

1. A Short (Non-Technical) Summary

Why have we prepared this document and what is sustainability appraisal?

- 1.1 The North York Moors National Park Authority is preparing a new Local Plan. This plan will set out the framework of rules we will use to help decide planning applications. It will be a long term plan covering the period from 2016 to 2035.
- 1.2 The Local Plan sets out the overall spatial planning framework for the National Park. It contains strategic objectives for the future development of the Park and will include core policies to achieve the objectives, together with proposals for monitoring.
- 1.3 This is the third stage in the Sustainability Appraisal process that the Local Plan goes through. Because Sustainability appraisals are long and complicated documents this short, non- technical summary has been prepared.
- 1.4 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a way of checking local plan policies and allocations against a series of economic, social and environmental criteria to see if they are capable of delivering the most sustainable forms of development. The appraisal also incorporates Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), the undertaking of which is required under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. Government guidance suggests that Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment can be carried out jointly and this is the approach the Authority has taken to appraising the Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan.

What has happened so far?

- 1.5 The first stage, known as the 'Scoping Stage' was published in September 2016; it is available on the Authority's web site. The consultation responses are set out in **Appendix 3**. The Scoping Report:
 - Reviewed other relevant policies, plans, programmes to establish whether their contents will need to inform the North York Moors National Park Local Plan;
 - Looked at what we know about the North York Moors National Park at the moment to see what issues need to be addressed. In sustainability appraisal terms this is known as 'baseline information'. Identified any particular issues and problems, using the information we have collected, as well as any difficulties encountered, including lack of information. Baseline information about the environmental, social and economic conditions in the Park which the Local Plan must address. These can be summarised as follows:
 - **Environmental** – the diverse and special landscape of the Park is valued highly by resident and visitors but is likely to be subject to a range of pressures as a consequence of global climate change.
 - **Social** – Net outward migration of younger people and restricted services in more remote parts of the Park has implications for the vitality and viability of rural communities.
 - **Economic** – Low unemployment rates mask the seasonal nature of employment related to tourism and low agricultural incomes. This coupled

with exceptionally high house prices has resulted in a severe affordability problem which is contributing to the issues outlined above.

- Set out the objectives we will be using to carry out this sustainability appraisal and how the appraisal will be carried out;
 - Set out how we will start to monitor our eventual Plan to see if it is working.
- 1.6 The second stage of the Sustainability Appraisal involved an appraisal of the draft **'Preferred Options'** Local Plan and this is available on the Authority's web site. This stage assessed the Plan Objectives against the Sustainability Objectives; it also considered the preferred policy option and the alternative options generated in relation to the spatial strategy and in relation to alternative options or individual policies against each of the Sustainability Objectives. In cases where no alternative policy options were generated the policies were assessed against each Sustainability Objective. Finally changes were recommended where it was felt that it would result in a more sustainable outcome. At the current, third, stage of the Sustainability Appraisal process the previous alternative options have not been included and this Appraisal assesses only the policies being taken forward to the 'Pre Submission' stage.
- 1.7 In accordance with the statutory requirements the three Strategic Environmental Assessment bodies (Historic England, Environment Agency and Natural England) were consulted at the Preferred Options stage and asked for their views. Their responses are set out at **Appendix 4**.

What is in this document?

- 1.8 The preparation and production of the SA has been led by officers from the National Park Authority.
- 1.9 This document:
1. Explains what Sustainability Appraisal is and about the preparation process (Section 2)
 2. Carries out an appraisal of the 'Pre-Submission' Draft Local Plan, and starts by setting out the twelve **environmental, social and economic objectives** that will be used to appraise the draft Plan (Chapter 4);
 3. Assesses whether the separate objectives set out in the 'Pre-Submission' Draft Local Plan perform well in sustainability terms by assessing **those objectives** against the objectives used by this sustainability appraisal (Chapter 5);
 4. The appraisal then moves on look at **individual policies**. The full appraisal tables are at **Appendix 5**. No site allocations were tested as the Draft Plan does not include any relating to new development (apart from a couple of small 'environmental enhancement sites' identified in draft Policy ENV15.)
 5. The policy wording is tested against each Sustainability Objective and changes are recommended where it is felt that it would result in a more sustainable outcome. Suggested mitigation measures to improve policy outcomes are set at **Appendix 7**.

6. Cumulative effects were then considered. There are two sorts – how the policies interact with each other (**Appendix 6**) and the effect of the whole Plan would have in sustainability terms when implemented in combination with other plans and programmes. This information is summarised in **Table 2**.

Summary of Sustainability Appraisal

- 1.10 Overall the policy appraisal found that the Local Plan would largely have positive impacts through application of the sixty four policies and associated environmental, social and economic Sustainability Objectives. No significant negative impacts were identified during the policy appraisal process. Where minor negative impacts were identified, in most cases the negative impacts were outweighed by the positive effects of the policy resulting in overall sustainable policies. Any minor negative impacts arising from the cumulative assessment can be mitigated through the application of policies within the Plan.

What happens next?

- 1.11 Any changes made in response to representations and/or modifications to the draft Plan will be incorporated in the next version of this document.
- 1.12 All comments should be received by **5 p.m. on the 20 April 2019**.