YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority

Yorkshire Dales National Park Local Plan 2025-40
Publication Draft (Regulation 19)

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL REPORT

March 2025

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1. Introduction

1. The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA) is currently preparing a new Local Plan which will set out the vision, objectives and planning policies that will guide development within the National Park up to 2040.

2. The aim of the Local Plan is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It will do this by guiding the type and location of new development to deliver long term benefits for the community, the economy and the environment. It will also help support the achievement of National Park purposes which are:

    1. To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park, and
    2. To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Park by the public.

3. In addition, in taking forward these purposes, the National Park Authority has a statutory duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of communities within the area.[1]

Requirement for Sustainability Appraisal

4. In accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004[2], the National Park Authority is required to carry out an appraisal of the sustainability of the proposals in the local development plan documents it produces.

5. A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a method of assessing a plan to find out whether it is likely to promote a sustainable pattern of development, and where possible, avoid or mitigate any significant negative social, environmental or economic effects and maximise any positive ones. It is a systematic process that must be carried out during the preparation of a local plan, enabling changes to be made if necessary. SA will help to inform the selection of plan options by appraising reasonable alternatives in respect of, for example, different volumes of growth and site allocations. The findings are, however, not the only factors taken into account when determining a preferred option to take forward in a plan. Factors such as public opinion, deliverability and conformity with national policy will also be taken into account by plan makers when selecting preferred options.

6. The SA process incorporates the requirements of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004[3] (commonly referred to as the 'Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Regulations'). SA/SEA ensures that potential environmental effects are given full consideration alongside social and economic issues.

7. In-line with the Regulations, a report (known as the SA Report) must be published for consultation alongside the Draft Plan that essentially 'identifies, describes and evaluates 'the likely significant effects of implementing 'the plan, and reasonable alternatives'. The report must then be taken into account, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.

Stages in the Sustainability Appraisal Process

8. The five key stages in the SA process are shown in the diagram below. It shows how the SA stages correspond with the main stages of the plan making process.

[1] The statutory purposes and duty for National Parks are specified in the National Parks and Access to Countryside Act 1949, as amended by the Environment Act 1995.
[2] The requirement for SA of Local Plans is set out under section 19(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
[3] Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

Local Plan preparation stages	Sustainability Appraisal stages (including SEA regulation requirements)
Evidence Gathering: Develop an evidence base to inform the plan 'Groundwork'	**Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope** 1. Reviewing other relevant policies, plans and programmes 2. Collecting baseline information 3. Identifying sustainability issues 4. Developing the SA Framework 5. Consulting on the scope and level of detail of the SA
Consider and consult upon options for the Plan (Regulation 18) During the preparation of the YDNP Local Plan there have been numerous consultation on issues and options: *Consultation No.1: Setting the agenda* *Consultation No.2: Exploring our options: Ambitions* *Consultation No. 3: Housing Exploring our options - growth options* *Consultation No. 4: Exploring our options: Barns, Viability and Household Targeting* *Consultation No 5: Preferred Options* *Consultation No. 6: Housing site options* *Consultation No. 7: Preferred Housing sites*	**Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects** 1. Testing the Plan objectives against the SA Framework 2. Developing the Plan options 3. Appraising the effects of the plan 4. Consider ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising positive effects 5. Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the Plan
Prepare **Publication Draft** Local Plan	**Stage C:** Prepare the **SA Report** documenting the appraisal process.
Seek representation on the Publication Local Plan (Regulation 19) from consultation bodies and the public	**Stage D:** Seek representations on the Sustainability Appraisal report from consultation bodies and the public.
Submit the draft Local Plan and supporting documents for Examination	Sustainability Appraisal report submitted as supporting document to the Local Plan.
Outcome of Examination: Consider implications for SA/SEA compliance	Appraise any significant changes.
Adopt the Plan and monitor implementation 'Going live'	**Stage E: Post adoption reporting and Monitoring**

tructure of this report

Purpose of this SA Report

9. This report accompanies the **Yorkshire Dales National Park Publication Draft Local Plan (2025-40)**. It documents the SA process to date and reports the findings of the SA of the of the Local Plan Publication Draft including the vision and objectives, policy approaches and the proposed site allocations.

10. Both this report and the Publication Draft Local Plan are now subject to a formal period of consultation[4] to allow representations to be made on their content.

11. At this stage in the Plan's preparation process, only minor modifications can be made to the Plan before is it submitted to the Secretary of State for examination[5]. This report will be revised and updated, if necessary, to reflect any changes prior to submission and following examination.

Structure of this report

12. The remainder if this report is structured under the following sections:

Section 2: Briefly covers the background to the Local Plan review and the outlines the Plan's vision and objectives

Section 3: Details the scope and the approach to the SA process and assessment.

Section 4: Summarises how the SA has informed the development of the Local Plan at the Issues and Options Stage (Regulation 18)[6].

Section 5: Covers the assessment of the vision, objectives, polices and housing site allocations presented in the Publication Draft Local Plan.

Section 6: Outlines the proposals for monitoring the likely significant social, economic and environmental effects of implementing the Plan.

Other assessments

13. In addition to the SA, the emerging/Publication Draft Local Plan has also been subject to the following assessments:

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

14. The YDNPA has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 and the associated Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to ensure that its plans and policies do not discriminate or disadvantage people.

15. The Authority has carried out an EqIA of the Publication Draft Local Plan. This shows that the Plan is expected to have a positive impact on the nine characteristic groups. No aspects of the Plan are considered to have a negative impact.

[4] In accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

[5] Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

[6] Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)

16. Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017[7] (the 'Habitats Regulations') requires that competent authorities assess the potential impacts of land use plans on the Natura 2000 network of European protected sites to determine whether there will be any 'likely significant effects' on any European site as a result of the plan's implementation (either alone or 'in combination' with other plans or projects); and, if so, whether these effects will result in any adverse effects on that site's integrity. The process by which the impacts of a plan or programme on a European site are assessed is known as 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' (HRA).

17. The Publication Draft Local Plan has been subject to HRA[8]. The Assessment determined that with mitigation measures the Publication Draft Local Plan would not have a likely significant effect on the network of protected sites. The recommended mitigation measures have been incorporated into the Plan.

[7] As amended by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations, 2019
[8] Report to Inform a Habitats Regulation Assessment, YDNPA Local Plan 2025-40 Publication Version, Thomson Environmental Consultants, Oct 2024

2. The Local Plan – context

The Local Plan Area

18. The area covered by the Publication Draft Local Plan and this SA report is the Yorkshire Dales National Park (see Fig 1 below).

Figure 1: The Yorkshire Dales National Park and neighbouring protected landscapes



The Local Plan Review

19. The YDNPA adopted the current Yorkshire Dales National Park Local Plan (2015-30) in 2016. In August that year the government extended the boundary of the National Park bringing in additional areas of Cumbria and a small part of Lancashire. As a consequence, the Authority inherited a number of older local plans prepared by neighbouring district and county planning authorities. This resulted in a suite of planning policy spread over eleven different documents, prepared at different times by different bodies.

20. In December 2018, the YDNPA took the decision to prepare a single Local Plan for the whole of the National Park. Work on this new plan commenced in 2019 with the aim of producing a single set of strategic and thematic policies to guide new development in the National Park up to 2040.

21. The Local Plan is informed by an evidence base of the key aspects of the social, economic and environmental characteristics of the National Park. Seven 'informal' stages of consultation have also helped to shape the issues the plan will cover, guide how ambitious the strategy should be, consider where new housing should be developed and inform the detail and justification of policy.

The Publication Draft Local Plan

22. This SA report accompanies the Publication Draft Local Plan which includes the following key parts:
    - Local Plan Vision & Objectives,
    - Strategic Policies
    - Thematic Policies
    - Site allocations
    - Proposed monitoring framework.

The Vision and Objectives for the Local Plan

23. The 2040 Vision for the Yorkshire Dales National Park is set out in the National Park Management Plan. It also provides the Vision for the Local Plan. The Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan is the single most important policy document for the National Park setting out the overarching five-year strategy for its management.

24. The YDNPA consulted widely on the vision for the National Park Management Plan prior to its publication in 2019. The Management Plan for 2025-30 is currently under preparation and will retain this same vision.

Vision

Through their passion for this special place, local people and businesses will keep the Yorkshire Dales National Park a thriving area. Its unique cultural landscape will be treasured for its stunning scenery, exceptional heritage and wonderful wildlife, and every year millions of people will be inspired to be part of it.

By 2040, it will be:

- **A distinctive, living, working, cultural landscape that tells the ongoing story of generations of people interacting with their environment.**
- **A friendly, open and welcoming place with outstanding opportunities to enjoy its special qualities.**
- **Home to the finest variety of wildlife in England.**
- **Resilient and responsive to the impacts of climate change, storing more carbon each year than it produces.**
- **Providing an outstanding range of benefits for the nation based on its natural resources, landscape and cultural heritage, which underpin a flourishing local economy.**
- **Home to strong, self-reliant and balanced communities with good access to the services they need.**

25. The strategic development objectives for the Local Plan are to:

Strategic development objectives:

- Allow the **landscape** of the National Park to be responsive to change while at the same time conserving and enhancing its distinctive character.
- Permit **locally-sustainable development** that will improve the National Park as a high quality place to live, work and visit.
- Steer new development into **locations** near to existing services, which avoid the risk of flooding, which minimise avoidable greenhouse gas emissions and which have capacity to accommodate and benefit from it without harm to the Park's special qualities.
- Identify sites and permit development of new **affordable housing** that will meet the needs of local communities, the economy and the long-term objective of stabilising population decline and aging.
- Encourage development that will support a growing, diverse and **resilient economy**, and which will help make the National Park a more attractive place for young adults and people of working age.
- Protect existing jobs, homes and businesses and support measures to improve **access to services** for the benefit of local communities.
- Support innovative, high-quality and more sustainable building and **design** that respects and complements the distinctive character of the National Park.
- Ensure new development is designed to adapt to the **changing climate** and minimise avoidable carbon emissions.
- Use the planning system to help deliver **nature recovery** through good quality design and protection from harmful development. Require new development to incorporate measures that will create 10% net gain for biodiversity and strengthen wildlife networks.
- Use the Local Plan as a tool to help deliver some of the Management Plan objectives and the statutory **National Park purposes**.

Core Policies

26. Core policies within the Local Plan include a spatial strategy that describes where new development will be located, an indicative housing delivery figure/target and definitions of sustainability and development quality that are appropriate to the context of the National Park.

Thematic Policies

27. The Local Plan also includes a range of development management policies grouped into themes covering Infrastructure, Access and Connectivity; Community; Archaeology & Built Heritage; Employment, Landscape and Wildlife.

3. SA Scope and Approach

28. One of the first stages in the SA process is to prepare and consult upon a SA Scoping Report. The Scoping Report (**Appendix** 1) sets the context, establishes the baseline and decides the scope and framework for the SA process. In line with Stage A in the process set out on page 4 it:

1. Identifies and reviews other relevant policies, plans, programmes and strategies
2. Collects baseline information
3. Identifies sustainability issues
4. Develops the SA Framework, which enables the sustainability of the plan to be appraised
5. Is used to consult the consultation bodies on the scope and level of detail of the SA.

Review of plans, programmes and strategies

29. In the early stages of the Local Plan development a review of plans, policies and programmes was undertaken of all relevant international, national, regional and local documents. The review aims to identify the relationship of these documents to the Local Plan; in terms of how the Local Plan could be affected by their aims, objectives and targets, or how it could contribute to the achievement of their sustainability objectives.

30. This review was originally presented in the SA Scoping Report (Appendix B to the Scoping Report) and has been kept up to date during the preparation of the Local Plan. The review highlights the key sustainability implications/considerations in the final column of the table.

Baseline analysis and identification of issues

31. To support this stage of the process, a Sustainability Assessment Framework table was prepared which collated a large selection of baseline data on the social, environmental and economic state of the National Park. The table (shown in Appendix C to the Scoping Report) is set out as a series of sustainability issues which fall under the themes/topic areas identified below. These headings cover the type of issues that the SEA Regulations (Schedule 2) say should be considered and also take into account the distinctive legislative and administrative context of the National Park:

Sustainability Issues/Themes

- Biodiversity
- Landscape
- Water
- Pollution
- Archeology/Built Heritage
- Community
- Waste
- Climate Change & Energy
- Public Enjoyment and Understanding
- Economy and Employment
- Transport
- Agriculture
- Special Qualities

32. The table in Appendix C of the Scoping Report uses quantitative and qualitative data sources to show the current situation with these issues and, where possible, makes references to past information and future projects in order to indicate trends. For ease of understanding, this information was divided into SWOT categories (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats). The baseline information can provide the basis for predicting and monitoring the environmental, social and economic effects of the plan. Where existing relevant targets exists, these are shown in the final column.

SA Framework

33. A series of sustainability objectives were proposed relating to the sustainability themes and these are shown in table 1 below. The development and use of a set of sustainability objectives is a recognised way in which the likely sustainability effects and implications of a plan can be described, analysed and compared on a structured and consistent basis.

34. Similar objectives have been utilised in previous sustainability appraisals and the YDNPA is satisfied that they effectively summarise the various environmental, social and economic aspects of sustainability in the National Park context.

Table 1: The SA Framework for the Yorkshire Dales National Park Local Plan

Sustainability Theme/Topic	Sustainability Objective	
Biodiversity	1	Safeguard and enhance internationally, nationally and locally important species and habitats.
Landscape	2	Reduce large scale extraction of aggregate minerals.
	3	Prevent or remove detrimental impacts on the landscape and deliver landscape enhancement.
	4	Safeguard and enhance geodiversity.
Water	5	Promote sustainable water supplies and appropriate waste water treatment methods.
	6	Safeguard and enhance water quality through the reduction and prevention of pollution incidents.
	7	Prevent vulnerable development in flood risk areas and ensure appropriate land management and development that does not contribute to downstream flood risk.
Pollution	8	Avoid harmful emissions of light and noise and maintain air quality across the National Park.
Archaeology/ Built Heritage	9	Protect below ground archaeology and preserve nationally important remains.
	10	Conserve and enhance above ground archaeology including built heritage, listed buildings, conservation areas and Scheduled Ancient Monuments.
	11	Ensure a high quality of design that respects or enhances its setting.
Community	12	Facilitate 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.
	13	Safeguard and improve access to services.
	14	Contribute to the creation and maintenance of vibrant and inclusive communities.
	15	Support a fair and representative system of governance, encouraging widespread participation and public involvement.
	16	Work to ensure that the maximum possible number of households have access to mobile signal and high speed broadband.
Waste	17	Support the movement towards a circular economy as well as appropriate waste management and disposal methods.
Climate Change & Energy	18	Support energy efficiency measures and a reduction in energy use.
	19	Support appropriate development of, and research into, renewable energy generation.

	20	Take action to adapt to the changing climate, mitigate against further changes and increase resilience to climate change.
Public Enjoyment & Understanding	21	Support sustainable tourism.
	22	Maintain and improve opportunities for the public to understand and enjoy the National Park.
	23	Understand and respond to the changing patterns of visitors to the National Park.
Economy & Employment	24	Facilitate the growth and diversification of a resilient economy, through the development of existing and new enterprises.
Transport	25	Locate development so that it supports a sustainable transport network which encourages the use of public transport, cycling and walking, minimises traffic congestion, reduces carbon emissions and improves air quality.
Agriculture	26	Understand and respond to changes in agricultural policy and land management change.
	27	Support appropriate agriculture, including opportunities for farm diversification.
Special Qualities	28	Conserve and enhance the special qualities of the National Park.

Appraisal methodology

35. The SA Framework has been used to appraise the following key components of the Local Plan:

- Vision and Strategic Objectives;
- The strategic options in terms of housing targets/requirements, spatial strategy, etc,
- Proposed strategic and development management policies;
- Proposed housing site allocations (and the reasonable alternatives).

36. The following scoring system has been used to determine their compatibility (Table 2 below):

Table 2: Sustainability appraisal assessment criteria

Category	Likely effect on the sustainability appraisal objective
++	Significant positive effect
+	Positive effect
N	Neutral effect
-	Negative effect
- -	Significant negative effect
~	No relationship or link (There is no clear relationship between the proposed option/policy and the achievement of the objective; or the relationship is negligible).
U	Effect is uncertain or unknown, for example due to a lack of information.

Secondary, Cumulative and Synergistic Effects

37. In line with the SA/SEA requirements, the nature of the effects are considered in terms of whether they are:
    - Direct or indirect,
    - Long term (16+years), medium term (5-10 years), short term (0-5 years), temporary or permanent,
    - Local or wider in geographical extent,
    - Cumulative and in combination

Technical Difficulties, Uncertainties and Assumptions

38. Where technical difficulties, uncertainties and assumptions have been made these are identified and explained within each relevant section below.

Scoping Report consultation

39. The SA scoping report was prepared during 2020 and was sent to the statutory consultation bodies for comment over a six-week period (20th Nov 2020 – 8th Jan 2021). It was also published on the Authority's website and comments were invited.

40. The comments received are summarised on the Authority's website together with a schedule of amendments/actions agreed in response. This SA framework (Table 1 above) was updated in light of the agreed amendments and has been used to appraise the effects of the emerging Local Plan at various stages as outlined below.

4. Developing and refining options and assessing effects

41. This section outlines the process undertaken in the development of the preferred approach set out in the Publication Draft Local Plan. It explains how work was undertaken to develop and then appraise reasonable alternatives and explains how the Authority has taken into account the findings of the appraisal when finalising the Plan. (Stage B of the SA process set out on p.4).

42. During the early stages of the development of the Local Plan (Regulation 18)[9], seven 'informal' and iterative stages of consultation have considered the issues the plan should address, the plan's vision and the potential approaches to key areas of policy, as well as the identification and selection of sites for development. Sustainability Appraisal was undertaken at appropriate stages with a series of interim SA reports/assessments prepared to support the plan's development and to help inform decision making.

Developing and appraising options / reasonable alternatives

Local Plan vision, Housing target, Carbon Futures & On-farm development

43. Consultation No. 2 was the first of the Authority's planned consultations on options for the new Local Plan. Following consideration of the key issues identified at the 'Setting the Agenda' stage (Consultation No.1), the Authority proposed a **vision** for the new Local Plan and identified separate approaches that the Plan might take for 3 key areas of policy:

1. **Community sustainability – options for the number of homes that should be built**
   Three strategic options around the quantum of housing growth that could be accommodated in the National Park over the plan period were explored and appraised against the SA objectives.

2. **Carbon Futures**
   Three strategic options that considered the Park's carbon future and the contribution the built environment could play in reducing carbon emissions were explored and appraised against the SA objectives.

3. **On-farm development – the future of farming in the Dales**
   Three strategic options were considered to help understand what planning policies would be needed to support the farming sector in the future and what impacts these might have. Each option was appraised against the SA objectives.

44. The interim Sustainability Appraisal which formed part of Consultation No.2 is presented in Appendix 2 and a summary of the findings are presented below:

[9] Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

Table 3: SA Summary of Options: Vision, Housing target, Carbon Futures, On-farm development

Establishing a Vision		
Strategic Options:	**Detail:**	**SA narrative/findings:**
Option 1: **Existing NPMP Vision**	Proposed to mirror the 2040 vision from the current National Park Management Plan published in 2019. This was consulted upon widely as part of the development of the Management Plan. 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.	The vision scored positively against all of the SA objectives. As the vision is multi-faceted and describes a positive social, economic and environmental outcome, it doesn't in itself imply any trade-offs. The vision is shared with the National Park Management Plan which is the overarching strategy for the National Park. It had previously been subject to SA as part of the development of the Management Plan during 2018/19.
Community Sustainability - Considering options for the number of homes that should be built		
Strategic Options:	**Changes to planning policy to deliver this option:**	**SA narrative/findings:**
Option 1: **No new homes**	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.	The SA showed that the higher the number of houses built, the bigger the potential for negative impacts 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. Conversely, the development of no new homes would likely have a negative impact on the social and economic objectives relating to the sustainability of the local community and the economy. The impact on the environment however would be minimal/neutral. The outcome of the consultation showed that, where people chose to specify an option, Options 2 and 3 had similar levels of support. The discussion about this important aspect of local plan strategy continued into Consultation No.3.
Option 2: **30 new homes**	Release land to develop 30 new homes each year to try and stabilise the population.	
Option 3: **70 new homes**	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. Increasing the rate of house building is a high priority in national planning policy.	

Carbon Futures - considering the Park's carbon future and what contribution the built environment can play in reducing carbon emissions		
Strategic Options:	**Changes to planning policy to deliver this option:**	**SA narrative/findings:**
Option 1: Zero Carbon	All new buildings must be zero carbon. Policy to prioritise small and medium scale renewable energy production.	A planning strategy that encourages low carbon and zero carbon development scores well in terms of climate change, reduction in waste and helping communities to become more resilient. Possible negative impacts could be around unconventional design and use of material in juxtaposition with traditional buildings and the Dales landscape. The outcome of the consultation showed that Option 2 had the highest level of support.
Option 2: Low carbon	All new buildings must be low carbon. More flexibility to allow small scale renewable energy production.	
Option 3: Status Quo	All new buildings must adhere to sustainable design principles. Policy support for small scale renewable energy production.	
On-farm development - options for the future of farming in the Dales to help understand what planning policies will be needed to support the farming sector moving forward and what impacts these might have		
Strategic Options:	**Changes to planning policy to deliver this option:**	**SA narrative/findings:**
Option 1: Rewilding	Not permitting new buildings or extensions for agricultural purposes Providing greater flexibility for farm diversification.	Generally, elements of rewilding and nature friendly farming score well in terms of enhancing natural resources and having positive effects on the environmental objectives. They would be largely neutral against the social and economic objectives. Intensification of farming has the potential to have a range of negative impacts across almost all of the SA objectives with the exception of agriculture. The outcome of the consultation indicated that Option 2 had the highest level of support.
Option 2: Nature friendly farming	Allowing new development which supports low intensity, low carbon farming which protects the environment. Providing greater flexibility for farm diversification. Support development of renewable technologies.	
Option 3: Intensification	Allowing farms to build more and larger new units to support intensification. Support improvements to farm infrastructure and access for larger vehicles. Facilitating the building of anaerobic digesters to convert animal manures, crops and crop by products into renewable energy.	

Outcome:

45. The outcome of Consultation No. 2 and the sustainability appraisal were considered at the National Park Authority meeting in December 2020. At that meeting, members agreed that the new Local Plan should adopt the same vision used in the Management Plan and indicated support for low carbon development, less intensive, nature friendly farming and a relatively ambitious housing target.

46. The outcomes from the consultation and SA were used to inform the next two options papers and gave an initial steer in helping to work up more detailed options relating to:

1. Housing Growth (Consultation No.3), and;
2. Barns policy and affordable housing (Consultation No.4).

Spatial Strategy and Housing Development

47. Consultation No. 3 explored where development; particularly housing development, should go. The consultation was divided into two parts and focused on:
    1. Spatial and housing strategy, and;
    2. Housing development capacity (incorporating a 'call for sites').

48. The purpose of the spatial and housing strategy is to determine the amount of new housing required over the plan period and to decide where it should go to bring the best shared benefits for the community, the economy and the environment.

49. The Authority consulted on the option of a simple two-tier settlement hierarchy defined by settlement size and the provision of services. This identified a number of towns and large villages where the majority of house building could be focussed.

50. The option of enabling a small number of houses in smaller settlements as a third tier in the hierarchy was also proposed and considered.

51. Consultation No 3 also provided a further opportunity to engage in the housing target issue, but this time supported by more in-depth evidence from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)[10]. The SHMA modelled three dwelling led scenarios based upon the development of 30, 50 and 70 new dwellings per annum. Whilst these did not tally exactly with those from Consultation No.2, they presented a low, medium and higher target that would have a similar impact on the population of the Park.

52. Following Consultation No.3, 5 recommended housing strategy options were put to a meeting of the Full Authority. Sustainability appraisal was undertaken of these options, and this was included in the report to Full Authority to help support decision making[11] (see Appendix 3). Many of the sustainability issues were also considered in the consultation report drawing on evidence from the SHMA.

Housing Target – SA findings:

53. A housing target of 50 dpa (minimum) to be met through a planned and deliverable supply of allocated sites was the recommended option. The SA showed this scored positively against the community sustainability objectives as this target would be sufficient to prevent depopulation and avoid the SHMA's projected drop in the number of households living in the National Park. At this early stage the main potential negative effects highlighted by the SA related to the environment, including potential impacts on the landscape, water pollution, archaeology, agriculture (loss of land) and special qualities. The development of the SHLAA and SA of sites later in the process would assist with the selection of the most appropriate and sustainable sites and consider mitigation measures if required.

54. The option of zero new housing was dismissed because this would continue the trend of a falling population and would be bad for community vitality, local business and key services such as village schools.

55. 30 dpa would be achievable based upon recent housing completion rates, but according to the SHMA would not be enough to reverse the forecast population decline or to halt the shrinking labour force.

56. The target of 70 dpa would be double the average number of houses completed each year between 2009 and 2019 in the pre-extension National Park area. This would be a very ambitious target and would require more numerous and larger sites to be allocated than previously. Bigger house builders are not active in the National Park and historical evidence of low build rates and inertia in

[10] Yorkshire Dales SHMA, Arc4 (2019)
[11] Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority meeting, 29th June 2021

turning permissions into completions meant this option was dismissed. The Park has a shortage of unconstrained land for housing development and there was a risk that pressure to release a high number of sites quickly could lead to longer term harm to landscape, heritage or other special qualities.

Spatial Strategy – SA findings:

57. The spatial strategy determines the future pattern of development. The proposed two-tier settlement hierarchy seeks to locate development in the most sustainable places in terms of access to services. Allocating sites in Local Service Centres (LSC) / towns and large villages scores positively against the sustainability indicators for economy and community. There is the potential for negative impacts on the landscape, however the landscape sensitivity of sites can be considered in greater detail once potential sites have been identified. Those with the highest sensitivity ratings can be dismissed if appropriate.

58. Small amounts of housing located in the smaller settlements also scored positively against the sustainability indicators for economy and community vibrancy but has the potential for some negative impacts on the landscape, special qualities and in terms of traffic movements and carbon emissions. The overall level of development in small settlements - one or two new homes in each - is likely to have small negative impacts overall and policy safeguards could help to prevent or reduce these. Sensitivity and scale will be key to implementation and the drawing of development boundaries to support windfall development will require careful consideration to help mitigate adverse impacts.

59. Requiring a range of house sizes on development sites will support the community and economy objectives by helping to meet local needs for a range of people, including single people, couples, families and older people. The potential negative effects are the same as those highlighted above.

Outcome:

60. The outcome of this stage of work was that that Authority agreed:
    a) to set a housing target of a minimum of 50 dwellings completed per year and that this should be met primarily through site allocations (and existing permissions),
    b) to create a single new National Park "Settlement Hierarchy", allowing housing sites to be allocated in "local service centres" and "large villages"
    c) to identify small settlements that could accommodate one or two homes as an exception to the policy of focussing housing delivery in the larger service settlements
    d) to use development boundaries as the means for supporting future "windfall" housing, establishing new boundaries in the extension area and reviewing existing boundaries with the objective of including some more opportunity for new housing in local service centres and large villages; and
    e) to require a range of house sizes across each site by setting a minimum density but not to impose a maximum dwelling size.

Preferred Strategic and Development Management Policies

61. Building upon the earlier stages of consultation on issues, ambitions, spatial strategy, and local housing options, etc, a range of preferred policies were developed which set out the Authority's direction of travel. The policies covered seven themes: *Core Policies, Access & Connectivity, Archaeology & Built Heritage, Community, Economy, Landscape and Natural Environment*. Each theme / chapter contained a list of development objectives and a set of policies covering specific topics. Each policy included an aim that described the intended outcome. Consultation No.5 asked for comments about the direction the policies were taking and sought views as to whether they were appropriate to the issues the National Park is facing and the degree of influence the Authority may have through planning policy.

62. Sustainability Appraisal was undertaken to indicate to consultees how a potential policy might contribute towards sustainability. The SA was included as part of the consultation documentation and is presented in Appendix 4. It helped to flag up the numerous trade-offs inherent with

development decisions and planning policy. All decisions will have some kind of positive and negative outcomes against a wide spectrum of sustainability indicators. It helped to inform policy makers about the acceptable and unacceptable trade-offs and to identify where mitigation of harmful effects may be necessary when drafting up the policies and their justification in greater detail.

SA Findings / Outcome

63. The outcome of this stage of work highlighted that the overall direction of travel appeared to be appropriate. The outcome of the consultation and the SA findings were used to help refine and flesh out the finer details of the of the policies now presented in the Publication Draft Local Plan.

Sites for Housing Development

64. Following on from the call for sites as part of Consultation No.3, options around land for housing development were considered through Consultation No.6 and 7.

65. The Local Plan presents two key mechanisms for releasing land for housing development: housing site allocations and housing development boundaries. The Authority had agreed that site allocations would play an important part in providing a supply of land sufficient to meet the housing target of 50 dpa. Housing site allocations provide certainty to landowners, developers and communities by firmly establishing the acceptability, in principle, of developing land for housing.

66. A total of 139 sites which could be suitable for allocation were identified following the 'call for sites' and a subsequent search for additional site candidates by planning officers. As part of the Housing Land Availability Assessment (HLAA) process, these sites were then screened to determine their potential suitability for development. This started with an assessment of their landscape sensitivity and was followed by further checking of a variety of development constraints, including wildlife, heritage, flood risk and highway access.

67. Quite a lot of sites were screened out of the options process at this stage. The outcome was a shortlist of 33 sites which appeared worthy of investigation. These sites were subject to a period of public consultation (Consultation No.6); to which almost 800 responses were received.

68. A member working group was established (the Local Plan Advisory Group – LPAG) to review the consultation responses and all available site options. They were also tasked with making recommendations back to the Full Authority regarding which sites should go forward as allocations into the Publication Draft Local Plan.

69. The group undertook a screening exercise to determine which sites should be prioritised for review. A total of 50 sites were subjected to further detailed investigation of landscape sensitivity, highways requirements, drainage and other clarifications (e.g. impact on heritage assets, flood risk, wildlife and trees). Each site was also subject to sustainability appraisal (see Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report – Housing Site Options in Appendix 5).

70 Full details of the site screening and selection process are set in the Housing Land Availability Assessment that accompanies the Reg 19 (Publication) version of the Local Plan.[12]

SA Findings

71. The Sustainability Appraisal highlighted that each site has differing effects on the sustainability objectives owing to site specific factors such as location, site size, flood risk, proximity to important habitats, etc.

[12] See Interim Housing Land Availability Assessment, YDNPA (August 2024)

72. In general, all of the site options support social sustainability by increasing the opportunity to access new homes and providing much needed affordable housing. This will be vital in helping to stabilise the Park's population and ensuring that younger and working age households are given opportunities to live in the National Park. New homes and residents will help to maintain vibrant and inclusive communities as well as supporting and sustaining a range of local services.

73. New households will also support economic objectives by expanding the availability of labour for the benefit of local businesses and increasing spending in the local economy.

74. As may be expected within a nationally protected landscape, in general terms the objectives where the sites score negatively relate to the environment, e.g. potentially adverse effects on biodiversity, landscape, pollution, archaeology/built heritage, climate change, etc. The SA showed that mitigation measures are possible for almost all potential negative effects and these are set out in the appraisal for each site. These mitigation measures were either already supported by draft policies within the emerging Local Plan or, where this was not the case, the SA has helped to inform the policy[13].

75. The mitigation of negative impacts on the landscape were not possible in relation to the cumulative impact of developing certain sites within Grassington. In landscape terms if GRA6 and GRA7 were both developed the adverse effects would be significant. Informed by the Landscape Sensitivity Review, the SA highlights that only one of these two sites should be considered for development and consequently only one was ultimately 'shortlisted' as a preferred site.

Outcome

76. The outcome of the investigation work (summarised in Appendix 15 of the HLAA), together with the SA for each of the 50 sites was reported to the LPAG to help inform its decision making. On the basis of this information, the LPAG determined that 23 sites should be taken forward and recommended as allocations to the Full Authority.

77. These preferred sites were published and subject to a further period of consultation during Sept-Oct 2024 (Consultation No.7). An Interim SA Report detailing the appraisal of the 50 sites formed part of the evidence supporting the consultation.

78. The outcome of the consultation and a number of recommendations were considered at a meeting of the Full Authority in December 2024. Officers were of the view that the consultation had not raised any materially new planning considerations that would change the recommendations on any of the preferred housing sites. At the meeting Members agreed that all 23 sites should be included as allocations within the Publication Draft Local Plan.

Summary of comments received on the Interim SA report

79. Comments were received from two residents, the Environment Agency and Historic England relating to the Interim SA report. These were concerned with:
    - the appraisal methodology: including whether weighting is given to the various criteria? (It isn't).
    - whether the use of the relative number of proposed dwellings on a site was an appropriate way of scoring as it automatically favoured larger sites, e.g. the suggestion that bigger development sites in an existing village will make a 'more vibrant and inclusive community', or that a fairer and more representative system of governance in YDNP villages is achieved by larger sites.
    - Criteria 12 (Facilitate a mix of housing types and tenures), 13 (Safeguard and improve access to services) and 16 (maximising the no. of households with access to mobile signal and high-speed broadband) - it was felt these are about housing and infrastructure, not community.
    - how the scoring and assessment determines the decisions on the sites,
    - comments specifically relating to the appraisal of site HAW2, including:

[13] Details are summarised in the Interim SA Report – Housing Site Options.

    - Specific comments/observations on issues relating to biodiversity, landscape, pollution, archaeology/built heritage, community, public enjoyment and understanding and agriculture.
- A reminder that Local Plan documents and policies must comply with relevant climate change legislation.
- The EA commented on a number of sustainability objectives including Biodiversity, Water, Community, Waste, Climate Change & Energy. They expressed their support to the objectives, the assessment criteria and scoring thresholds and made suggestions for a few additional points that could be considered. These included the Water Environment Regulations, links between green-blue space and the well-being of communities, the links between sustainable development, design and more effective waste management, and greater consideration to the role that green and blue infrastructure could play in the assessment given its role in adapting to and mitigating against climate change.
- The appraisal matrix/scoring systems adopted for the Archaeology and Built Heritage sustainability objectives were considered to be insufficiently fine grained and not sufficiently reflective of national policy on the conservation of the historic environment.

80. Having considered these comments, the SA has been updated in the following ways prior to publication:
    - The scoring system for criteria 9 and 10 have been updated in light of comments from Historic England and in light of Heritage Impact Assessments that have been a carried out in relation to a number of sites. The 23 preferred sites have been reappraised (the results of which are shown in Appendix 7).
    - The comments in relation to the use of the number of dwellings to score the site are noted, however using the number of dwellings is relevant and provides a means of assessing the sites against the criterion objectively and on a consistent basis. More houses provide greater opportunity to achieve these objectives for the reasons outlined in column B of the appraisal matrix / site scoring system, though it is accepted this is not guaranteed. Criteria 12-16 are considered relevant to ‘community’ and remain unchanged.
    - In relation to HAW2,
        - red squirrels, as a protected species have been noted in the site appraisal against sustainability objective 1 (biodiversity).
        - Wording relating to dark night skies core area/buffer area has been updated for clarity and consistency.

5. What are the SA findings at this stage (Publication Draft)?

81. This chapter presents the appraisal findings in relation to the Publication Draft Local Plan. This includes the appraisal of the Plan's vision and objectives, policies and site allocations. It considers the likely cumulative and in-combination effects of the Plan.

Local Plan Vision and Strategic Objectives

82. Table 2 in Appendix 6 shows the assessment of the vision and strategic objectives set out in the Publication Draft Local Plan against the SA Framework.

Vision

83. Appraisal of the vision against the SA framework was initially carried out at consultation No.2 (summarised in Table 3 above). The detailed appraisal in Appendix 6 shows how the vision scores positively against all of the SA objectives. As the vision is multi-faceted and describes a positive social, economic and environmental outcome, it doesn't in itself imply any trade-offs. The vision is shared with the National Park Management Plan which is the overarching strategy for the National Park.

Strategic Objectives

84. Analysis of the Local Plan Strategic Objectives against the SA Framework objectives is as follows:

SO1. Allow the landscape of the National Park to be responsive to change while at the same time conserving and enhancing its distinctive character.

This objective recognises the National Park faces challenges in relation to, for example, climate change, agricultural policy, socio-economic changes and appropriate new development, etc. It recognises that the landscape needs to be able to respond to these changes whilst conserving its character, and this can be achieved through appropriate policies within the Local Plan. As a result, this objective scores positively against a broad range of SA objectives. For the remainder impacts are neutral.

SO2. Permit locally-sustainable development that will improve the National Park as a high quality place to live, work and visit.

This objective supports sustainable development in a National Park context for the benefit of those who visit, work in and live in the Park. It scores positively against a broad range of SA objectives.

SO3. Steer new development into locations near to existing services, which avoid the risk of flooding, which minimise avoidable greenhouse gas emissions and which have capacity to accommodate and benefit from it without harm to the Park's special qualities.

This objective recognises that development could go into a variety of locations. It considers the best locations are those that are sustainable; having good access to services, not contributing further to climate change or the effects of climate change and not harming the environment. The objective scores positively against a range of environmental, social and economic outcomes. Some effects are likely to be neutral, none are negative.

SO4. Identify sites and permit development of new affordable housing that will meet the needs of local communities, the economy and the long-term objective of stabilising population decline and aging.

This objective recognises some of the demographic challenges facing the National Park and seeks to respond to them through the development of new affordable housing. The objective scores positively against the community and economy objectives but has the potential for negative effects on some on the environmental objectives without mitigation. This can be achieved through appropriate policies and Planning interventions.

SO5. Encourage development that will support a growing, diverse and resilient economy, and which will help make the National Park a more attractive place for young adults and people of working age.

This objective seeks to encourage development opportunities that will support new businesses and jobs to help maintain a resilient economy and address the demographic challenges. The objective scores positively against the community and economic objectives but has the potential for negative effects on some on the environmental objectives without mitigation. This can be achieved through appropriate policies.

SO6. Protect existing jobs, homes and businesses and support measures to improve access to services for the benefit of local communities.

Improving and safeguarding access to services is important for the economy and the sustainability of local communities. This objective performs well against the community and economy SA objectives, but there is potential for some negative effects on the landscape without mitigation. This can be achieved through appropriate policies and interventions

SO7. Support innovative, high-quality and more sustainable building and design that respects and complements the distinctive character of the National Park

This is the objective that encourages innovation and quality in the design and construction of new buildings. The beneficiaries will be future occupants and visitors to the local plan area who will be able to enjoy living in / visiting more sustainable buildings which should complement and reflect the distinctive character of the Yorkshire Dales. It scores positively in relation to built heritage, community, climate change and special qualities SA objectives.

SO8. Ensure new development is designed to adapt to the changing climate and minimise avoidable carbon emissions.

This objective seeks to ensure that new development does not contribute to climate change and is resilient to it. The intention is to give flexibility to developers to incorporate solutions that minimise emissions, utilise renewable energy and provide resilience to cope with a changing climate. This objective scores positively against the climate change, transport and some environmental SA objectives. No negative effects are predicted.

SO9. Use the planning system to help deliver nature recovery through good quality design and protection from harmful development. Require new development to incorporate measures that will create 10% net gain for biodiversity and strengthen wildlife networks.

Alongside climate change, nature recovery is also a priority for national policy and the Local Plan. A biodiversity net gain policy and the design requirements for new development will be expected to contribute to improvements in habitat, aiming to leave wildlife in a better state after development than prior to it. This objective has positive effects against many of the environmental SA objectives and no negative effects.

SO10. Use the Local Plan as a tool to help deliver some of the Management Plan objectives and the statutory National Park purposes.

The Management Plan is the overarching plan for the National Park which ensures that National Park purposes are being delivered jointly through partnership with other bodies. The Local Plan is a tool to help deliver some of the National Park Management Plan objectives where they are relevant to development e.g. housing, employment, farm development and visitor accommodation and facilities. The Local Plan also helps to conserve and enhance the qualities which make the National Park distinctive and special in a national context by including policies around landscape protection, biodiversity enhancement and conservation of heritage assets. As a result, this objective scores positively against many of the SA Framework objectives.

Local Plan Publication (Regulation 19) Draft Policies

85. Supporting the overall strategy for development, the Local Plan Publication Draft includes 52 policies across the following themes:

- Core Policies
- Infrastructure, Access and Connectivity
- Archaeology & Built Heritage
- Community
- Employment
- Landscape
- Wildlife

86. The performance of all the policies has been tested against the SA objectives. Detailed matrices containing the appraisal of each policy is presented in Appendix 6 and a summary is provided below:

Core Policies

87. Core policies set the spatial strategy and seek to direct and influence development proposals in response to matters of National Park purposes, design, climate change, water management, etc. The policies have an important role in securing the achievement of the vision and objectives of the Local Plan. They will apply to all forms of development.

88. Most of the core policies perform strongly against the sustainability objectives. This is because a number of them directly seek to support sustainable development from a range of policy angles, e.g. Policy CP6: Design, CP2 National Park purposes, CP5: Sustainable Drainage, CP9 Biodiversity Net Gain, etc.

89. Policy CP7: Energy requirements, CP8: Landscape Character and CP10: Major Development show some negative effects. Policy CP7: Energy Requirements has the potential for negative effects in relation to the landscape, heritage and some of the special qualities of the National Park. There is the potential for some renewables to be incongruous with traditional buildings and with the landscape. Policy CP8: Landscape Character seeks to ensure that new development does not harm the distinctive landscapes of the National Park but this may impact negatively on the achievement of some of the economic and social objectives because it may prevent some development. Conversely, major development (policy CP10, whilst potentially having positive effects on economic and social objectives, has the potential to impact negatively on environmental objectives. Restrictive policies within the plan will help to mitigate these negative effects both individually (through safeguards within a policy) and collectively (through safeguards created by other policies).

Infrastructure, Access and Connectivity

90. Policies within this section seek to ensure that new development is supported by appropriate levels of infrastructure (roads, schools, etc). They also support active and sustainable travel and consider railway related development within the National Park. The Settle to Carlisle railway is a strategic transport route through the area and a number of other former railway lines exist and have potential for reuse as active travel links or even future reinstated railways.

91. Policy AC1 and AC2, which deal with infrastructure relating to development, score positively against economic and social objectives as they will help enable and support new development. There is the potential for negative impacts in relation to some of the more environmental objectives though these are capable of mitigation. The level of new infrastructure required to deliver the plan has been considered and is expected to be minimal.[14] Within the deeply rural and thinly populated context of the National Park one of the benefits of new development is that it will generally help to sustain and support existing services and infrastructure, rather than place a burden on them.

[14] Infrastructure Delivery Plan, YDNPA, Feb 2025

92. Policy AC3 supports active travel and performs well against most objectives. There is some scope for negative impact to habitats and landscape but these should be capable of mitigation through policies within the plan.

93. Development within railway corridors (AC4) has the potential for some negative impact on existing habitats and the landscape, as the railways cross some remote locations in the Park. It also of course has the potential for positive effects on social and economic objectives as the corridors could provide future benefits to residents, visitors and businesses. Policy AC5 considers vehicle movements generated by new development. Travel plans will be required for developments generating lots of vehicle movements and will consider alternative sustainable travel options. AC4 therefore performs well against objectives relating to climate change, public enjoyment and transport.

Archaeology & Built Heritage

94. Policies within this chapter seek to conserve, manage and enhance heritage assets. Several policies focus on the use and treatment of traditional buildings which form a distinctive part of the Yorkshire Dales landscape. As would be expected, the policies have positive effects on the built heritage objectives and on a number of the environmental objectives given their 'protectionist' nature. They also support the public enjoyment and understanding objectives because heritage assets are linked to many of the National Park's special qualities and the reasons why people enjoy their visits. There is scope for tension with energy efficiency objectives and with some of the economic objectives. Heritage buildings are not suitable for every kind of modern use and traditional buildings are not always well suited to off the peg low carbon / energy efficiency measures. A balance needs to be struck in terms of retaining the historic interest and the demands of a new use and the policies seek to do this.

Community

95. Policies in this chapter support the development of new housing to meet both local needs for new accommodation and more strategically to help sustain the Park population in the longer term. Policies set out the settlement hierarchy and affordable housing requirements, as well as considering sites for Gypsies and Travellers and specialist housing for older and vulnerable adults. Linked to community needs, policies also consider community facilities, important open space and waste management.

96. Generally, the policies supporting new housing will have positive effects on the community and economic objectives. Providing a range of house types will help to meet different types of housing need and will help counter depopulation, enabling local communities to survive. Economic benefits derive from new housing, especially affordable new homes. They can provide accommodation for working-age people, a supply of labour and skills for local businesses and increased demand for local goods and services.

97. Negative effects are identified in relation to some of the environmental objectives. There is the potential for some negative impacts on the landscape, although the most sensitive sites were screened out early in the housing land availability process. All proposed housing site allocations have been assessed for their individual and cumulative impact on the landscape though a formal, independent Landscape Assessment process. Any 'residual' negative impacts will be mitigated as far as possible at the detailed design stage having consideration to other policies in the Local Plan. Where there is a risk to harming below and above ground archaeology, other policies in the Local Plan (e.g. AB1) will ensure adequate assessments take place and inform development.

98. Sites that were sensitive from a biodiversity perspective have also been screened out. A Habitats Regulations Assessment has been undertaken of the draft Local Plan and has determined that with mitigation measures the Plan would not have a likely significant effect on the network of protected sites within the National Park.

99. Policy C8 aims to protect existing community facilities and support new ones that meet the needs of local residents and their visitors. It also scores positively against community and economic objectives and less well against some of the environmental objectives. Negative effects should be capable of mitigation. The opposite is true for Policy C9: Important Open Space which scores positively against environmental objectives; but as it may frustrate some developments it scores less favourably against some of the community and economic objectives.

100. The 'Community' policies are a good example of the trade-off between economic, social and environmental objectives.

Employment

101. Policies within the 'Employment' chapter of the Plan seek to support new and existing businesses and jobs across a range of sectors. They consider modern and innovative forms of working including homeworking and live-work space. A number of policies deal with rural land-based enterprises and specifically tourism related development given its prominence in the Yorkshire Dales economy.

102. As may be expected, all of the policies will have positive effects on the economic objectives in the SA framework. The policies support business/employment development and growth on particular sites (Business Opportunity Sites) and types of sites (e.g. brownfield sites) or within particular sectors. Unsurprisingly the policies also have positive effects on many of the social objectives in terms of supporting local services and communities.

103. There is the potential for negative impacts on the environmental objectives. Development could take place in a variety of locations across the National Park with potential effects on biodiversity, landscape, water, special qualities, etc. These would need to be considered carefully for each development proposal. Some of the policies in this section include specific criteria which would help to mitigate negative effects. Where this is not the case, other policies in the Local Plan will provide safeguards.

Landscape

104. Policies in this chapter focus on a range of landscape related issues including quarrying (large and small scale), mineral safeguarding and protecting open upland and the Park's dark night skies.

105. Whilst Policy L1: Crushed Rock Quarrying limits the development of new quarries; the continued operation of existing quarries will have some negative impacts on the environmental SA objectives. The policy does, however, expect new permissions to deliver mitigating environmental benefits. Policy L2 would allow small scale quarrying of building materials where appropriate. It is likely that sufficient safeguards could be put in place to minimise negative impacts on the environment in order to secure other benefits to the Park - such as providing local building materials to maintain the areas distinctive architectural qualities.

106. The other policies in this section (e.g. Open Upland, Dark night skies) are more restrictive in nature and / or protective towards these environmental qualities. Consequently, their impact on many of the objectives will be positive (particularly in relation to environmental objectives) and either neutral or negative towards some of the community and economic objectives.

Wildlife

107. The two policies in this chapter seek to protect wildlife sites, species and networks; as well as the National Parks irreplaceable habitat (including ancient woodland, blanket bog and limestone pavements), hedgerows and walls. These make up some of the special qualities of the National Park.

108. The policies will prevent development which will adversely affect or cause loss of these features unless outweighed by the public benefit development would bring. These policies will support the

achievement of many of the environmental objectives in the sustainability framework. They will help to ensure that development which meets the social and economic needs of the National Park does not do so to the detriment of the quality of the natural environment.

Site Allocations

109. The Publication Draft Local Plan allocates 23 sites for housing through Policy C1 and 5 business opportunity sites are identified in Policy E1. The sites have been considered in relation to the SA Framework. The detailed appraisals are presented in Appendix 7 and 8, and a summary is provided in tables 4 and 5 below.

Housing Site Allocations

110. Table 4 shows each site has differing effects on the sustainability objectives owing to site specific factors.

111. In general, the sites score positively against the community objectives as they will deliver a range of new homes, including affordable homes, to help address the needs of the National Park and the demographic challenges it is facing. More affordable homes increase opportunities for lower income households, young people and working-age families to live in the National Park and to utilise and help to sustain a range of local services. This also helps to support the local economy by creating a supply of local labour, etc.

112. New homes will generally meet the climate change SA objectives as they will meet modern energy efficiency standards and developers will be encouraged to generate local renewable energy and design homes that are resilient to the further effects of climate change.

113. The appraisal shows that there is the potential for some sites to have negative impacts against some of the environmental SA objectives, including those relating to biodiversity, landscape, waste and special qualities. These should be capable of mitigation through a range of policy safeguards such as landscaping, wildlife enhancement and careful design and these are highlighted in the appraisals. The HLAA has taken a landscape-led approach to housing site selection, this means sites within areas of high sensitivity have been rejected and others have been reduced in size and density. Space has been provided for landscape planting to mitigate future impact and ensure that housing will be appropriately integrated into its setting.

114. The impact of the sites and the wider Local Plan policies on national and internationally protected wildlife sites has also being examined by an external expert through a ‘Habitats Regulation Assessment’. It found that cumulatively the Local Plan policies (including site allocations) will not undermine the integrity of the Park’s designated wildlife sites.

115. The allocation of sites is in line with the Local Plan’s spatial strategy and focusses the development of new housing in local service centres and large villages close to existing services and in places where people want to live. This will help to sustain those services and reduce the distance residents may need to travel to access them. Wider policies will help to make sure new development is well designed to fit within the distinctive landscape of the National Park, is energy efficient, resilient to climate change and has the infrastructure needed to support it.

116. Whilst the distribution of site allocations across the National Park is uneven, other policies in the Local Plan, notably policy C3: Rural Exception Sites, will support the delivery of affordable homes in locations where market homes would not normally be permitted. New housing development boundaries have also been drawn around settlements that did not previously have them and existing boundaries have been expanded to allow more flexibility for ‘windfall’ housing, such as self-build. On sites of two or more dwellings, policies restrict new homes to principal occupancy to maximise the use of new housing and avoid leakage into the second home and holiday market.

117. A relatively high proportion of housing on allocated sites is being proposed in the settlement of Grassington and Threshfield. Threshfield/Grassington is one of the three local service centres identified in the Local Plan Spatial Strategy and is considered to be a sustainable place for managed housing growth. It is well located for providing services to mid and upper Wharfedale and also has good road links to Skipton and beyond for a full range of employment facilities and travel options. It is a place where households are likely to want to live because of its immediate access to local services, its excellent green infrastructure and its proximity to Grassington high street.

118. Grassington and Threshfield have more sites than Sedbergh or Hawes, only because fewer suitable sites have been forthcoming there due to site constraints and lack of landowner availability. It means that the north and west of the park will have a greater reliance on Rural Exception Sites for affordable housing, than the south of the Park.

Business Opportunity Sites

119. Five sites for potential future business and employment uses are allocated on the Local Plan Policy Map. These sites are carried forward from the current Local Plan. As with the housing sites, each business opportunity site has differing effects on the sustainability objectives owing to site specific factors.

110. In general, the sites score strongly against the community and economic objectives. They will provide new employment opportunities within the National Park. They will complement the new housing sites by providing employment and affordable housing opportunities in sustainable locations. New residents and businesses will also utilise and support existing local services. Some of the sites perform positively against the archaeology/built environmental objectives because they have the potential to safeguarded and enhance nearby heritage assets.

111. Sites have the potential for negative impacts on some of the environmental objectives though these should be capable of mitigation.

Table 4: Housing Site Allocations

	Sustainability Objectives																											
	Biodiversity	Landscape			Water			Pollution	Archaeology / Built Environment			Community					Waste	Climate Change & Energy			Public Enjoyment & Understanding			Economy & Employment	Transport	Agriculture		Special Qualities
Site ref:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
AIR1																												
BOL1																												
CPY1																												
GRA5					U																							
GRA7					U																							
HAW1																												
HAW2																												
HAW3																												
HAW4																												
HOR6																												
LON5																												
LON8																												
NAT2																												
NLU1																												
NLU2																												
ORT1																												
SED2																												
SED9																												
SED15																												
SED16																												
THR4					U																							
THR5					U																							
THR8					U																							

Table 5: Business Opportunity Sites

	Sustainability Objectives																											
	Biodiversity	Landscape			Water			Pollution	Archaeology / Built Environment			Community					Waste	Climate Change & Energy			Public Enjoyment & Understanding			Economy & Employment	Transport	Agriculture		Special Qualities
Site :	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Toll Bar																												
Baliol																												
Thr'fld Quarry																												
Linton Camp																												
Gigg Quarry																												

Cumulative Impact – Policies & Sites

112. The core policies set out the overarching principles for development. They aim to secure sustainable development and the protection and enhancement of the special qualities of the National Park. They seek to direct development into sustainable locations, with community policies shaping the range and mix of housing to be built to meet local need and the facilities needed to support them.Economic policies seek to promote economic growth within the National Park, with policies focussed on key sectors such as tourism and agriculture, as well as enabling employment development on allocated ‘opportunity sites, brownfield land and suitable small sites on the edge of large villages.

113. Polices relating to infrastructure and connectivity will ensure that development is supported by appropriate levels of infrastructure and sustainable travel links. Environmental policies seek to protect and enhance the wildlife, landscape and built heritage in the National Park. Where negative effects have been identified sites have not progressed into the Plan mitigation measures have been proposed which include the application of other policies within the plan covering for example, Flood Risk, Sustainable Drainage, etc.

114. Together, the policies promote appropriate development and growth whilst protecting and enhancing the environment. The allocation of sites gives certainty as to where development needs will be met whilst safeguarding some of the most sensitive and valued areas of the National Park. Employment sites are sustainably located close to or within local service centres. When considered in combination with the housing sites in these locations there are strong positive effects on the economic and social sustainability objectives; potentially providing housing and employment opportunities which are close to and will help to support local services. Whilst there are potential negative effects on the environmental objectives, all should be capable of mitigation.

Summary

115. Taken together, the vision, objectives and range of policies (including site allocations) within the draft Local Plan create a balance which promotes development to support the social and economic needs and opportunities of the National Park, whilst also protecting and enhancing its environmental and other special qualities.

6. Monitoring & Next Steps

Monitoring

116. It is requirement of SA to establish how the significant sustainability effects of implementing the draft Local Plan will be monitored. This will help to understand whether the policies of the Local Plan are having the desired effects on the sustainability objectives, whether the mitigation measures are performing and whether policies are having any unacceptable adverse effects.

117. Monitoring will be through maintaining a quantitative record of key indicators but also qualitative judgements about the effect on change from planning decisions and land allocations. These judgements may arise from discussions by the Authority or routine consultations with partner bodies such as Parish Councils. Substantive changes to national policy or locally significant economic, environmental or social trends, may also trigger targeted performance reviews of areas of policy. In the past this has led to reviews of housing land supply, carbon emissions, residential occupancy restrictions and review of barns policy.

118. Table 6 below identifies a number of possible quantitative indicators which may be used to monitor the performance of the Local Plan. Should the monitoring indicate that the policies of the plan are failing to deliver the expected results, action may need to be taken by the Authority to ensure that policies are effective in achieving the aims and objectives of the Plan and responding appropriately to the sustainability objectives assessed through this appraisal. This action could be in the form of a requirement for more pre application engagement with the Authority, better information in support of a planning application or better use of planning conditions to manage and mitigate impacts.

119. The indicators will be monitored and reported through the Authority Monitoring Report which the YDNPA produces on an annual basis and publishes on its website.

Next Steps

120. The YDNPA have published the Local Plan Publication Draft to enable formal representations to be made to its content prior its submission to Government for independent examination. This SA Report is being made available for comment alongside the Publication Draft and comments received during this consultation will be submitted to the Secretary of State for consideration.

121. Any modifications required by the Inspector to ensure the soundness of the Local Plan will be subject to SA where necessary, with the findings published for comment alongside any consultation on 'main modifications'.

122. Once the Local Plan is found sound and has been formally adopted by the Authority, the Authority will publish a Post Adoption Statement which will set out how the Authority will monitor for significant effects during the plan's implementation[15].

[15] This will be in line with the post-adoption requirements set out in Regulation 16 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

Table 6: Potential Sustainability Indicators

SA Indicator & Objectives	Possible Monitoring Indicators
Biodiversity Safeguard and enhance internationally, nationally and locally important species and habitats.	% designated land in favourable condition % of priority habitats outside of designated wildlife sites are in good condition Biodiversity net gain (% uplift secured through new developments)
Landscape Reduce large scale extraction of aggregate minerals. Prevent or remove detrimental impacts on the landscape and deliver landscape enhancement. Safeguard and enhance geodiversity.	Net loss of open upland (ha) from new development
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.	Quality/ecological status of rivers and streams
Pollution Avoid harmful emissions of light and noise and maintain air quality across the National Park.	Maintain Dark Skies reserve status - achieve average darkness reading across the National Park of above 21.2mpa).
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.	Traditional farm building conversions Number of listed buildings removed from Heritage at Risk register
Community Facilitate 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.	Housing permissions by type (e.g. Affordable, principal residence, local occupancy, etc) Housing completions by type (e.g. Affordable, principal residence, local occupancy, etc)

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.	No. of community facilities lost to other uses
Waste Support the movement towards a circular economy as well as appropriate waste management and disposal methods	Tbc
Climate Change & Energy Support energy efficiency measures and a reduction in energy use. 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.	Low carbon energy schemes granted planning permission Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions
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.	No. and % of visitors staying overnight (STEAM data) No of tourism visits (STEAM data)
Economy & Employment Facilitate the growth and diversification of a resilient economy, through the development of existing and new enterprises.	No of business opportunity sites developed Amount of floorspace developed for employment use
Transport Locate development so that it supports a sustainable transport network which encourages the use of public transport, cycling and walking, minimises traffic congestion, reduces carbon emissions and improves air quality.	% of new dwellings in local service centres and large villages Length of new footpath/cycle-ways delivered through development

Agriculture Understand and respond to changes in agricultural policy and land management change. Support appropriate agriculture, including opportunities for farm diversification.	No of new farming/diversification related permissions
Special Qualities Conserve and enhance the special qualities of the National Park.	Covered through the above indicators