YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority

Sustainability Appraisal & Strategic Environmental Assessment



Gayle, Wensleydale

Vision, Housing Target, Carbon Futures, on-farm development
November 2020

Yorkshire Dales National Park Local Plan 2023 - 2040

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Introduction

The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority is required to produce a Local Plan setting out its development policies over the next 20 years.

A first consultation began in December 2019. It invited the public to suggest development and land use issues that the Authority should attempt to address in the new local plan. A report of findings is available on the local plan website. A second consultation then looked at three of the issues identified and offered possible planning options for each. A third consultation will take place in the new year and will look at the options around housing growth.

The local plan must be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development[1]. The regulations require a sustainability appraisal (SA) and a strategic environmental assessment to be undertaken at each stage of the local plan process. A sustainability appraisal scoping statement is available on the local plan webpage. This contains all the baseline data and sets out 13 objectives against which the Local Plan will be tested (Appendix1).

This document is the Sustainability Appraisal of the second consultation paper looking at the options for a potential vision for the local plan and approach to a housing target, carbon emissions from new development and the approach to new agricultural development.

Sustainability appraisal of the local plan Vision, Housing Target options, Carbon Futures and on farm development

The tables in appendix 2 provide a commentary against each local plan option and assign an indicative 'score' against the 13 sustainability objectives. The score identifies the potential impact against each objective and is represented by the following symbols:

++	an overall significant positive impact
+	an overall positive impact
0	an overall neutral impact
-	an overall negative impact
- -	an overall significant negative impact
≈	no relationship or link

The scoring is somewhat subjective because it depends on the context and the perception of the starting point around each issue. For example building houses will generally have a negative impact on those aspects of sustainability that relate to non renewable resources, yet new homes are needed in order to maintain a living working population and ultimately to support the management of the landscape.

Sustainability assessment is considered helpful because it structures the local plan process and helps flag up options or strategies that might seem to be particularly helpful or potentially

[1] National Planning Policy Framework para 151

harmful. Ultimately there is a reckoning to be made by policy makers as to whether the positive impacts of an option outweigh the negative impacts. Later in the local plan process reasons will be added to the assessment to justify choosing a particular option.

The purpose of early assessment here is to indicate to consultees how a potential policy direction might contribute towards sustainability.

Appendix 1: Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment Objectives (scoping statement November 2020)

1	Biodiversity	Safeguard and enhance internationally, nationally and locally important **species and habitats**.
2	Landscape	Reduce large scale extraction of aggregate **minerals**.
		Prevent detrimental impacts on the **landscape**.
		Safeguard and enhance **geodiversity**.
3	Water	Promote sustainable **water supplies** and appropriate **waste water treatment** methods.
		Safeguard and enhance **water quality** through the reduction and prevention of pollution incidents.
		Prevent vulnerable development in **flood risk** areas and ensure appropriate land management and development that does not contribute to downstream flood risk.
4	Pollution	Avoid harmful **emissions** of light and noise and maintain air quality across the National Park.
5	Archaeology/ Built Heritage	Protect below ground **archaeology** and preserve nationally important remains.
		Conserve and enhance above ground archaeology including **built heritage**, listed buildings, conservation areas and Scheduled Ancient Monuments.
		Ensure a high quality of design that respects or enhances its **setting**.
6	Community	Encourage a mix of **housing types** and tenures in order to ensure all have the opportunity to meet their housing needs in accommodation of adequate quality.
		Safeguard and improve access to **services**.
		Contribute to the creation and maintenance of **vibrant and inclusive communities.**
		Support a fair and representative system of **governance**, encouraging widespread participation and public involvement.
		Work to ensure that the maximum possible number of households have access to **mobile** signal and high speed **broadband**.
7	Waste	Support the movement towards a **circular economy** as well as appropriate waste management and disposal methods.
8		Support **energy efficiency** measures and a reduction in energy use.

	Climate Change & Energy	Support appropriate development of, and research into, **renewable energy** generation.
		Take action to adapt to the changing climate, mitigate against further changes and increase **resilience to climate change**.
9	Public Enjoyment & Understanding	Support **sustainable tourism**.
		Maintain and improve opportunities for the public to **understand and enjoy** the National Park.
		Understand and respond to the changing patterns of **visitors** to the National Park.
10	Economy & Employment	Provide conditions which encourage growing, diverse and resilient **economy** and the diversification of existing enterprises.
11	Transport	Locate development so that it supports a sustainable **transport network** which encourages the use of public transport, cycling and walking which minimises traffic congestion and improves air quality.
12	Agriculture	Understand and respond to changes in agricultural policy and **land management** change.
		Support appropriate agriculture, including opportunities for **farm diversification.**
13	Special Qualities	Conserve and enhance the **special qualities** of the National Park.

Appendix 2; Assessment of ambitions – local plan vision, housing target, carbon futures and on farm development

	Sustainability objectives (Appendix 1)												
Strategic options	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**
	Biodiversity	**Landscape**	**Water**	**Pollution**	**Archaeology /Built environment**	**Community**	**Waste**	**Climate change & energy**	**Enjoyment & understanding**	**Economy & employment**	**Transport**	**Agriculture**	**Special qualities**
Establishing a vision	The new local plan will contain a vision for planning strategy and planning policy to pursue. The preferred option is to use the same as the National Park Management Plan. This covers the whole of the post 2016 National Park and looks forward over the same twenty year timeframe. The Management Plan has a wider remit than the local plan, covering land management and partnership objectives as well as the ambitions for development outcomes. It is the overarching strategy for the National Park so it makes sense to share the same vision in the new local plan. Since the vision is multi facetted and describes a positive social, economic and environmental outcome it doesn't in itself imply any trade offs and theoretically scores well across all sustainability objectives. Further into the process the Local Plan will set out its own strategic development objectives that will summarise its strategies for housing, employment, farm development and conservation.												
Share the same vision for 2040 as the National Park Management Plan	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Community Sustainability	Many consultees commented on the amount of new homes that should be built in the park. Increasing the rate of house building is a high priority in national planning policy. The consultation proposed three options. Option 1 favoured by some consultees is a zero housing target where the Authority does not attempt to release significantly more land for development. The logic for this is based on the decline in households living in the Park, as projected by the national household model. Option 2 would be to maintain the current output of 30 new homes each year. Option 3 would be an ambitious increase up to 70 dwellings per annum. This would require the identification and release of more land for development with the intention that new house building will attract households into the Park, thereby reversing population decline and ultimately supporting community sustainability.												

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	Generally speaking the higher the number of houses built, the bigger the impact on the environment. Future homes should however have a lower carbon footprint than previously and they might be assumed to be designed to have a less harmful impact on the landscape and perhaps a neutral or even enhanced impact on biodiversity. The major positives are scored in terms of potentially reversing population decline, supporting services and boosting the local economy. The discussion about this important aspect of local plan strategy will continue into next year as part of the consultation on future housing growth.												
No new homes	0	0	0	0	0	--	0	0	-	--	-	-	0
30 new homes per year (510 over the Plan period)	0	0	0	0	0	0/+	0	0	0/-	-	-	0	0
70 new homes per year (1190 over the Plan period)	0/+	-	0/-	-	-	++	0	0/-	0/+	++	0/+	-	0/-
Carbon Futures	Total emissions from the local plan area are low because of the small population and relative lack of development. Emissions per head are higher than average however because of the age of the housing stock and high car dependency that living and working in the area entails. Government advice is that planning authorities should avoid using local policy to determine new home performance standards. Instead changes to the building regulations and the 'Future Homes Standard' are intended to deliver nationally consistent standards. Nevertheless the local plan can still explore other strategies and policies that will reduce climate emissions and mitigate their impacts from new development. Examples include spatial strategy (locating new buildings near to existing services and people), encouraging renewable energy, using bio based materials, planting woodland and pursuing bio diversity net gain.												

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	A planning strategy that encourages low carbon and zero carbon development is going to score well in terms of climate change, reduction in waste and helping communities become more resilient. Possible impacts may be around their unconventional design and use of materials in juxtaposition with traditional buildings and Dales landscapes.												
Zero carbon	0	0/-	0	0/-	0/-	+	+	++	+	0/+	0/+	0	0/-
Low carbon	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0
Status quo	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0/+	0	0	0	0	0
On-farm development	Significant change is coming to UK farming. We don't know precisely what farming in the Dales will look like in the future, but we may expect it to be more diverse with elements of traditional farming, natural recovery and some areas of greater intensification. We need to consider what planning policies will be necessary to support these. Assessing the impacts of the potential different types of farming is as subjective as other parts of the SA. Generally speaking though elements of rewilding and nature friendly farming will score well in terms of enhancing natural resources.												
Rewilding	++	+	+	+	-	0	+	++	+	0	0	-	-
Nature friendly farming	+	0	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	0	+

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Intensification	-	-	-	-	-	0/-	-	0/+	-	0/-	-	+	-