, the Authority's appeal record continues to be mixed, with 45% of appeals against the Authority's decisions being successful (Table 7). Once again, the sample is relatively limited, and the range of issues dealt with is diverse, so it is difficult to draw clear conclusions.

Table 7 – Appeals Determined 2008/9. Source: YDNPA records.

	Dismissed	Allowed	Total
Planning	9 (50%)	9 (50%)	18
Enforcement	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	2
Total	11 (55%)	9 (45%)	20

- 4.9 No appeals have been allowed where the Authority's policies are considered to be fundamentally flawed or unreasonable. In all instances, the reasons for overturning the Authority's decision rest with detailed interpretation of policies, or other procedural matters. These typically involved judgements as to appropriate design, landscape impact, impact on neighbours and use of conditions⁴.
- 4.10 In two instances, appeals were lodged against the decisions of Planning Committee, rather than against the outcome of a delegated decision. Further details of these cases are given in the Planning Committee section below.

Customer Satisfaction

- 4.11 During the monitoring year, the Authority launched a structural review of its Development Control service. The main objective of the review was to identify ways in which customer service could be improved, but also to provide improved support for Planning & Enforcement Officers.
- 4.12 The review concluded that the previous system of Planning Officers working within dedicated geographical areas should be replaced with a new team-orientated approach. This new approach sees two teams covering the north (Richmondshire & South Lakeland) and south (Craven) parts of the National Park, each consisting of three Planning Officers. Each team has a Principal Planning Officer with responsibility for day to day management of workloads.
- 4.13 In addition to the area-based approach, the review resulted in the creation of two new Planning Assistant posts, providing crucial technical support for each team and dealing with general planning enquiries. Finally, the Enforcement Team was also incorporated into the new team structure, improving integration between the two disciplines.
- 4.14 The changes will help ensure a more even distribution of work, improved support and consistency between Officers, and a more customer-orientated service for the general public. Following the conclusion of the review, the new team arrangements were instituted at the start of July 2009. The planning department is also engaged in a longer-term process of developing internal procedures to ensure continued progress beyond the structural changes highlighted above.

⁴ Further analysis is available in a detailed report made to Planning Committee on 12th May 2009
http://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/may_anal-2.pdf

- 4.15 The Authority last monitored applicants' satisfaction with the service they received in 2006/7, where 86.44% reported that they were satisfied. Following on from this, a target of 88% has been set for 2009/10, and a new survey will take place in due course.

Enforcement

- 4.16 During the monitoring year, 258 new enforcement cases were logged, while 192 were resolved. A total of 47% of reported breaches of planning control were resolved within the target period of 16 weeks. The Authority's corporate target for resolving breaches is 60%. Performance also fell below the established target in the 2007/8 year. In addition, a combination of high workload levels and prolonged job vacancies has led to a significant backlog of 'live' enforcement cases.
- 4.17 The Authority has recognised this underperformance in enforcement, and has taken steps to make improvements. The enforcement function was an integral part of the review of Structural Review of Development Control that has been undertaken (see above). This resulted in a decision to embed the enforcement function within each of the two new area teams so as to improve support and integration between disciplines.
- 4.18 In addition, the Authority employed the services of an independent specialist to identify an appropriate strategy for tackling the immediate backlog of cases and for securing long term improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of the service. This includes a clear enforcement policy and action plan. These measures were reported to full Authority in September 2009⁵.

Planning Committee

- 4.19 Of all applications determined by the Authority during the monitoring year, some 89% were determined under delegated powers by the Head of Planning. The remaining 11% were determined by Planning Committee.
- 4.20 In total, 81 applications were put before Planning Committee for determination at some point during the monitoring year⁶. In 78 of these cases, the Committee has made a formal resolution to approve or refuse the application⁷.
- 4.21 Of the 78 applications where Committee made a resolution, some 64 (82%) were determined in accordance with the recommendation of Planning Officers, while 14 (18%) were determined contrary to recommendation (Table 8).

⁵ Full details can be found at: <http://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/npa29sept09enforcementreview.pdf>

⁶ Some of these cases were determined outside of the monitoring year. Withdrawn applications not included. Although some applications have appeared before Committee on several occasions, these have been counted just once for these purposes.

⁷ Includes cases where a resolution has been made, but the application is yet to be determined pending completion of a S106 agreement.

Table 8 – Applications resolved at Planning Committee 2008/9. Source: YDNPA records.

Committee Resolution	Total
Approved as recommended	58
Refused as recommended	6
Approved contrary to recommendation	12
Refused contrary to recommendation	2
Total	78

- 4.22 Table 9 gives full details of those cases where a determination was made contrary to recommendation. The majority of cases involved differing interpretations of the impact of proposals upon the character and appearance of the locality or the wider landscape, highway safety or neighbouring amenity. These matters do not relate to departures from established planning policy, but rather to matters of interpretation. Occasionally, individual cases have raised more fundamental planning policy issues, and some of these are discussed in greater detail in the following section.
- 4.23 In instances where the Committee resolve to determine applications contrary to officer recommendation, the Authority continues to operate a reference back system, whereby the application is reported at a subsequent meeting. This allows officers to consider the reasons given for the Committee's decision, and to provide advice on them. This is considered to represent good practice, as it ensures that a full public record of the reasons for a decision, together with the evidence that supports them, is established.
- 4.24 In the two instances where applications have been refused by Committee contrary to officer recommendation, both applications have proceeded to an appeal. In the case of the barn to the rear of the Crown Inn, Askrigg, a Planning Inspector concurred with the initial officer recommendation for approval, while in the case of Honeycott Caravan Park, the Inspector agreed with Committee's resolution to refuse. The latter case is discussed in more detail in Section 5.

Table 9 – Applications determined by Planning Committee contrary to Officer recommendation. Source: YDNPA records.

Application Reference	Site	Description	First reported to Committee	Committee Resolution
C/33/260D	5 Station Road, Grassington	full planning permission for alterations to planning permission C/33/260B	April	Approve
R/56/270F	Land adjoining Haulage Depot, Cornclose, Appersett, Hawes	full planning permission for change of use of agricultural land to Haulage Yard, including laying of aggregate base (Retrospective)	April	Approve
S/01/79A	Milton Barn, West Backstonegill, Dent	full planning permission for enlargement of existing slit window	April	Approve
R/50/168	The Barn, rear of The Crown Inn, Askrigg	full planning permission for change of use of barn to form camping barn	May	Refuse
R/56/32G	Honeycott Caravan Park, Ingleton Road, Hawes	full planning permission for siting of 14 static holiday caravans in lieu of 18 touring caravans (to make 42 static holiday caravans in total)	August	Refuse
C/68/47C	Hillcrest, Westhouse, Ingleton	full planning permission for demolition of existing dwelling and erection of replacement dwelling	October	Approve
S/01/77B	Dent Stores, Dent	full planning permission for replacement of two shop windows	November	Approve
C/26/621H	Bondcroft Farm, Embsay	full planning permission for retention of poly tunnel for housing sheep for a further period of 8 years	December	Approve
C/48/24H	Langcliffe Mill, Stainforth Road, Langcliffe	full planning permission for construction of offices, 46 bedroom hotel, change of use and adaptation of former mill for 5 live work units, and change of use of former works office to live work unit together with new access and landscaping	December	Approve*
C/54/35B	Malham Raikes, Finkle Street, Malham	full planning permission for works to barn and construction of access track (retrospective)	December	Approve
S/03/448A/CC	Sedbergh Auction Mart, Station Road, Sedbergh	conservation area consent for demolition of former auction mart buildings	December	Approve
C/48/635	Barn on Locks Lane, Langcliffe	Full planning permission for conversion of redundant barn to form annex to existing house	January	Approve*
C/52/33D	32 Main Street, Long Preston	Full planning permission for sub-division of existing house to form two dwellings	March	Approve*
C/55/45A	Middlehouse Farm, Malham Moor	full planning permission for installation of 6kw Proven Wind Turbine to replace existing 800w Wind Turbine (application accompanied by an Environmental Statement)	March	Approve*

*pending completion of Section 106 legal agreement

5. Local Plan Monitoring

5.1 This section will focus on those areas of the Local Plan that have raised important issues during the monitoring year, or which are likely to be areas for future attention. Unlike previous years, this section does not provide a commentary on each individual chapter, but has instead concentrates on those more prominent areas of policy.

Housing

5.2 Housing remains one of the most pressing issues facing the National Park's communities, and is particularly relevant in view of the ongoing preparation of a Housing DPD. This area of policy is therefore particularly worthy of detailed analysis.

Housing Permissions

5.3 Housing permissions have fluctuated quite markedly in recent years, often according to the point at which permission has been granted for an unusually large scheme (Table 10). On average, around 85 dwellings have been permitted annually over the period 2002-2009. Two years stand out from this period. 2005/6 saw an extraordinary number of planning permissions, largely by virtue of the 58-unit Embsay Tannery scheme. By contrast, the current monitoring year has seen a substantial drop in housing application numbers to their lowest level in recent years.

Table 10 - Housing Permissions by Type 2002/3-2008/9. Source: YDNPA records.

	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	Total
Dwelling units granted	71	92	77	139	73	97	48	597
<i>New build</i>	33	22	28	101	44	42	24	294 (49.3%)
<i>Barn conversion</i>	17	24	27	18	17	16	15	134 (22.4%)
<i>Sub division</i>	3	5	6	4	1	6	1	26 (4.4%)
<i>Re-occupation</i>	8	2	2	5	3	5	2	27 (4.5%)
<i>Other change of use</i>	10	39	14	11	8	28	6	116 (19.4%)

5.4 The National Park is unusual in that it supports a relatively low proportion of its overall housing provision from new build schemes. Just over half of all housing permissions stem from existing buildings, predominantly conversions of traditional agricultural and other buildings. Sub-division and re-occupation of former dwellings remain largely incidental providers of additional housing.

Permissions 1996 and 2006 Local Plans

5.5 It is instructive to compare the respective proportions of occupancy restricted housing permissions between the 1996 and 2006 Local Plan policies. Policies within the 1996 Local Plan were largely unrestricted in terms of occupancy. Only

proposals allowed as an exception to policy would normally be subject to an occupancy restriction, for example on sites outside of development boundaries or for agricultural workers. The result was that nearly three quarters of all residential permissions were unrestricted.

- 5.6 The 2006 Local Plan marked a step-change in occupancy restrictions, with an element of open market housing only being permitted within the four key service centres and through the re-occupation of former dwellings. The result is noticeable, with unrestricted permissions having been reduced to around 35%. Housing provision for local housing needs (local occupancy and affordable) has increased from around 14% under old policies to over 43% under new policies (Table 11).

Table 11 – Housing permissions by Local Plan period and occupancy type. Source: YDNPA records.

Occupancy Type	1996 Local Plan (1/4/02 – 11/4/05)		2006 Local Plan (12/4/05 – 31/3/09)	
	No.	%	No.	%
<i>Unrestricted</i>	296	74.4	73	34.8
<i>Affordable</i>	37	9.3	24	11.4
<i>Local Need</i>	18	4.5	67	31.9
<i>Agricultural/Rural Worker</i>	17	4.3	24	11.4
<i>Other</i>	1	0.2	7	3.3
<i>Holiday</i>	21	5.3	3	1.4
<i>Farm Diversification</i>	8	2	12	5.7
Total	398		210	

- 5.7 Unfortunately, while the proportions of occupancy restricted housing may have increased, a drop in the number of applications received means that numerically, the gains have not been as significant. This drop in applications may be partly attributable to the fact that new policies, in restricting occupancy, offer lower financial returns for landowners and developers. Other factors are however likely to have contributed. As already noted in this report, the number of applications submitted for all development types has been dropping for a number of years, and recent economic conditions are likely to see this trend continue. The National Park has a relatively limited supply of developable housing land, which is largely dictated by the settlements within which housing will be permitted, and the development boundaries that are drawn around these settlements. Opportunities for additional housing have therefore, over recent years, been gradually consumed, reducing overall capacity for further development.

Housing Completions

- 5.8 Last year's AMR recognised a substantial gap in the Authority's monitoring regime relating to the recording of housing completions. This is a vital source of information to inform the ongoing development of the Housing DPD and to monitor the success of current policy. It is important to recognise that it is what is built, rather than what is permitted, that really makes a difference on the ground. Consequently, a system of monitoring housing completions has now been instituted, and information on past completions dating back several years has been researched (Table 12).

- 5.9 Completion rates average around 72 units per year. While there may sometimes be a substantial lag between the point of permission being granted, and the point of a dwelling being completed, the fact remains that very few housing permissions in the National Park are allowed to expire.

Table 12 – Housing completions by occupancy type, 2003/4-2008/9. Source: YDNPA records.

	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	Total
Dwelling units completed	55	48	68	84	85	92	432
Unrestricted	46	38	54	56	43	56	293 (67.8%)
Affordable	0	6	0	14	15	19	54 (12.5%)
Local Needs	1	1	1	3	11	14	31 (7.2%)
Agricultural/Rural	5	3	4	5	10	3	30 (6.9%)
Other	0	0	1	0	1	0	2 (0.5%)
Holiday	3	0	8	3	3	0	17 (3.9%)
Farm diversification	0	0	0	3	2	0	5 (1.2%)

- 5.10 The lag period between permission and completion means that, in terms of occupancy, the majority of completed units still have unrestricted occupancy. This balance should begin to be redressed in coming years as the longer term impact of the change in the Authority's housing strategy begins to be felt.
- 5.11 When the housing completions information was last updated, there were remaining planning permissions for 101 dwellings where works had not yet started, with schemes for a further 66 units being underway (implemented). There remains therefore a supply of extant permissions for housing, within which there is a greater potential supply of occupancy-restricted housing.
- 5.12 The relative proportions of housing completions by type closely mirror those of permissions discussed above, with a roughly 50-50 split between new build and conversion proposals (Table 13).

Table 13 – Housing completions by development type. Source: YDNPA records.

	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	Total
Dwelling units completed	55	48	68	84	85	92	432
New build	26	17	20	40	62	56	221 (51.2%)
Barn conversion	12	15	21	13	10	6	77 (17.8%)
Sub division	3	4	6	4	3	2	22 (5.1%)
Re-occupation	6	1	1	1	3	3	15 (3.5%)
Other change of use	8	11	20	26	7	25	97 (22.4%)

- 5.13 When considering the potential impact of planning policy upon the housing market, it is always useful to gain some perspective. The 432 housing completions over the six year period 2003/4 – 2008/9 represent an increase in the Park's overall housing stock of just 4.2%⁸. When we consider that only a small proportion of these completions have been aimed at fulfilling local housing needs, the limitations of the planning system in influencing the overall housing issue become apparent. This should not however detract from the fact that these affordable & local needs schemes can be hugely beneficial for the communities in which they are developed. In the longer term, the cumulative effect of ensuring a supply of housing to meet local needs should begin to have a more markedly positive effect on community vitality throughout the National Park.

Housing affordability

- 5.14 Average house prices in the National Park fell by just under 5% between 2007 and 2008. This overall change does however mask significant variations according to property type (Table 14).

Table 14 – Average House Prices by Property Type - 2007 & 2008. Source: Land Registry data.

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>% change</u>
Overall Average	£277,116	£263,379	- 4.96
<u>Detached</u>	<u>£389,273</u>	<u>£359,102</u>	<u>- 7.75</u>
<u>Semi Detached</u>	<u>£246,753</u>	<u>£227,876</u>	<u>- 7.65</u>
<u>Terraced</u>	<u>£196,525</u>	<u>£198,144</u>	<u>+ 0.82</u>
<u>Flat/Maisonette</u>	<u>£191,476</u>	<u>£212,448</u>	<u>+ 10.95</u>

- 5.15 The drop in average house prices was much more modest than in other parts of the country, with prices still remaining above their 2006 level and well in excess of the county or constituent district averages. Sales volumes have however dropped to their lowest level this decade (Table 15).

Table 15 – Average house prices and sales volumes 2001-2008. Source: Land registry data.

Year	Sales	Average Price
2001	764	£127,643
2002	807	£157,823
2003	934	£188,984
2004	702	£226,096
2005	582	£241,297
2006	732	£259,612
2007	746	£277,116
2008	494	£263,379

⁸ Based on total housing stock of 10,236 in 2001 (2001 Census)

- 5.16 In 2008 the mean household income in the National Park was £33,465⁹, slightly above the regional average. This represents an increase of nearly 5% on the 2007 average. Average house prices still outstrip average incomes by a factor of nearly 8, and so remain well above typical mortgage lending ratios, even if a substantial deposit were available.
- 5.17 Despite modest changes to average house prices and incomes, the affordability situation is still particularly serious. Average income figures mask significant variations. It is known for example that in 2008, almost a quarter of households in the Park had incomes that were 60% or more below the national median level¹⁰. Furthermore, in assessing affordability, it is necessary to take account of rising levels of unemployment and more restrictive lending regimes resulting from the economic downturn.
- 5.18 The affordability problem continues to be emphasised in the strategic evidence of housing need that the Authority has. In 2005/6 Housing Needs Assessments were produced for each of the National Park's three constituent Districts. These indicated an affordable housing shortfall of 88 units per annum across the whole Park. New assessments of need are due to be carried out by each of the Districts in due course, however, in the interim, updates of the information in the 2005/6 surveys have been carried out. These updates have modelled changes in need based on factors such as household formation, income/house price information and turnover in existing affordable stock. The refreshed needs information estimates that the annual affordable housing shortfall has now grown to 100 units per annum¹¹. This is not particularly surprising, since supply of new affordable stock has been modest, and the fundamental drivers of need remain.

Affordable Housing

- 5.19 In terms of affordable housing provision, 2008/9 saw the highest level of completions in recent years, made up from the scheme at High Hall, Bainbridge (17 units), together with the Masonic Hall, Sedbergh (2 units). Worryingly however, the supply of affordable housing in the near future is likely to be restricted. The only extant planning permission for further affordable housing that is likely to be delivered in the foreseeable future relates to 4 units at Place Hill, Reeth. There is the possibility of an extension to this scheme to provide a further 2 affordable units, subject to planning permission, however there are no other schemes that are likely to be the subject of a planning application imminently.
- 5.20 A prospective scheme of 12 affordable units at Dent fell through following a failure to reach agreement between the housing association and landowner. This was of course disappointing, particularly given that the application had progressed to the point where the Authority had resolved to approve the proposal subject to a Section 106 agreement, and invested a good deal of time in negotiating an acceptable

⁹ Source: CACI Paycheck Data

¹⁰ Source: CACI Paycheck Data (unequalised data). 'National' relates to England.

¹¹ Richmondshire Housing Market Assessment Update – Final Report - April 2008; Craven Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Draft - August 2008; South Lakeland (Dales Area) Housing Market Assessment – Draft - August 2009

scheme. This is indicative of a wider issue in terms of reconciling landowner expectations about the return they may achieve from their land, with what can actually be delivered by affordable housing developments.

- 5.21 The Authority is constantly engaged in bringing other potential affordable housing sites forward in advance of the ongoing review of planning policy. Dedicated Rural Housing Enablers are active across the parts of Craven and Richmondshire Districts within the Park, while the Cumbria Rural Housing Trust have undertaken work relating to the South Lakeland District. At present their efforts are concentrated on bringing forward affordable exceptions sites, engaging with Parish Councils and also in conducting parish level housing needs surveys to gain a fuller picture of need at the local level. A parish housing needs survey has recently been completed at Carperby and forthcoming surveys are planned for West Burton and Dent.

Local Needs Housing

- 5.22 As noted in previous AMRs, Local Plan policies aimed at restricting a proportion of dwellings to local need have raised issues. These policies have operated in their current form since 2005, but have a heritage stretching back to the late 1980s. Since 2002, around 85 such houses have been permitted, half of which have subsequently been completed.
- 5.23 A key issue is the degree to which occupancy restrictions bring these house prices within the reach of households in need. The answer to this question depends on a number of factors. Where local needs units are made available for outright sale, there is no statutory mechanism to control the price at which they can be made available for sale or rent. As such, they cannot be claimed to be affordable, since they fail to take account of what is affordable in relation to income levels. It is however the responsibility of the owner to make the property available at a price that reasonably reflects its value, bearing in mind the restricted market it can be made available to.
- 5.24 The Authority has never attempted to define an expectation of what level of discount local needs units should achieve, but rather has left this to the market to decide. Table 16 gives some examples of local needs restricted units that have been sold within the last three years or that have been recently marketed. While it is difficult to draw direct comparisons given the variety of property types and fluctuations in average house prices, this table is at least illustrative of the range of asking prices for local occupancy dwellings. Asking prices are consistently lower than would be expected for equivalent unrestricted properties, although the degree to which this is the case fluctuates. Experience to date suggests that there has been greater difficulty in achieving sales for local needs housing marketed towards the higher end of this price range.

Table 16 – Local needs restricted housing currently marketed or sold in the last 3 years. Source: YDNPA records.

Tenure	Type 1	Type 2	Bedrooms	Price
Freehold	New build	Mid Terrace	3 bed	£250,000 (sold)
Freehold	New build	Detached	3 bed	£249,950 (for sale)
Leasehold	New build	Flat	1 bed	£199,500 (for sale)
Freehold	New build	Mid/end Terrace	3 bed	£174,995 (for sale)
Freehold	New build	Semi-detached	3 bed	£185,000 (for sale)
Freehold	New build	Mid Terrace	2 bed	£170,000 (sold) £175,000 (sold)
Freehold	New build	Mid Terrace	2 bed	£160,000 (for sale)
Leasehold	New build	Flat	2 bed	£155,000 (sold)
Freehold	New build	End Terrace	3 bed	£154,000 (sold)
Freehold	New build	Mid terrace	2 bed	£150,000 (sold)
Leasehold	Conversion	Mid Terrace	2 bed	£128,000 (sold)
Freehold	Conversion	End terrace	3 bed	£125,000 (sold)
Freehold	New build	Semi-detached	2 bed	£120,000 (sold)

- 5.25 From the evidence available to the Authority, it would appear that local needs dwellings are capable of providing an alternative sub-open market or 'more affordable' type of housing. The strategy is however relatively young, and relatively few units have been completed. As a result, the policy cannot be expected to have significant effects on the National Park's housing market in the short term.
- 5.26 Unlike affordable housing, the local needs policy does not rely on linking supply with demand for this particular market sector at any strategic level. It relies instead upon demonstration of need at the point of a planning application being made. Obtaining adequate evidence of a local need at the point of a planning application is not always straightforward, particularly given the lag between permission being granted and housing becoming capable of occupation. Some evidence of the extent of more intermediate (i.e. non-affordable) forms of local housing need can be gleaned from existing District Housing Needs Assessments. The Authority is working with its partners to ensure this issue is given more explicit consideration in future needs assessments.
- 5.27 The present economic downturn and its associated impact on the housing market has brought issues of occupancy restriction sharply into focus. A local needs occupancy restriction acts to reduce the market to which dwellings are available and to depress house prices to reflect this limited market. In the context of a housing market where mortgage brokers have been exercising added caution, an occupancy restriction can be viewed as an additional risk for buyers, lenders and developers. The same issue has been encountered with shared ownership affordable dwellings, where accessing lending on just a proportion of the property's value has proved problematical given that local connection criteria apply.
- 5.28 The Authority is aware of these issues, and at various times during the year has come under pressure to relax or rescind occupancy restrictions in light of the difficulties that have been encountered with achieving sales. In all instances, the Authority has rebuffed such requests, as to relax the policy now would set a harmful

precedent. It would not be appropriate for the planning system to respond to short/medium term economic trends in a way that would fundamentally undermine longer term policy objectives. The problems encountered by vendors in achieving sales, or by buyers in obtaining mortgages are not peculiar to occupancy restricted housing, but are reflective of the wider housing market.

Employment

- 5.29 The Authority has considered two employment proposals during the monitoring year which are significant in the context of a deeply rural area, and have raised some important policy issues.

Sedbergh Auction Mart

- 5.30 The Authority received an initial application to redevelop the former Sedbergh Auction Mart site as a convenience store and health centre in May 2008. The proposal raised important employment issues, notably the potential impact of a large new Spar convenience store upon the vitality of Sedbergh town centre. The Yorkshire Dales Local Plan deals with employment proposals in a relatively generic way and does not make any distinction between the huge variety of uses that could fall within the definition of 'employment'. The auction mart, as an existing employment site, could, in principle, be redeveloped for any other employment-generating use in accordance with the Local Plan employment policies.
- 5.31 Retail uses in out of town-centre locations do however prompt particular concerns. This is because of their potential to draw business away from town centres, both directly from other retail providers, but also from other businesses who benefit from passing trade. While Local Plan policies do not provide specific coverage of town centre viability issues, national planning policy¹² contains necessary safeguards to ensure that out of town centre proposals are rigorously assessed. This includes requirements to assess the availability of alternative sites closer to the town centre, and an assessment of the potential impact on existing businesses in the main shopping area. The objective of these requirements is not to protect the interests of individual businesses, but to take a wider view on maintaining healthy town centres in overall terms.
- 5.32 Town centre viability was given careful consideration in the determination of the applications for redevelopment of the auction mart. The Authority commissioned an independent specialist assessment of the proposal, which initially concluded that a fuller exploration of the availability of alternative sites was necessary. It also concluded that there was a need for further consideration of the impacts upon the town centre as a result of trade draw to the new store. Following further analysis of these issues, the Authority is now minded to approve the proposal, having been satisfied that these concerns can be overcome. Further independent assessment revealed that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the town centre, subject to appropriate conditions regarding the future of the existing town-centre premises.

¹² CLG (2005) Planning Policy Statement 6 'Planning for Town Centres'

- 5.33 Although town centre viability issues are not specifically covered in Local Plan policy, it is considered that they are dealt with in sufficient depth in national planning policy so as not to warrant any fuller interpretation at a local level. As already stated above in the section relating to the saved Local Plan policies, repetition of national policy is actively discouraged by the government.

Langcliffe Paper Mill

- 5.34 The second significant employment proposal considered in 2008/9 was at the former Langcliffe Paper Mill site. This proposal involved redevelopment of the site to provide a hotel, offices and live-work units. Once again, as an existing employment site, the hotel and office elements of the scheme did not raise any policy issues as a matter of principle. The previous use ceased for economic reasons in 2006, at which time it employed some 35 people. It is stated that the proposed redevelopment will yield in excess of 300 jobs, and so in terms of employment generation the scheme can be seen to have clear benefits.
- 5.35 The main policy issue with the scheme concerned live-work units. Six of these units were proposed, comprising a mixture of residential and employment uses. As noted in last year's AMR, the Local Plan does not contain a policy aimed at live-work units, but instead draws a clear distinction between the two different uses. Precedent for live-work units in the National Park is largely limited to cases where individual justification could be presented at the point of application, or where clear building conservation benefit could be demonstrated (for example the Farfield Mill scheme near Sedbergh). The Langcliffe Paper Mill proposal differed in that the live-work units proposed were entirely speculative at the point of application.
- 5.36 A lack of a specific Local Plan policy relating to live-work units should not necessarily be construed as an absence of support for such proposals. There are successful live-work developments throughout the country, and a general acceptance in government guidance and other research that they can be beneficial form of development¹³. Given the lack of any local policy dealing with live-work developments however, the Authority need to be convinced that proposals are well justified, capable of being effectively managed and controlled, and that they will not cause demonstrable harm to other policy objectives. This kind of rigour should be expected of any proposal that is an exception to normal policy.
- 5.37 In the case of Langcliffe Paper Mill, it was argued that the live-work units formed an integral part of the whole scheme, and that they were crucial to its overall viability. While these matters were clearly pertinent to this particular scheme, they fail to give any wider indication of the market that may exist for live-work units, or, since the scheme is speculative, the uses they may be expected to accommodate. It is difficult therefore to draw any lessons from the live-work element of this scheme, at least until such time as they have been developed and are operational.
- 5.38 Officers, in recommending that the proposal be refused, expressed concern at the lack of justification for the live-work units (aside from viability considerations),

¹³ See for example CLG (2009) Draft PPS4 'Planning for Prosperous Economies', para EC4.1; CLG (2008) 'Living Working Countryside' (Taylor Report), recommendations 26 & 29; CLG (2009) The Government Response to the Taylor Review, pp 6, 10, 19, 44-5; Arup (2008) The Upper Dales Study, section 6.4.

together with the overall size of the units and the proportion of floor area given over to the 'work' element of the scheme. Members however gave weight to the viability and employment generation considerations and granted permission for the scheme subject to a completion of a legal agreement. This legal agreement will ensure appropriate phasing of the scheme so that the link between the live-work units and the overall scheme viability is maintained.

- 5.39 Live-work issues continue to emerge from time to time, and will be an area requiring dedicated provision in future policy, so as to provide greater certainty regarding the parameters for their acceptability.

Upper Dales Study

- 5.40 A study was published in December 2008, designed to inform an economic development and funding strategy for the Upper Dales (Wensleydale & Swaledale). This study was carried out by consultants on behalf of Richmondshire District Council and provides some general analysis of the challenges and opportunities for economic development in this area.

- 5.41 Notable issues highlighted are the limited availability of business space, particularly for micro-businesses and office-based enterprises, funding restrictions, together with a dependence on public/community, rather than privately driven enterprise. In terms of a future strategy, the report identifies numerous areas for action, including the provision of new business space, further tourism development, targeting 'creative & cultural' industries and the provision of training opportunities for young people.

- 5.42 The report also focuses in on the role of the planning system in influencing economic development in the National Park. It emphasises the need for an appropriate and flexible policy framework to facilitate economic development in the Upper Dales, together with the importance of a constructive dialogue between local businesses and the Authority. Economic development is recognised by the Authority as an integral element of wider wellbeing of the National Park's communities, and the planning system has a key role to play in terms of facilitating economic activity. The Local Plan has specifically allocated land for employment development, and also allows a wide range of non-allocated employment sites to be brought forward, either through the re-use of modern/traditional buildings, the development of new small-scale sites, or through farm diversification. Policies also allow for the expansion of, and improvements to, existing businesses. Taken together, these policies provide comprehensive coverage, and a flexible framework for new employment proposals in the National Park. In addition, the Authority has a commitment to pre-application advice for all proposals, which would extend to businesses.

- 5.43 The Upper Dales Study does identify a general perception that the planning system may stifle economic development in the National Park. There are two key strands to this criticism. The first relates to how comprehensive and up to date the Authority's employment policies are. While existing policy coverage is good, it is recognised that the Local Plan may struggle to keep pace with all new initiatives, of which live-work has been noted as a case in point. The Authority is not however closed to

such proposals, and will continue to consider them on their own merits. The recommendations of the Upper Dales Study will be considered as part of the review of employment policies in a future Core Strategy, and in updating these policies, the Authority will work closely with relevant interest groups to identify improvements in policy coverage. The second element of concern is the degree to which employment proposals may be undermined by other planning considerations. In the context of the National Park, the built heritage and wider landscape quality is often a prime concern, and will always need to be weighed against the needs of business. Conflict between such objectives is not however inevitable, and the Authority has in the past, and will continue to seek to negotiate in order to achieve a satisfactory solution. In a wider sense, it is also necessary to emphasise that status as a designated landscape affords multiple economic opportunities and benefits not enjoyed by other areas. These arguments have been well explored in a number of reports in recent years¹⁴.

Building Design

- 5.44 Design is a fundamental consideration in any planning application. The National Park is typically associated with the design principle of 'fitting in' and an appreciation of context in arriving at a suitable design solution. This is a consequence of the strong vernacular architecture of the National Park, and the homogeneity that exists, particularly in the use of traditional locally-sourced natural materials. These principles are well-represented in existing Local Plan policies GP2 (General Design), B7 (Building Design) as well as a number of other built heritage policies.
- 5.45 The Authority remain mindful of the need to ensure that local distinctiveness is maintained through appropriate design, use of materials, and construction techniques. A perennial issue is the need to ensure external walling utilises an appropriate stone type and mortar composition, and that it is suitably coursed and pointed, having regard to the surrounding environment. The forthcoming Design Guide (see below) will be able to address some of these matters through general best practice principles, however site specific approaches will always be warranted in view of local variations in style. Planning conditions requiring the prior approval of sample stone panels are the most usual method of ensuring that a new building will be appropriate in its surrounding context. A wider issue for consideration is the sourcing of appropriate building stone. There is just one building stone quarry within the boundaries of the National Park (Hill Top, Keld) which has been actively worked for stone in recent years, with a further quarry (Grey Yaud, Witton Fell) a short distance outside the Park. Policies in the Minerals & Waste Local Plan are generally supportive of small scale building stone quarries for local usage, although there has been little interest in such ventures in recent years. Opportunities do exist to recycle existing building stone, however this risks the loss of, or damage to historic assets, so will not always be appropriate.

¹⁴ See for example Council for National Parks (2006) 'Prosperity & Protection'; English Heritage et. al. (2007) Building Value: A Study of the Social and Economic Impacts and Benefits of Traditional Farm Building and Drystone Wall Repairs in the YDNP

- 5.46 Opportunities to explore design issues in a less conventional context are relatively rare. The proposals to redevelop the former Langcliffe Paper Mill site provided one such opportunity since, while some of the buildings do retain historic interest, the majority of the site is occupied by large modern buildings that generally detract from the surrounding environmental quality. The Authority entered into extensive discussions regarding an appropriate design for this redevelopment. The resultant scheme responds to the historical use of the site, and has adopted a distinctly industrial feel in its design, consisting of buildings with a robust and functional appearance organised around a central courtyard. The focal building of the scheme is on the site of the former main mill building (Figure 1). This is a contemporary interpretation of the design of the original structure, which had timber latticework to aid paper drying, prior to its destruction by fire in 1940. Careful consideration of appropriate hard and soft landscaping are also integral parts of the scheme's overall design.

Figure 1 – Visual representation of proposed live-work units, Langcliffe Paper Mill



- 5.47 The Authority is currently working on a replacement for the 2002 Design Guide. This aims to provide a more user-friendly and up to date guide to help applicants & agents in arriving at a suitable design for their proposal. As part of the process of preparing the Design Guide, the Authority held a Built Environment Forum in March 2009 to discuss with agents its content and overall approach. One of the principles that has been identified for incorporation within the Design Guide is a greater emphasis on the role of less conventional or innovative designs that contribute positively to the built quality of the National Park. This and other issues will be explored as the Design Guide continues to develop, with further involvement from the Built Environment Forum. Alongside the Design Guide, the Authority is planning to hold a second Design Awards scheme in 2009/10, following on from the success of the first scheme in 2004. Over the course of the next year, the Authority is also hoping to introduce assessments of larger housing schemes under the government's 'Building for Life' scheme, which rates the design quality of a

development against 20 standard criteria¹⁵. These assessments will be reported in future AMRs in association with Core Indicator H6.

Sustainable Design

- 5.48 A crucial element of any well-designed building is its ability to maximise energy efficiency by reducing energy usage during the lifetime of the building and in the course of its construction. The Local Plan does not set any specific requirement for set levels of energy efficiency, but rather establishes a generic commitment to ‘...encourage development which minimises the use of energy and other natural resources, uses sustainable materials and is designed for a long life span’ (Policy GP2).
- 5.49 Many aspects of energy efficiency are controlled through the minimum standards established by the Building Regulations, which fall outside the Authority’s planning remit. Alongside the Building Regulations, the government also operates the ‘Code for Sustainable Homes’, which sets out graded levels above the minimum standard Building Regulations. At present, while all new homes need to be rated against the Code, compliance with its requirements remain voluntary as far as private sector housing is concerned. Affordable housing that entails government grant funding is however required to meet level 3 of the Code. Following on from the improved standards set out in the Code for Sustainable Homes, the government intends to incrementally tighten the Building Regulations in coming years, so that mandatory improvements are made in the energy efficiency of all new housing. The overall intention is that, by 2016 all new housing is designed to be zero carbon. Similar requirements for commercial properties will also be implemented with a slightly delayed timescale, so that they are required to be zero carbon by 2019¹⁶.
- 5.50 The Code for Sustainable Homes raises some important planning policy issues. It is possible for the Authority to set a policy that requires improvements energy efficiency at a faster rate than will occur through the tightening of Building Regulations. The timetable of all new dwellings being zero carbon by 2016 is already very ambitious, so it is doubtful whether to require additional improvement in advance of this would be practicable. The phased improvements to building sustainability are being implemented at a national level, and are therefore largely outside of the Authority’s control. It is important however that the Authority understand their implications for development in the National Park, notably as regards design and viability.
- 5.51 In terms of design, an eventual requirement for buildings to be zero carbon is likely to have important impacts on materials and building techniques that reflect high levels of thermal performance and responsible sourcing. Overall aesthetics may also be affected, for example ensuring greater passive solar gain will necessitate additional exposed areas of glazing, or place constraints on how a building may be orientated. It will be necessary for the Authority to understand the extent of these impacts upon the future design and layout of buildings.

¹⁵ Further details can be found at <http://www.buildingforlife.org/>

¹⁶ CLG (2008) The Code for Sustainable Homes: Setting the standard in sustainability for new homes.

- 5.52 Compliance with requirements for greater energy efficiency will also have a financial implication for developers. There is evidence to show that higher energy efficiency will command higher market values, and it can also be expected that financial savings will be achieved over the lifetime of the development through declining energy usage. Recent research has however estimated that in the case of a detached house, meeting level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes could increase build costs by around 6%, but that higher levels of the Code could increase costs disproportionately (level 4 = 15%; level 5 = 32%; level 6 = 52%)¹⁷. These costs do raise concerns regarding the viability of some housing schemes, particularly where the thrust of policy is to make more affordable housing available. This is an area that the Authority will continue to monitor as increased energy efficiency requirements continue to be implemented.
- 5.53 Sustainable design is increasingly having an influence on development proposals within the National Park, particularly larger-scale ones. The proposed redevelopment of Langcliffe Paper Mill placed a good deal of emphasis on the long term sustainability of the development, through small scale renewables, sustainable materials, high levels of thermal performance and passive solar gain (through careful building orientation and natural light penetration). Conditions attached to the approval have sought to secure optimum energy performance of the development, requiring an energy sustainability strategy to be agreed, and compliance with the Code for Sustainable Homes and the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) Excellent standard.

Renewable & Low Carbon Energy Generation

- 5.54 In addition to high standards of energy efficiency, the prospect of increasing requirements for sustainable design will also rely heavily on the ability of a building to generate some or all of its own energy needs from renewable or low carbon sources. Two key issues are analysed here – the imposition of policy requirements for incorporating renewable technologies into new build proposals, and the installation of renewable technologies retrospectively onto existing buildings and sites.

Policy requirements for renewable/low-carbon energy generation

- 5.55 Policy ENV5 of the Regional Spatial Strategy, which came into effect from May 2008, requires that wherever viable, certain developments secure at least 10% of their energy from decentralised and renewable or low-carbon sources. This applies to developments of 10 or more houses, or other developments of over 1000 square metres floorspace. The regional policy acts as a baseline for renewable energy requirements in the National Park. It is however relatively rare for the Authority to receive applications of this scale. The redevelopment of Langcliffe Paper Mill is one of the few developments of a scale to trigger this policy requirement, and demonstration of the 10% on-site generation is a condition of this approval.

¹⁷ CLG (2008) Cost Analysis of The Code for Sustainable Homes.
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/codecostanalysis.pdf>

- 5.56 The Authority has the option of setting more exacting requirements, for instance by lowering the thresholds to which they apply, or increasing the proportion of energy needs to be met from renewable or low carbon sources. In doing so, it would be necessary to ensure that policies were well justified and capable of delivery. The North York Moors NPA has adopted a policy in November 2008 that establishes requirements for 10% renewable energy generation for developments of 5 or more houses or 200 square metres of floor area. These requirements set lower thresholds than required by regional policy and were approved by a government inspector when the policy was independently examined last year.
- 5.57 It is for the Authority to determine whether a more exacting approach to on-site renewable generation should be followed in the Housing DPD and other subsequent policies. This issue was initially raised as part of the Issues & Options consultation on the Housing DPD. At this time, consultation responses revealed that, while there was widespread support for maximising renewable/low-carbon generation opportunities, there was also concern about the potentially prohibitive costs, particularly in the context of providing low cost housing.
- 5.58 The initial resolution of the Housing Working Group was to maintain flexibility in any future policy, ensuring that the Authority encouraged renewable generation as far as possible, but not establishing statutory requirements in excess of the regional policy. No final determination has yet been reached, and in view of the growing impetus to maximise the environmental sustainability of buildings, the issue will be revisited shortly with a view to arriving at an agreed policy position in the Housing DPD. In the meantime, using Local Plan policy GP2, officers will seek to influence applicants to consider sustainability issues in formulating their proposals.

Ongoing renewable energy proposals

- 5.59 Away from any possible future policy requirement for renewable energy generation, the Authority continue to deal with proposals under current Local Plan policies, particularly policy U6 (small scale renewable developments). Relatively few applications for renewable/low-carbon energy installations were received during the monitoring year. The total number processed amounts to just 14, 13 of which were approved. As in previous years, the majority of proposals were for solar technologies, but wind turbines, biomass boilers, air-source heat pumps and hydro-electric installations also featured.
- 5.60 Planning Committee considered a proposal for a 6kw wind turbine with a total height of 12 metres at an isolated farm on Malham Moor. Officers recommended that this application be refused on the basis of landscape impact, given that the turbine would be located in an elevated and isolated location. Members of the Planning Committee did however resolve to grant planning permission for the turbine, which would serve an isolated farm that was off-grid.
- 5.61 During 2008 the Authority also considered a scheme to install hydro-electric generators and turbines at the upper Weir of the River Wharfe at Linton Falls. This involved the re-use of a building formerly used for hydro-electric generation during the first half of the 20th Century, but which has subsequently fallen into a state of advanced dilapidation. The site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument by virtue of its

importance as an early remnant of rural hydro-electricity generation. This proposal raised numerous issues, not least related to the building's historical importance, potential noise pollution, and impact on fluvial ecology. The proposal did however offer multiple benefits, generating renewable energy (estimated at 0.1 megawatts), while finding a re-use for a building that perpetuates its historic and technological meaning.

- 5.62 The proposal at Linton Falls shares much in common with the objectives of the Authority's small-scale hydro-power feasibility study. This project has looked at 49 potential sites for future hydro schemes, and planning officers have had input into the likely planning issues that may be experienced at each site. Further details of the project, its aims and outcomes are available through the Authority's website¹⁸.
- 5.63 Changes in planning legislation instituted in April 2008 have reduced the extent to which planning control can be exercised over micro-renewable technologies installed on existing dwellings. Solar panels, ground/water source heat pumps and flues for biomass or combined power systems are now all capable of being classed as 'permitted development', subject to certain criteria relating to their size, height etc. The impact of these changes is difficult to measure, given that consent is not now required for these installations, and the Authority may not be notified as a result. Further concessions in respect of permitted development for wind turbines are still awaited.

Visitor Facilities

- 5.64 Visitor facility issues have been prominent during the monitoring year, and two issues are particularly deserving of mention.

Range of Visitor Accommodation

- 5.65 Since the adoption of the 2006 Local Plan, the Authority has been aware of a particular gap in planning policy. This relates to the lack of any specific provision for the protection of visitor accommodation either in outright terms, or in terms of maintaining an appropriate mix and range of accommodation. The issue can apply to any form of visitor accommodation, but has particularly been noted in relation to caravan and camping accommodation. This is undoubtedly a gap in policy and one that has been identified as having the potential for being harmful to certain interests.
- 5.66 This omission has been noted in previous AMRs, and has also been exposed by individual planning applications. Furthermore, the issue was raised by the Association of Rural Communities, and was subsequently debated at the January Authority meeting. A particular concern is the relative affordability and accessibility of different forms of accommodation to those on lower incomes, and a fear that loss of cheaper accommodation would lead to the National Park being accessed by

¹⁸ Full report can be accessed at:

http://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/index/living/planning_1/planning_applications/renewable_energy/hydro-power_feasibility_study_july2009.htm

more affluent people only. This debate particularly centred on the loss of touring caravan and camping pitches to static caravans or holiday lodges.

- 5.67 This issue was recently exposed by a proposal to replace 18 touring caravan pitches with 14 static ones at Honeycott Caravan Park near Hawes. In accordance with the requirements of Policy VF5, Officers had assessed the application according to whether the proposal would reduce the environmental impact of the site, and on this basis, opined that a sufficient improvement had been secured. Members of the Planning Committee however took the opposite view, deeming there to be insufficient environmental improvements. Crucially, in refusing the application, Members also cited a detrimental change in the balance of accommodation, notably the loss of touring and tented pitches.
- 5.68 This latter reason for refusal goes to the heart of the Authority's statutory purpose to promote opportunities for the enjoyment of the National Park by the public. Furthermore, it also strikes a chord with Management Plan principles to secure such opportunities for people from all sectors of society. In the absence of a specific provision within the development plan to protect certain forms of visitor accommodation, Members used other material considerations to add weight to the reasons for refusing the application.
- 5.69 The application subsequently proceeded to an appeal, which was dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate. In reaching this decision, the Inspectorate agreed that the proposal had failed to secure an adequate enough environmental improvement, but also that it would be detrimental to the National Park purpose relating to public enjoyment. The level of policy usage (Table 4 in previous section) shows that the Local Plan policy relating to National Park purposes (GP1) is well used in determining planning applications. Typically, it is the purpose relating to conservation and enhancement that is incorporated into planning decisions, which can relate to a multitude of issues commonly encountered in development proposals. The purpose relating to understanding and enjoyment is encountered less in a planning context, however it was clearly a central consideration in this case.
- 5.70 As a result of this decision, the maintenance of a range of visitor accommodation has been emphasised as a material consideration in planning decisions. The Authority will not be in a position to comprehensively review its visitor facility policies in the near future. In the meantime however, the Authority is in the process of reviewing its current Integrated Access Strategy, and this process will inform the development of the Authority's future stance on catering for a range of visitors.

Field Barn Project

- 5.71 This monitoring year saw the development of an innovative concept for re-using traditional field barns. Field barns are one of the National Park's 'special qualities', making a significant contribution to the landscape character of the Yorkshire Dales. Many are now largely redundant as a result of changing farming practices, and where not used, can readily suffer from neglect and dereliction. Viable re-uses of these barns are limited by their remoteness from services and infrastructure. Planning policies currently support low-level re-uses of some field barns, for

example as camping barns, however this would never extend to more intensive re-uses such as residential conversions. Where more intensive uses are permissible, even the most sympathetic of conversions tend to impact heavily on the character of barns, resulting in a loss of internal features and significant changes in exterior appearance. Substantial grant aid for the repair of barns has benefited around 500 barns in the Dales in recent years, however it is estimated that there are in the region of 4500 such structures across the Park.

Figure 2 – The ‘Field Barn’ Concept



- 5.72 At the start of 2008, the Authority were approached by Fielden Clegg Bradley Architects, who had developed a concept for the re-use of barns. The concept essentially consists of a free-standing pod – a prefabricated wooden structure – which can be installed inside a barn without interfering with its structure or external appearance. It is envisaged that the pods could be used as short-stay holiday accommodation. The pods are made of timber from sustainable sources and are capable of being removed and recycled at the end of their lifetime without lasting impacts on the barn’s structure.
- 5.73 The Authority was presented with a planning application for the temporary use of a barn at Howgill to test the concept. A pod was inserted into How Beck Barn in August 2008, the costs of which were partly met by the Sustainable Development Fund. Alongside the functional testing of the pod, the Authority has also commissioned an economic appraisal to test the longer-term viability of the concept and the potential for its wider application.
- 5.74 The ‘Field Barn’ project raises some important planning policy issues. At present, Local Plan policies would permit only a very limited range of re-uses for the more isolated barns. One of the few uses that may be permitted would be a camping-barn type use, whereby the barn’s external appearance is not altered and only relatively basic facilities are provided. More formal types of accommodation offering a greater degree of comfort and facilities, for example serviced bunkhouse barns or self-catered holiday lets, are only permissible in the less remote locations, where access

to services is likely to be less problematical and changes to appearance are less intrusive.

- 5.75 The Field Barn concept offered a middle ground between these more conventional accommodation types, offering a solution that could be applied to remote barns with minimal impacts on external appearance, and yet that could conceivably offer a higher level of comfort and convenience than camping barns. As a result, the concept didn't fit entirely comfortably with established Local Plan policy, since it was a departure from the more conventional types of visitor facilities with which the Authority commonly comes into contact. Where such situations arise, it is necessary for the Authority to examine the wider objectives of its policies, together with other material planning considerations, to determine whether a proposal is capable of support. In doing so, the Authority recognised the material conservation and recreation benefits that could accrue were the project to prove successful, but also the risks represented by future control over matters such as ongoing management of the accommodation units and changes to their appearance. As a result, temporary consent was granted for an experimental period to trial some of the techniques and technologies involved in the concept, and to test its longer term viability.
- 5.76 This project is illustrative of the difficulties raised in making policy responsive to changing circumstances. While appreciating the need to maintain the integrity of policy by applying it consistently, the Authority needs to strike a balance, ensuring that proposals that do not meet the letter of the policy are not discounted without due consideration or their merits. The longer term issue for the Authority in reviewing policy will be the need to ensure that future policies embrace changes in visitor accommodation trends & demand, and maintain flexibility to respond to future changes.

Minerals

- 5.77 During the monitoring year the Authority considered a significant application to extend the working life of Swinden Quarry in Wharfedale. The application proposed a physical extension to the quarried area, and also a ten year extension to the working life of the quarry.
- 5.78 It is established in national planning policy¹⁹ that mineral reserves should generally be sourced from outside National Parks. Proposals for major mineral developments should only be permitted in National Parks in exceptional circumstances where they can be demonstrated to be in the public interest following the most rigorous examination. Policies in the Minerals & Waste Local Plan reiterate this 'exceptional' test, and add that extensions to quarrying activity will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there are overall benefits to the environment or residential amenity.
- 5.79 The presumption is therefore very much that additional quarrying activity should not be permitted within the Park, however this application did raise very individual issues. The proposal incorporated a commitment to permanently close and restore

¹⁹ Minerals Policy Statement 1: Planning and Minerals; Regional Spatial Strategy (May 2008) Policy ENV4.

nearby Threshfield Quarry, which was considered to have planning permission for significant further levels of extraction. The proposal was therefore an equal transfer, rather than increase, in permitted mineral reserves within the National Park.

- 5.80 Further considerations weighed in favour of the proposal. Swinden Quarry is served by a rail link, which substantially reduces reliance on less sustainable road haulage, while Threshfield Quarry is solely reliant on road haulage. Furthermore, Swinden Quarry is the largest operational quarry in the National Park, while Threshfield has been mothballed since 2001. Part of Threshfield Quarry is a nationally designated Site of Special Scientific Interest and is surrounded by an internationally designated Special Area of Conservation. Restoration of the quarry therefore offered potential for significant gain in terms of habitat creation, improved transport provision and additional public access.
- 5.81 These factors were weighed against some negative aspects, for example an increase in visual impacts from the Swinden works, and a postponement of the restoration of this quarry. On balance however, the Authority concluded that the proposal met with the exceptional tests by yielding overall benefits in the public interest. This case is illustrative of the limited gains in reviewing minerals planning policy at the present time, where saved Local Plan policies can be used in accordance with national and regional policy to provide a robust basis against which to determine applications.

6. Review of Changes to National & Regional Planning Policy

Changes to householder permitted development (legislated October 2008)

- 6.1 Permitted development regulations set out the types of development that are considered sufficiently minor not to require planning permission. This is dictated by various criteria relating to the size, height and location of the development and is most commonly applied to minor household extensions and alterations.
- 6.2 Following on from changes legislated in April 2008 which relaxed planning control over micro-renewable technologies, further changes were introduced for a suite of alterations and extensions to dwellings. These changes sought to apply a more 'impact-based' approach to proposals, utilising criteria that dictated the likely impact on neighbouring properties and the local environment. In practice, the new regime is still reliant on rigid criteria relating to size or location, and while they have clarified certain aspects of planning control, they have also raised new areas of confusion.

Living Working Countryside – The Matthew Taylor Report (published July 2008)

- 6.3 In July 2008, Matthew Taylor MP issued his final report on a review of the rural economy and affordable housing. This review took a detailed look at all aspects of these issues currently facing rural communities and made some 48 recommendations for future action to address them. These included the following:

- 6.4 Improve delivery of rural affordable housing through:

- The exploration of the appropriateness of a national target for affordable housing;
- Encouraging and providing guidance on community-led affordable housing schemes on exceptions sites and Community Land Trust initiatives;
- Incentivisation of the release of land for affordable and local need housing by allowing landowners to nominate recipients of housing (e.g. family members or employees), subject to these properties remaining affordable in perpetuity;
- Exploration of other mechanisms for affordable housing provision beyond subsidised and housing association projects, for example schemes where landowners retain an interest or income from land, provided these schemes would be genuinely affordable;
- That affordable housing provision on small sites in rural areas shouldn't rely solely on national thresholds, but should be dictated by evidence of local need and viability;
- In one or more of the National Parks, trial a separate use class for non-permanent residential units (holiday and second homes) as a means for controlling the amount of housing stock lost to these uses;

Facilitate rural economies by:

- Recognising that many rural areas will not be readily accessible by public transport, and that this should not be used to 'write-off' rural areas as inherently unsustainable locations for economic development;

- That planning authorities use evidence of need for rural employment sites to justify decisions about the protection of existing, or supply of future premises;
- That national planning policy recognises changing working practices, including guidelines on live-work units and home working;

6.5 The report's findings have proved influential in shaping attitudes to rural issues. Following on from the report, the government published its response in March 2009. This revealed a substantial amount of consensus on the need for improved responses to rural issues, and a good degree of agreement with the report's recommendations. In some instances the government cite existing policy and emerging initiatives that address the report's concerns, while in others it promises future action. One such example is the content of the proposed PPS4, which incorporates a number of the report's recommendations (see section 7).

PPS12 Spatial Plans (Published June 2008)

6.6 The system of development plan preparation was comprehensively reformed following the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, including the introduction of the new system of LDFs. Following on from early experiences of the new system, the government has sought to streamline it through a number of changes introduced in a new PPS 12. This alters some procedural aspects of DPD production, for example by removing the 'preferred options' stage.

The Regional Spatial Strategy (Adopted May 2008) & Integrated Regional Strategy

6.7 The RSS was prepared by the Yorkshire & Humber Assembly, and formally adopted in May 2008. It now forms the upper tier of the development plan for the National Park. Since adoption of the RSS, the government has undertaken a review of the structure of regional governance, with the ultimate objective of combining regional planning and economic development functions into a single Integrated Regional Strategy. As a result, regional planning functions were transferred from the Yorkshire & Humber Regional Assembly to a Joint Regional Board. This has now commenced work on the preparation of the first Integrated Regional Strategy.

7. Emerging Changes to National & Regional Planning Policy

Planning Policy Statement 4 - Planning for Prosperous Economies (Draft for consultation May 2009)

- 7.1 Last year's AMR reported proposed replacements for PPG4 (Industrial & Commercial Development) & PPS6 (Planning for Town Centres). The government has now elected to combine these updates into a single new document, along with a selective review of those parts of PPS7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas) that deal with economic development. The draft policies represent a number of the recommendations of the Matthew Taylor Report by seeking to secure greater economic opportunity in rural areas. It reiterates many of the most important messages within the current PPS7, for example the need to strictly control development in the open countryside, protection for National Parks against major development, protection of village shops and town centre vitality and positive policies for sustainable tourism and the re-use of buildings for economic purposes. A response to the consultation on behalf of all English NPAs can be viewed online²⁰.

Planning Policy Statement 15 – Planning for the Historic Environment (Draft for consultation July 2009)

- 7.2 This draft policy will supersede its predecessors PPG 15 & 16 dating from the 1990s. It gives the government's policies on the formulation of policies, and dealing with planning applications, in relation to the historic environment, including buildings, sites, monuments, conservation areas and landscapes. It adopts an approach based around the attributable significance of heritage assets i.e. their value to present and future generations based on archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest. It provides much more abbreviated policy guidance than was previously the case, and so one of the main issues will be to ensure that this does not lead to any loss of value from its content. The Authority is taking the lead in formulating a response to the consultation on behalf of the English National Park Authorities Association.

Improving Permitted Development (Consultation – July 2009)

- 7.3 The previous section highlighted changes to *householder* permitted development instituted during the monitoring year. The government have followed this with proposals to extend permitted development rights to *industrial, commercial and educational premises*. These properties currently benefit from very restricted rights, and the changes are aimed at offering further concessions from the need to apply for planning permission based upon the likely impact of minor proposals. As with previous changes to permitted development, there is little additional protection offered for National Parks, and some of the concessions are potentially generous. It is estimated that the changes could remove up to 25,000 applications from the planning system annually.

²⁰ <http://www.enpaa.org.uk/enpaa/consultation-responses.htm>

Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (Consultation on Allocation Mechanisms Years 2 and 3 – May 2009)

- 7.4 Since 2002, planning authorities have received a Planning Delivery Grant from the government based on their performance. Until 2007, the grant award was largely dependent upon performance in the determination of planning applications, however it has subsequently been broadened to embrace elements of housing delivery. Unfortunately, the current grant criteria are not particularly favourable for small planning authorities, since housing delivery is typically only modest, and the grant criteria tend to favour volume house building. Under the proposed changes however, it may be that the Authority could benefit from a system based on procedural matters aimed at boosting affordable housing provision. The changes do however fall short of an approach that is tailored to the particular context of National Park Authorities, something that ENPAA have consistently lobbied for in recent years²¹.

²¹ http://www.enpaa.org.uk/consultation_on_hpdg_allocation_mechanisms_years_2_and_3_-_response_by_english_national_park_authorities_association_june_2009.pdf

Appendix 1 – Contextual Indicators

ITEM	STATISTIC		DATA SOURCE
Area			
Total National Park area	176,180ha		Ordnance Survey, 2008
Number of parishes totally or partly in the National Park	83		Office of National Statistics, 2001
Population			
Resident population	19,654		Office of National Statistics, 2001
School and pre-school age (0-15)	3,439	(17%)	Office of National Statistics, 2001
Working age (16-64)	12,087	(61%)	Office of National Statistics, 2001
Pensionable age (65+)	4,127	(21%)	Office of National Statistics, 2001
Number of settlements with 3,000+ population	0		Office of National Statistics, 2001
Housing			
Housing stock	10,236		Office of National Statistics, 2001
Resident households	8,363		Office of National Statistics, 2001
Owner occupied	6,194	(74%)	Office of National Statistics, 2001
Private rented	1,614	(20%)	Office of National Statistics, 2001
Social Housing	555	(6%)	Office of National Statistics, 2001
Second and holiday lets	1,498	(15%)	Office of National Statistics, 2001
Nature conservation			
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	50,769ha		Natural England, 2008
Special Protection Areas (SPAs)	28,606ha		Natural England, 2008
Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)	40,063ha		Natural England, 2008
RAMSAR Sites	285ha		Natural England, 2008
National Nature Reserves	1,278ha		Natural England, 2008
Land use			
Moorland, heathland and unenclosed grassland	92,500ha		Countryside Commission, 1991
Farmland	71,800ha		Countryside Commission, 1991
Woodland	6,000ha		Countryside Commission, 1991
Heritage			
Scheduled Ancient Monuments	203		English Heritage, 2008
Conservation Areas	37		Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, 2008
Listed buildings			
Grade I	18		English Heritage, 2008
Grade II*	68		English Heritage, 2008
Grade II	1,713		English Heritage, 2008
Recreation			
Public footpaths	1,456km		Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, 2008
Public bridleways	660km		Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, 2008
Other public rights of way	44km		Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, 2008
Open Access land	109,300ha		Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, 2009

Source: YDNPA Corporate Plan 2009/10

Appendix 2 – Core Indicators

1. Business Development

		Use Class	Floorspace (sq. m)
BD1	Total amount of additional employment floorspace – by type*	B1a (offices)	295
		B1b (research/development)	0
		B1c (light industry)	316
		B2 (general industry)	0
		B8 (storage/distribution)	127

		Use Class	Floorspace (sq. m)
BD2	Total amount of employment floorspace on previously developed land – by type*	B1a (offices)	63
		B1b (research/development)	0
		B1c (light industry)	0
		B2 (general industry)	0
		B8 (storage/distribution)	0

		Use	Land Available
BD3	Employment land available** – by type	B1 (business) uses only (Reeth)	0.35ha
		All employment uses	7.28ha
		Total	7.63ha

		Use Class	Town centres	Whole area
BD4	Total amount of floorspace for ‘town centre uses’*	A1 (retail)	104	130
		A2 (financial/professional)	0	0
		B1a (offices)	0	295
		D2 (assembly/leisure)	0	65

2. Housing

H1	Plan period and housing targets	<p>1991-2006 - 500 net additional dwellings, North Yorkshire County Structure Plan;</p> <p>2008-2026 - Zero housing target - all additional housing to meet local housing needs, adopted Regional Spatial Strategy. Forthcoming Housing DPD likely to set a target for affordable housing provision only.</p>
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H2(a)	Net additional dwellings - previous years	2003/4	55
		2004/5	48
		2005/6	68
		2006/7	84
		2007/8	85
H2(b)	Net additional dwellings - reporting year	2008/9	92
H2(c)	Net additional dwellings – future years	Not available	The Regional Spatial Strategy contains no housing target for the National Park, therefore it is difficult to predict future levels of provision. There will be greater certainty as regards affordable housing delivery following adoption of a Housing DPD that will allocate developable sites and establish an indicative annual target.
H2(d)	Managed delivery target	Not available	See above

H3	New and converted dwellings - on previously developed land	81	A significant proportion of housing completions in 2008/9 have been on brownfield land. Over half of this figure is accounted for by schemes at Embsay Tannery & High Hall, Bainbridge.
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H4	Net additional pitches (gypsy & traveller)	Nil
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H5	Gross affordable housing completions	19	<i>Figure accounted for by completion of schemes at High Hall, Bainbridge and the Masonic Hall, Sedbergh.</i>
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H6	Housing quality – Building for Life Assessments	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Assessments will be required for High Hall, Bainbridge & Embsay Tannery, however, the Authority is awaiting formal training on conducting assessments from the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment. Results will be reported in next year's AMR.</i>
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3. Environmental Quality

E1	Planning permissions contrary to Environment Agency advice	1	<i>The single permission contrary to Environment Agency advice was at the Haulage Depot, Appersett, Hawes. Environment Agency statistics record additional cases where an objection has been lodged, however, further investigation reveals that following negotiation, these objections were withdrawn.</i>
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E2	Changes in areas of biodiversity importance	<i>None</i>	<i>No significant change in areas of biodiversity importance are known to have occurred during the monitoring year, whether they be gains resulting from new designations or environmental enhancements, or losses as a result of development or intentional damage. Long term restoration of quarry sites is one area which in the future may be a significant area for adding areas of biodiversity importance and will continue to be monitored.</i>
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E3	Renewable energy generation	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>This indicator carries a qualifying threshold of 0.5MW generation capacity. All installed schemes in the National Park are micro-renewable ones falling well below this threshold.</i>
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4. Minerals

M1	Primary land won aggregates	2006: 3,816,535 tonnes; 2007: 4,001,175 tonnes; 2008: 3,786,545 tonnes; 2009: Not yet available	<i>Figures are for calendar, not financial years, so 2009 figure not yet available. Figures consistently around/just below 4 million tonnes in recent years</i>
M2	Production of secondary/recycled aggregates	<i>Nil</i>	<i>All sites in National Park produce primary won aggregates.</i>

5. Waste

W1	Capacity of new waste management facilities	<i>Nil</i>	<i>No new facilities provided in the National Park.</i>
W2	Municipal waste arising by type	<i>Not available</i>	<i>Information cannot be disaggregated to the National Park area since it is only currently available at whole County or District level. While the National Park Authority is the waste planning authority, it is neither the waste collection or disposal authority.</i>

* Based on permissions not completions

** Figures show land allocated for employment purposes in the Local Plan and still available for development. It does not include non-allocated employment land.