

County Durham Plan Sustainability Appraisal Pre Submission Draft

2019

Non-Technical Summary



Altogether better



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1 Introduction

1.1 This Non Technical Sustainability Appraisal Report has been prepared as part of the integrated Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the County Durham Plan. This report provides an overview of the background and approach used to undertake the assessment, along with the main outcomes and recommendations that emerged from the assessment process. This report relates to the Pre-Submission draft of the County Durham Plan and should be read in conjunction with that document.

County Durham Plan

1.2 All council's are required to have a Local Plan for their area which seeks to guide the future development of a place whilst contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. The Council's Local Plan - the County Durham Plan will therefore provide the policy framework for managing development up to 2035 and aims to protect and enhance the environment, promote quality of life, provide jobs for a flexible and skilled workforce and support County Durham's towns and villages. Once adopted, the County Durham Plan will make it easier to resist inappropriate development and secure new infrastructure such as schools and health facilities.

1.3 The Preferred Options of the County Durham Plan sets out how many homes and how much employment land are needed, where they will go, what infrastructure is required and how landscapes, habitats and other environmental receptors will be protected and enhanced. The Preferred Options were consulted upon in Summer 2018 and following consideration of responses the Pre-Submission of the County Durham Plan has been prepared. The Pre-Submission has been prepared in accordance with the most up to date National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

What is Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

1.4 National and European legislation require local planning authorities to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of each of the proposals in a Local Plan during its preparation with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. SA/SEA can be undertaken in a single assessment process and aims to make a Plan more sustainable and more responsive to its social, economic and environmental effects by:

- Evaluating the environmental consequences of plans and programmes to ensure that environmental issues are integrated and assessed at the earliest opportunity in the decision making process;
- Assessing and identifying the extent to which the emerging Plan, when judged against reasonable alternatives will contribute to addressing social, economic and environmental issues; and
- Identifying the plan's significant impacts and ways of minimising its negative effects and maximising positive effects

1.5 For the sake of brevity, the integrated SA/SEA process will be referred to as Sustainability Appraisal (SA) in this report.

1.6 The five key stages of SA include:

- Stage A: Setting Context, Objectives and Scope;
- Stage B: Preparing, Developing and Refining Alternatives and Assessing Effects;
- Stage C: Preparing the SA Report;
- Stage D: Consulting on the Plan and the SA; and
- Stage E: Post Adoption Monitoring of the Plan.

2 Background

2.1 The County Durham Plan has been subject to SA throughout its preparation. The outcomes of the first stage of assessment (Stage A) were documented within a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report in February 2016. The report identified the sustainability issues in County Durham, their likely evolution in the absence of the County Durham Plan and the sustainability objectives and framework to assess the Plan against.

2.2 The second stage of assessment (Stage B) commonly referred to as the 'assessment' stage, involves the assessment of Plan objectives, policies and their reasonable alternatives against the SA framework and associated sustainability objectives and decision making criteria. Whilst this stage has been undertaken in an iterative manner alongside each stage of Plan development it can be broadly categorised as follows:

- **Issues and Options** - During this stage of Plan development, the SA assessed the high level strategic issues and plan options including how much development is needed and how it should be broadly distributed. An Interim SA report was produced which was consulted upon over summer 2016.
- **Preferred Options** - During this stage of Plan development, the SA further assessed approaches taken to the quantity and distribution of new development in addition to alternative development sites to meet need and approaches to managing development proposals coming forward over the Plan period. The reasons for selecting and discounting the alternatives subject to assessment was documented. A Preferred Options SA report and Non Technical Summary was produced which was consulted upon over summer 2018.
- **Pre-Submission** - This current stage of assessment identified and assessed any new reasonable alternatives arising as a result of new evidence, updates to national policy and guidance and consultation responses. Any significant changes made to the previous Preferred Options policies were also subject to assessment.

2.3 For ease of reference the outcomes of previous stages of SA are summarised within this report. However, the associated documents are available at: <http://durhamcc-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/iosustainabilityappraisal>. Please note that the Pre-Submission SA report and this Non Technical Summary fulfils Stage C of the SA process.

3 Supporting Assessments

3.1 A number of complimentary assessment processes have informed the findings of the sustainability appraisal. Those most common to the SA process include:

Habitats Regulations Assessment

3.2 A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) has been undertaken in line with the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive, as transposed by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

3.3 Whilst SA and HRA are two separate processes and are undertaken upon separately there are a number of linkages between the two processes. These include:

- Evidence gathered for HRA has fed into the evidence that informs SA;
- The issues raised by the HRA have fed into the assessment of reasonable alternatives, policies and sites, in particular against biodiversity objectives;
- Mitigation proposed by the HRA has helped shape the mitigation measures proposed by the SA; and
- The SA has ensured that wider interest features of European protected wildlife sites that are not within the scope of the HRA such as component Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are also considered.

3.4 Initial work on the scope of the HRA and screening of strategic options was published for consultation alongside the County Durham Plan Issues and Options (June 2016). A further HRA document including an appropriate assessment and coastal avoidance strategy was published alongside the Preferred Options.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

3.5 A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has also been produced to inform the SA process, and in particular the assessment of sites. The role of SFRA is defined within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This requires that a 'sequential, risk based approach to the location of development - taking into account the current and future impacts of climate change - so as to avoid, where possible, flood risk to people and property.'⁽ⁱ⁾

i See paragraph 155 of the NPPF

3.6 SFRA is an assessment of the risk posed by flooding from a range of sources in a defined geographical area. It provides the necessary information to undertake a sequential approach to the location of development in relation to flooding. This requires that new developments are steered towards areas with the lowest probability of flooding with Flood Zone 1 being considered ahead of Flood Zone 2, and Flood Zone 3 where sites in Flood Zone 2 are not available. Depending on the vulnerability of development to flooding it may also be necessary to apply the 'Exception Test' to justify the locating of a site in a certain Flood Zone. ⁽ⁱⁱ⁾

3.7 Sites in the emerging County Durham Plan have all been subject to the Sequential Test utilising information provided through the SFRA. This data has also been used to inform the SA (which includes criteria on flooding) to help assess sites.

Health Impact Assessment

3.8 Health is a core component of sustainable development. The United Nations agreed a series of sustainable development goals for 2030 including a commitment to 'ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.' ⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾

3.9 Even before this goal was established, health was seen as a core requirement of strategic environmental assessment and therefore sustainability appraisal. Annex 1 of the SEA Directive lists topics which can be considered in an environmental report, including human health. Several agencies have issued guidance on how health should be considered in strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal. Accordingly, at each stage of the SA process undertaken to date, health issues have been considered and assessed. In addition, during Pre-Submission, the Council undertook a Health Impact Assessment (HIA). A screening process therefore took place in order to consider which policies would be subject to specific HIA. Following this process, evidence, including consultation responses, was gathered to support any potential health impacts, whether positive or negative. Recommendations were thereafter developed in order to help improve the health outcome and assessment of policies. The HIA report accompanies the Pre-Submission Plan and can be found in more detail within section 2.3 of the main SA report.

Other Assessments

3.10 Please note that a number of other locally specific assessments have also been taken into account throughout the SA.

4 What does Sustainability Appraisal Involve?

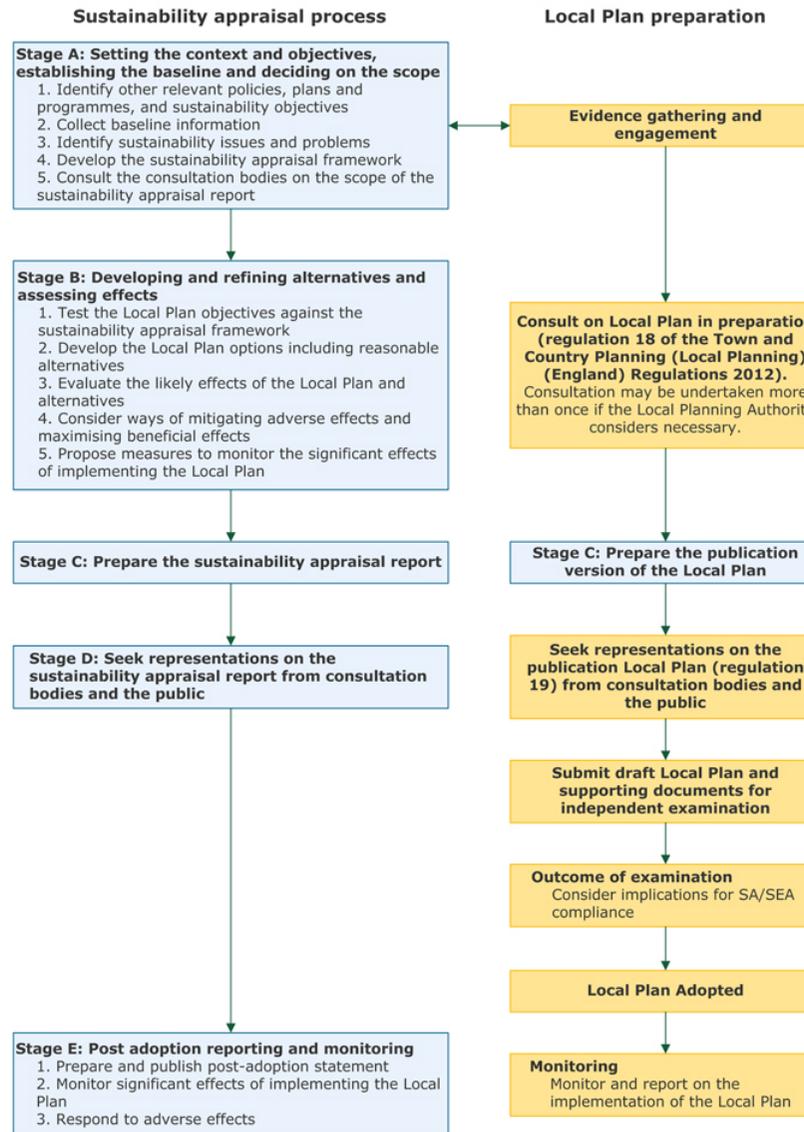
4.1 As mentioned in the Introduction, there are five key stages of SA which are integrated with the Plan making process. These are depicted in the following figure: ^(iv)

ii The Exception Test is a 3 part test that sets out to demonstrate wider sustainability benefits of development, consideration of previously developed land and the safety of development

iii Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

iv Source: [Planning Practice Guidance: Paragraph 013](#)

Figure 1 The Five Stage Approach to SA



4.2 An overview of the key stages and the approach to undertaking them is provided as follows:

Stage A

4.3 The tasks involved with Stage A are commonly and collectively referred to as the Scoping stage. The Scoping stage provides the context, and information on baseline social, economic and environmental conditions and associated trends in order to set the basis for the subsequent stages of SA i.e. impact prediction, evaluation and monitoring. The outcomes of Stage A are documented in full in the 2016 Scoping Report which includes:

- A review of international, national and local plans and programmes that could influence the development and direction of the County Durham Plan and its assessment;
- Analysis of the current state of the environment, trends and likely evolution in the absence of the County Durham Plan;
- Identification of key sustainability issues for County Durham and distinct geographic areas within it; and
- Development of a SA Framework and associated sustainability objectives to assess the Plan against

4.4 Following a five week consultation period with the statutory consultees for SA/SEA (Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency) the following SA Framework was agreed and utilised throughout Stage B of the SA process (Assessment):

SA Framework

Sustainability Appraisal Objectives	Criteria: Will the emerging Plan...	Associated Key Sustainability Issues for County Durham
1. To provide everybody with the opportunity to live in a decent and affordable home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the need for affordable housing is met across a range of tenures? • Decrease the number of vacant properties and properties that don't meet the decent homes standard? • Site new housing in deliverable locations linked to identified need? • Ensure that a mix of housing type and size is available in the county? • Improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent social, economic and physical disparities between parts of the County including particular concentrations of poor quality housing, degraded environments, poor health and unemployment. • Pockets of poor quality housing with risk of further deterioration in associated low demand housing areas. • Deficit in the provision of certain types of housing that meet social, economic and demographic characteristics of the County's existing and future residents.
2. To promote strong and secure communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance a sense of safety and security? • Deter / prevent crime? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued high levels of deprivation with economic, health and education disparities between the County the north east region and/or the Nation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the adverse impacts of traffic (including HGVs) on communities? • Encourage a sense of community and wider engagement in community activities or local democracy to allow residents to influence social, economic and environmental decision-making? • Promote mutual understanding of different ethnic and cultural groups? • Help cater for the needs of an ageing population? • Increase cultural awareness through enhancing and promoting the local historic environment? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ageing population, with uncertainty about whether their needs will be adequately met. • Increased car traffic and congestion with continued strong commuting patterns to major conurbations.
3. To improve education, training and life-long learning, and maintain a healthy labour market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the quantity or quality of education, training opportunities or facilities? • Improve access to education or training opportunities? • Promote lifelong learning? • Raise educational and employment aspirations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued high levels of deprivation with economic, health and education disparities between the County the north east region and/or the nation. • The demographic profile of the County will lead to a shrinking workforce and loss of associated skills and experience from the workplace.
4. To reduce health inequalities and promote healthy lifestyles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to promotion of healthier lifestyles and healthy leisure opportunities? (e.g. cycling and walking) • Improve access to public open space / multi-functional green infrastructure? • Reduce health inequalities? • Improve access to healthcare? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued high levels of deprivation with economic, health and education disparities between the County the north east region and/or the Nation. • Persistent social, economic and physical disparities between parts of the County including particular concentrations of poor quality housing, degraded environments, poor health and unemployment.
5. To reduce the need to travel and promote use of sustainable transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the need for travel / transport (e.g. by ensuring local needs are met locally or by telecommunication)? • Help people to access jobs, services and facilities easily? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declining rural service centres and a declining rural economy. • Increased car traffic and congestion with continued strong commuting patterns to major conurbations.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect / increase the range of shops, services, amenities and employment opportunities in town and village centres? • Promote / widen opportunities for 'greener' modes of travel (walking, cycling public or shared transport)? • Ensure development is served by an appropriate level of transport infrastructure including public and sustainable transport networks? • Move freight from road to rail / sea? 	
<p>6. To alleviate deprivation and poverty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help those on lower incomes? • Contribute towards local regeneration initiatives, or benefit areas suffering from economic deprivation? • Improve economic, social and environmental conditions in the most deprived areas and for the most deprived groups? • Improve physical access to jobs? • Help reduce unemployment? • Encourage higher incomes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued high levels of deprivation with economic, health and education disparities between the County the north east region and/or the nation. • Persistent social, economic and physical disparities between parts of the County including particular concentrations of poor quality housing, degraded environments, poor health and unemployment.
<p>7. To develop a sustainable and diverse economy with high levels of employment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguard employment or create new employment opportunities? • Promote business expansion / development? • Promote growth in key economic sectors? • Encourage clean technologies to locate in the area? • Reduce road congestion and help reduce journey times to key employment sites? • Encourage young people to stay in the area? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A continued focus on a narrow economic base with particular dependencies on declining economic sectors. • Declining rural service centres and a declining rural economy. • The demographic profile of the County will lead to a shrinking workforce and loss of associated skills and experience from the workplace. • Increased car traffic and congestion with continued strong commuting patterns to major conurbations.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the use of local labour, goods and services? • Improve the diversity / resilience of the economy? • Help realise the economic potential of the County's natural and historic assets in a sustainable way? 	
8. To reduce the causes of climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the demand for energy or increase energy efficiency of buildings, transport or industry? • Minimise greenhouse gas emissions from waste management? • Contribute to the development / wider use of renewable energy sources? • Contribute to the absorption of carbon dioxide? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased car traffic and congestion with continued strong commuting patterns to major conurbations. • Increased production of renewable energy but unclear direction for future development: in particular major wind development.
9. To respond and enable adaptation to the inevitable impacts of climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise the risk of/ from flooding or coastal erosion? • Discourage inappropriate development in areas at risk from flooding? • Ensure that new development does not give rise to flood risk elsewhere? • Help to cope with climate extremes, e.g. design of buildings and urban areas? • Allow for habitats or species of biodiversity importance to adapt to climate change? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the 2050s; limit the increase in average annual temperature of around 1.8°C; average reduction in annual rainfall of 4-5%; and sea level rise of about 30 cm. • Accelerated erosion of coastline, affecting internationally protected maritime grassland and other habitat. • Increased frequency and severity of floods affecting settlements, water systems, economy, transport, habitats and built heritage. • Continued need to protect and enhance biodiversity including reducing sources of harm/ pressures not linked to climate change to better facilitate adaptation of habitats and species.
10. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect or enhance internationally designated wildlife/ geological sites? • Ensure net gains in biodiversity are achieved? • Protect or enhance nationally designated wildlife/ geological sites and protected species? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerated erosion of coastline, affecting internationally protected maritime grassland and other habitat. • Continued need to protect and enhance biodiversity including reducing sources of harm/ pressures not linked to climate change to better facilitate adaptation of habitats and species, ensuring net gains are achieved.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Protect or enhance UK and Durham Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitats and species? ● Protect or enhance other areas of local importance for biodiversity or geodiversity (LNRs, CWS, CGS, semi-natural ancient woodland)? ● Prevent deterioration and fragmentation of habitat and establish and maintain sustainable habitat networks? ● Improve access to or understanding of local biodiversity/ geodiversity resources? ● Ensure adequate and appropriate mitigation for any biodiversity loss which may occur as a result of development? ● Create new areas or sites of biodiversity/ geodiversity value? 	
<p>11. To protect and enhance the quality and character of landscape and townscape</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Protect and enhance designated protected landscape areas (i.e. AONB, Durham Heritage Coast)? ● Protect and enhance local landscape character and quality? ● Protect and maintain the openness of the green belt? ● Ensure that new developments reflect the distinctive character and appearance of the local area? ● Encourage good quality design in new development? ● Protect and enhance the vitality and viability of the county's town centres and main village centres? ● Protect and improve the quality of public areas/ discourage fly tipping and reduce litter? ● Help regeneration of degraded built environments? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Persistent social, economic and physical disparities between parts of the County including particular concentrations of poor quality housing, degraded environments, poor health and unemployment. ● Declining rural service centres and a declining rural economy. ● Continued need to protect and enhance biodiversity including reducing sources of harm/ pressures not linked to climate change to better facilitate adaptation of habitats and species. ● Continued need to protect and enhance heritage assets, recognising that the County's heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource that should be enjoyed and conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. ● Continued need to protect and enhance the distinctive character and quality of County Durham's landscape.

<p>12. To protect and enhance cultural heritage and the historic environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance the character, appearance or setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets? • Reduce the number or severity of designated and non-designated heritage assets at risk? • Protect and enhance locally and regionally important designated and non-designated heritage assets? • Realise the economic and educational potential of designated and non-designated heritage assets and help make them accessible? • Recognise the contribution of conserving and enhancing existing buildings and other heritage assets to local distinctiveness, sustainable resource use and climate change mitigation? • Ensure the recording and appropriate protection of undiscovered archaeological features in areas of potential development? • Promote the maintenance, sensitive adaptation and re-use of buildings? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued need to protect and enhance heritage assets, recognising that the County's heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource that should be enjoyed and conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. • Continued need to protect and enhance the distinctive character and quality of County Durham's landscape.
<p>13. To protect and improve air, water and soil resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and improve local air quality? • Protect and maintain or improve surface & groundwater quality or the physical integrity of aquifers? • Reduce the amount of water used? • Keep water consumption / emission within local carrying capacity limits? • Improve areas of historic land contamination and prevent contamination to new areas? • Encourage the location of development on previously developed land, while taking account of biodiversity value that may be present? • Minimise the loss of better quality agricultural land to development? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in water quality from implementing River Basin Management Plans, but increased threat from intense rainfall events causing leaching from contaminated sites and overflow from sewerage systems. • Increased demand for water and need for waste water treatment from new households and development. • Good air quality Countywide but with poor quality hotspots in Durham City and Chester-le-Street • Areas of contaminated land in County Durham remain due to its mining and industrial heritage.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote good soil management in land reclamation? • Improve the WFD water body classification? 	
<p>14. To reduce waste and encourage the sustainable and efficient use of materials</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage an increase in the reduction, re-use, recycling and recovery of energy from waste (progress away from landfill and up the “waste hierarchy”)? • Encourage the use of recycled / reused materials? • Minimise the use of new non-renewable resources? • Reduce the adverse impacts of waste management facilities to acceptable levels? • Encourage the community to take responsibility for reducing its own waste? • Promote the maintenance, sensitive adaptation and re-use of buildings? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing but high levels of household waste and stabilising reuse, recycling and composting activity.
<p>15. To improve the sustainability of minerals extraction and use and reduce adverse impacts on communities and the environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help meet an identified need for minerals? • Reduce the adverse impacts of minerals processing and extraction to acceptable levels? • Reduce the energy used in minerals extraction, processing and transport? • Ensure the efficient use of minerals resources? • Avoid the sterilisation of economically important mineral resources? • Promote good practice in land reclamation having regard to sustainable after-use appropriate to the locality? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richness of minerals resources and the impact of minerals operations on communities and the environment.

Stage B

4.5 The tasks involved with Stage B can be collectively referred to as 'Assessment'. Within this stage, Plan objectives, policies and their reasonable alternatives/options are systematically assessed (through impact prediction and evaluation) against the SA Framework and associated sustainability objectives and decision-making criteria.

Impact prediction and evaluation

4.6 Typical questions asked by the assessors to inform the iterations of impact prediction and evaluation included:

- What activities would occur as a result of the options / policy approach? Where and when would these activities take place?
- On what geographic scale will the impacts occur? e.g. settlement scale, the monitoring area level, larger distinct geographic area, countywide, North East region or beyond.
- How would the sustainability baseline ('Business As Usual' scenario) change?
- Are effects positive or negative? Can negative effects be prevented/avoided, reduced or offset and are there any residual effects? Can positive effects be enhanced further?
- Are the impacts direct, indirect/secondary and/or cumulative? What is their magnitude (large or small impact) and spatial distribution? Do the impacts predicted vary over the short, medium and long term? Is the impact reversible or irreversible?
- Which 'receptors' (e.g. people, biodiversity, and businesses) are likely to be effected from the implementation of the options / policy?
- What is the likelihood of effect occurrence?
 - **Certain** → In the event that the option / policy is implemented the predicted effect will occur.
 - **Probable** → In the event that the option/policy is implemented there is a high likelihood that the predicted effect will occur.
 - **Possible** → In the event that the option/policy is implemented the predicted effect may occur.
 - **Uncertain** → It is uncertain what effect will occur in the first instance.

4.7 A number of information sources and tools were used to help predict and evaluate effects including for example: published research studies; websites; environmental impact assessments; government reports; specific assessments/studies e.g. transport modelling; professional and specialist judgement and geographical systems. To help visually display the predicted type and significance of effects the following key was devised:

Effect against the Sustainability Objectives	Symbol
Likely to have a very positive effect	√√
Likely to have a positive effect	√
Minor effect / No effect / No clear link	0
Uncertain or insufficient information on which to determine effect	?
Likely to have a negative effect	X
Likely to have a very negative effect	XX
Could have positive or negative effects depending on implementation.	√/X

Establishing Significance

4.8 In order to determine the significance of effects in a consistent manner, due regard was given to the SEA Directive's criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Annex II, 2). Whilst the criteria relate to deciding whether plans or programmes require SEA, they provide a useful indication of the factors to consider when establishing significance and include:

- The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;
- The cumulative nature of the effects;
- The transboundary nature of the effects;
- The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents);
- The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
- The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:

- Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage
 - Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values
 - Intensive land-use
-
- The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, (European) Community or international protection status.

Mitigation

4.9 Typical mitigation measures that have been identified to date include:

- Changes to the wording of options/policies or supporting text;
- The removal of components/statements that are not in line with the sustainability objectives;
- The addition of new components/statements;
- The development of new options, including a combination of the best aspects of existing options;
- Requirements to substitute or offset for certain types of impacts e.g. provision of new green space to compensate for that lost to development;
- Measures to be implemented alongside the development e.g. landscaping measures and use of native species;
- Identification of issues that need to be considered and analysed further through a project level Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

4.10 The mitigation measures that have been recommended through the SA process include measures that are within the remit of 'planning' to address e.g. helping to inform planning conditions and measures that may be within the remit of other sectors, organisations or require a multi-agency approach.

Stages C and D

4.11 These stages involve the preparation and consultation upon the sustainability appraisal/environmental report. The role of the report is to document the SA process so that readers can follow how environmental and sustainability considerations have been taken into account in decision-making, how the process has influenced the selection of alternatives and the final content of policies. As mentioned in section 2, a number of SA reports have been produced which document the outcomes of the SA process and consultation responses to it at each stage of Plan development.

Stage E

4.12 Stage E requires the preparation and publication of a post adoption statement. This statement will be prepared and published at the time of adoption of the Plan.

5 What are the outcomes of the Sustainability Appraisal?

5.1 This section provides an overview of the outcomes of the SA process to date.

Assessment of the County Durham Plan Vision

5.2 The vision of the Plan aims to reflect the key challenges facing the County and provides the framework for Plan policies to address the identified challenges. Social and economic impacts identified were assessed as positive, with the potential for significant positive effects being predicted against some SA objectives.

5.3 The vision will help to ensure existing and future residents have access a range of well-designed homes (including affordable housing), services and community, leisure and recreational facilities and infrastructure (grey, blue and green) to meet their needs and improve their quality of life; the vibrancy and vitality of town centres is supported to create stronger communities; and educational and employment aspirations will be raised. Re-balancing and improving the County's economy is a key element of the vision, and as such, significant positive economic effects were identified given the ambition to develop a thriving economy with reduced unemployment, whilst recognising the economic contribution rural communities and the environment play in this.

5.4 Following the acceptance of previous SA recommendations to include new wording emphasising protection and increased recognition of climate change and County Durham's unique natural, built and historic environment, environmental effects were predicted to be positive with significantly positive effects identified against climate change and mineral resources objectives.

Summary Assessment of the Spatial Vision	
	SA Objectives
	1. Decent Affordable Homes 2. Strong Secure Communities 3. Education, Training & Lifelong Learning 4. Health: Inequalities & Lifestyles 5. Need to Travel & Sustainable Transport 6. Alleviate Deprivation 7. Economy & Employment 8. Climate Change: Mitigation 9. Climate Change: Adaptation 10. Biodiversity & Geodiversity 11. Landscape & Townscape 12. Historic Environment 13. Resources: Air, Water & Soil 14. Waste & Use of Materials 15. Minerals Extraction & Impacts
Pre-Submission	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓✓ ✓✓ ✓✓ ✓✓ ✓ ✓✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓✓

Assessment of Plan Objectives

5.5 The exercise carried out to compare the Plan objectives with the sustainability objectives is designed to identify areas of compatibility and conflict. This has helped to:

- Highlight potential conflicts and ways to minimise them;
- Align the wording of the objectives with sustainability principles; and
- Improve their overall clarity.

5.6 Particular improvements in predicted effects against the Sustainable Communities and Sustainable Transport and Visitor Economy objectives were achieved as a result of the compatibility assessment and associated recommendations. The final predicted effects for all the Plan objectives are shown as follows:

Plan Objective	SA Objectives														
	1. Decent Affordable Homes	2. Strong Secure Communities	3. Education, Training & Lifelong Learning	4. Health: Inequalities & Lifestyles	5. Need to Travel & Sustainable Transport	6. Alleviate Deprivation	7. Economy & Employment	8. Climate Change: Mitigation	9. Climate Change: Adaptation	10. Biodiversity & Geodiversity	11. Landscape & Townscape	12. Historic Environment	13. Resources: Air, Water & Soil	14. Waste & Use of Materials	15. Minerals Extraction & Impacts
1: Economic Ambition	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	0	✓	✓/✓	✓/✓	✓	✓/✓	0
2: Sustainable Communities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	0	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
3: Housing Need	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4: Infrastructure	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✓	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓	0
5: Town Centres	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓	0	
6: Rural Economy	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✓	✓/✓	✓/✓	✓/✓	✓/✓	✓/✓	0	
7: Green Belt	0	✓	0	✓	?	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	0	
8: Effective use of Land	✓	✓✓	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
9: Natural Environment	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	0	
10: Built and Historic Environment	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	0	✓	0	✓	✓	✓	0	✓	✓	
11: Well Designed Places	✓	✓✓	0	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
12: Raising Aspirations	0	✓	✓✓	✓	0	✓✓	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
13: Tackling Deprivation and Inequalities	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	?	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	0	
14: Quality of Life	0	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	0	
15: Visitor Economy	✓	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	
16: Adaptation to Climate Change	✓	✓	0	✓	0	0	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	0	✓	✓	✓	
17: Low Carbon	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	0	?	0	0	✓	✓	0	
18: Sustainable Transport	0	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
19: Natural Resources	✓	0	0	✓	0	0	✓	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
20: Supply of Minerals	✓	0	✓	0	✓	0	✓	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
21: Waste Management	0	0	0	0	✓/✓	0	✓	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Assessment of Distribution Alternatives

5.7 One of the key purposes of the County Durham Plan is to identify how much development is needed and where it should be distributed with the aim of contributing towards sustainable patterns of growth. The Plan explains which approach has been selected in relation to the distribution of housing and employment, both of which influence a number of policies. The following section summarises the role and outcomes of the SA process in relation to the distribution alternatives considered.

Housing Distribution

5.8 The SA developed and assessed at Issues and Options a number of alternative housing distribution scenarios including:

- **Option A: Main Town Focus** - This distribution would direct housing to the main towns in County Durham but would direct the highest proportion of housing growth to Durham City.
- **Option B: Sustainable Communities** - Provides a more even distribution of housing than option A with a principal focus in and around towns where there are good opportunities for employment and access to services and facilities, public transport, healthcare and education.
- **Option C: Sustainable Communities with Central Durham Villages Focus** - This distribution is similar to option B but redistributes a significant proportion of the housing apportioned to Durham City to the central Durham villages, which may include Brandon, Langley Moor, Meadowfield, Coxhoe, Langley Park, Sherburn, Ushaw Moor, Lanchester and Esh Winning.
- **Option D: Wider Dispersal** - This distribution redistributes housing away from Durham City to the towns and villages principally within North, Mid and South Durham delivery areas. The wider dispersal option also increases the level of housing growth to East and West Durham
- **Option E: New Town** - A notional area which could accommodate the level of concentrated development required between the A1 and A19 in East Durham was also subject to SA

5.9 The following table provides a visual overview of the assessment outcomes:

Summary Assessment of Housing Distribution Options																
Option	Time-scale	SA Objectives														
		1. Decent Affordable Homes	2. Strong Secure Communities	3. Education, Training & Lifelong Learning	4. Health: Inequalities & Lifestyles	5. Need to Travel & Sustainable Transport	6. Alleviate Deprivation	7. Economy & Employment	8. Climate Change: Mitigation	9. Climate Change: Adaptation	10. Biodiversity & Geodiversity	11. Landscape & Townscape	12. Historic Environment	13. Resources: Air, Water & Soil	14. Waste & Use of Materials	15. Minerals Extraction & Impacts
Option A: Main Towns	S	✓	✓/✓	✓/✓	✓/✓	✓	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓/✓
	M	✓	✓	xx	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓/✓
	L	?	xx	✓	xx	✓	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	xx	xx	✓	✓	✓	✓/✓
Option B: Sustainable Communities	S	✓	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓/✓
	M	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✓	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓/✓
	L	✓	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓/✓
Option C: Central Durham Villages	S	✓	✓/✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓/✓
	M	✓/✓	✓	✓/✓	✓/✓	✓	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓/✓
	L	✓/✓	xx	✓/✓	✓	xx	✓	✓	xx	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓/✓
Option D: Wider Dispersal	S	✓	✓/✓	✓/✓	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓/✓
	M	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓	xx	✓	xx	xx	✓	✓	xx	xx	✓	✓	✓/✓
	L	✓	xx	✓	✓	xx	✓	xx	xx	✓	xx	xx	✓	✓	✓	✓/✓
Option E: New Town (Between A1 & A19)	S	✓/✓	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	M	✓/✓	✓/✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	xx	xx	✓/✓	✓	✓	xx	xx	✓	✓
	L	✓	✓/✓	✓	✓	xx	✓	xx	xx	✓/✓	✓	✓	xx	xx	✓	xx

5.10 Whilst a comprehensive narrative is provided within the main SA report, the following table provide a summary of the advantages and disadvantages related to each option:

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
Main Town	<p>Likely to deliver a higher proportion of affordable housing</p> <p>Good access to education facilities and potential for training opportunities</p> <p>Support the viability of the Durham City centre</p> <p>Maximise opportunities for walking and cycling and the delivery of sustainable travel infrastructure.</p>	<p>Impact upon conservation areas and WHS due to concentration of development</p> <p>Impact upon landscape and greenbelt</p> <p>Impact upon capacity of educational facilities in Durham City</p> <p>Loss of agricultural land, a proportion of which may be best and most versatile agricultural land</p>
Sustainable Communities	<p>Likely to deliver a higher proportion of affordable housing</p> <p>Good access to education facilities and potential for training opportunities</p> <p>Support the regeneration of settlements</p> <p>Support the viability of the Durham and other main centres</p> <p>Support opportunities for walking and cycling and the delivery of sustainable travel infrastructure.</p>	<p>Potential impact upon conservation areas and WHS</p> <p>Impact upon landscape and greenbelt</p> <p>Some loss of agricultural land, a proportion of which may be best and most versatile agricultural land</p>
Sustainable Communities with Central Durham Villages	<p>Support the regeneration of settlements in areas of high Indices of multiple deprivation</p>	<p>Increased levels of commuting to key economic areas and associated levels of congestion</p> <p>Long term impact upon climate change due to increased number of car journeys</p> <p>Impact upon landscape</p> <p>May require some use of Greenbelt</p>

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
Wider Dispersal	<p>Support the regeneration of settlements in areas of high Indices of multiple deprivation</p> <p>Not likely to require the use of Greenbelt land</p>	<p>No strategic allocations will result in less certainty around new educational capacity</p> <p>Significant levels of congestion likely due to increased number of car journeys to key economic areas</p> <p>Long term impact upon climate change due to increased number of car journeys</p> <p>Allocations in East Durham could increase recreational impact upon coastal internationally designated wildlife sites</p>
New Town	<p>Opportunities to support improved provision of healthy lifestyles and education</p> <p>Not likely to require the use of Greenbelt land</p>	<p>Significant levels of congestion likely due to increased number of car journeys to key economic areas</p> <p>Long term impact upon climate change due to increased number of car journeys</p> <p>Increased amount of minerals needed to be extracted due to supporting infrastructure</p> <p>Loss of agricultural land, a proportion of which may be best and most versatile agricultural land</p>

5.11 Following the SA of the housing distribution options the SA recommended that on balance the Sustainable Communities option, provides the greatest opportunities to deliver sustainable patterns of growth. This distribution option was selected in response to the SA and other factors including for example, opportunities to support economic growth, viability and deliverability.

5.12 As a means to deliver the Sustainable Communities option, further SA of a 'Sustainable Communities Without Green Belt' was undertaken which, following the exhaustion of other considerations (e.g. maximising the use of brownfield land), involved the assessment of 15 areas of search beyond the outer green belt boundary. This assessment process led to the shortlisting of four broad areas of search which were ultimately discounted on viability grounds and the likelihood that the areas, if one or more were selected, would increase levels of private car travel and congestion.

Employment Distribution

5.13 The Employment Land Review (ELR) ^(v) identifies a number of economic market areas across County Durham comprising:

- Durham City;
- A1 Corridor;
- A19 Corridor;
- Consett and Surrounds;
- Bishop Auckland and Surrounds; and
- The rest of County Durham including rural areas

5.14 These market areas are well established and reflect different commercial markets, cross boundary relationships, key transport corridors, existing infrastructure and a history of employment development. To focus employment development away from these areas would not be a reasonable approach as locations would not be attractive to or in many cases, appropriate to the needs of business. However, please note that the SA did assess alternatives in relation to rural employment exception sites (see commentary against Policy 11 in the table below)

5.15 The ELR also provided an employment land requirement for each economic market area and whilst all areas require the de-allocation of employment land, the remaining future portfolio is greatest within the most attractive market areas i.e. A1 Corridor, A19 Corridor and Durham City. There are no alternatives to the distribution conclusions of the ELR as these are based on a rigorous assessment of historic and current performance, demand and supply issues and site specific assessment.

Assessment of Plan Policies and their Alternatives

5.16 The following table aims to provide an overview of the assessment outcomes of each individual Plan policy and its alternatives. In order to provide a clear visual summary of overriding effects Social (SOC), Economic (ECON) and Environmental (ENV), the following key has been applied for the purposes of this table only:

Key

Mostly Positive Effects Predicted	
Mostly Negative Effects Predicted	
Mixed Effects Predicted	

v Lichfields (2018) Employment Land Review Update: Final Report Durham County Council

Minor/no clear link	-
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Policy	Reasonable Alternative Assessment	Policy Assessment Outcome			Commentary and Outstanding Issues
		SO	ECO	ENV	
How Much Development and Where?					
1: Quantity of Development	Employment Land: A - Maintain current supply (Business as Usual) - 755 ha B - Labour demand - 114.8 ha C - Labour supply - 121.1 ha D - Past Take-up Rates - 269.5 ha SA Recommended: Option D Option Selected: Combination of B, C & D Housing: A - Do not make an adjustment to the quantity of housing to be allocated in the Plan B - Make an upward adjustment to the quantity of housing allocated to account for the potential non delivery of housing commitments. SA Recommended: Option B Option Selected: Option B				Timely and adequate investment in the infrastructure required to support the quantity of development proposed will be achieved as a result of Plan policy and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. In respect of the housing and employment sites that have been allocated to meet the quantity of development proposed, the allocations are predicted to have positive effects against a number of social objectives and significantly positive economic effects. The potential for significant adverse effects to biodiversity (housing allocations) and landscape (employment allocations) were predicted but can be avoided with the careful and timely implementation of mitigation proposed. Outstanding issues relate to the need for further design detail and associated environmental assessment of highways infrastructure in Durham City at the planning application stage.
2: Employment Land Allocations	Allocating insufficient employment land of the correct size and quality across the County is deemed a social and economic risk; and consequently the 'do nothing' option is not considered a reasonable alternative in this regard. The 'business as usual' option (i.e. retain existing allocations and do not allocate any new sites or de-allocate sites for employment use) was therefore also not				Recommendations regarding mitigation, including improving accessibility; the need for a transport assessment; the support of appropriate infrastructure; the encouragement of renewable energy technologies; flood risk assessments; biodiversity and landscaping masterplanning; and archaeological assessment will be

Policy	Reasonable Alternative Assessment	Policy Assessment Outcome			Commentary and Outstanding Issues
		SO	CE	CON/ENV	
B8 Storage and Distribution. However, some extensions to existing sites and new employment land sites are also proposed for B1, B2 and B8 uses.	considered to be a reasonable alternative. There are no reasonable alternatives to the conclusions of the Employment Land Review (2018) or the sites to be allocated in the Policy as presented.				taken into account through the development management process. As such, there are no outstanding issues to raise.
3: Aykley Heads Allocates an employment site known as Aykley Heads within Durham City for B1(a) uses (offices)	<p>After undertaking sequential testing of various potential sites in and around Durham City, it was determined that the Aykley Heads site was the sequentially preferable location for new office development (vi). All the other sites assessed were discounted for various reasons (e.g. availability, suitability, capacity to meet identified need).</p> <p>Options regarding the extent and phasing of the Aykley Heads site were nonetheless considered reasonable and subject to SA. The options subject were:</p> <p>A. Only reusing existing land currently used for employment, excluding any Green Belt land.</p> <p>B. As above but also including land at County Hall car park currently in the Green Belt.</p> <p>C. As above but also including former police leisure centre and playing fields currently in the Green Belt.</p> <p>D. As above but only use Green Belt land when other areas have been redeveloped.</p> <p>SA recommended: Option D</p> <p>Option Selected: Option B</p>				The policy, supported by the approved masterplan for the Aykley Heads site, conforms to the principles of sustainable development. The SA proposed some mitigation and recommendations that should be considered alongside the development of the site. The policy and masterplan afford the necessary protection, in addition to seeking enhancements to the site and Durham City in terms of biodiversity, landscape, townscape, and historic environment. As such, there are no outstanding issues to raise. Whilst option D was recommended the former police playing fields could provide a longer term opportunity, however this will depend on the success of the existing strategic employment site. As such it was concluded that this element should be considered as part of a future review of the Plan.

Policy	Reasonable Alternative Assessment	Policy Assessment Outcome			Commentary and Outstanding Issues
		SO	CE	CON/ENV	
<p>4: Housing Land Allocations</p> <p>Allocates sites to contribute towards meeting the quantity of housing needed over the Plan period</p>	<p>All housing sites above 0.2 ha, categorised as either green through the Strategic Housing Land Assessment (SHLAA) process were reasonable alternatives and have been subject to a site specific SA.</p>				<p>The housing allocations are a result of various stages of assessment that have included detailed involvement from SA, including through the site specific SHLAA assessments undertaken which has informed the final site selection. Given the robust justification provided for those sites which were not allocated, yet received a higher sustainability score, it considered that Policy 4 represents a housing distribution that offers greater opportunities to deliver sustainable patterns of growth and provide a suitable mix of housing in deliverable locations that will enable the County to meet its identified housing need. This is supported by the distribution of employment land which complements the County's housing growth in terms of quantity and distribution. As such, there are no outstanding issues.</p>
<p>5: Durham City's sustainable Urban Extensions</p> <p>In order to promote sustainable patterns of development and meet housing need, some land is removed from the Greenbelt and allocated for housing</p>	<p>In exhausting other possibilities (developed land, optimising densities and discussions with neighbouring authorities), land suitable for 140 dwellings in Durham City has been identified and allocated within the draft Plan. However this is insufficient to meet the Sustainable Communities option, and therefore it was necessary to understand whether there was potential for a strategic site beyond the Green Belt surrounding Durham City. This process was supported by an independent assessment of the County's Green Belt which assessed General Areas as well as specific sites against the five purposes of Green Belt (as established by the NPPF).</p> <p>Of the Green Belt sites submitted, those adjoining Durham City were assessed for the potential for general housing purposes. Through the SHLAA process SA helped to inform the decision on whether any of these sites were capable of contributing significantly to the county's housing needs. This was also supported by the independent Green Belt assessment. Assessment enabled two potential strategic sites to be shortlisted, Sniperley Park and Sherburn Road, which were then subject to further detailed assessment; including SA. Ultimately this process informed the planning judgement that Exceptional Circumstances exist given Spatial Strategy and the particular circumstances in County Durham.</p>				<p>The stages undertaken (SHLAA and Exceptional Circumstances), arrive at the two strategic housing sites in Policy 5. The Plan will contribute towards the delivery of sustainable patterns of housing growth as well as a suitable mix of housing to meet the County's identified needs (including that for affordable and older persons' housing). In line with mitigation recommendations, the required detailed masterplans for the sites will need to demonstrate how net-gains for biodiversity will be achieved and afford greater protection to the woodland at the edge of Sherburn road. There are no outstanding issues.</p>

Policy	Reasonable Alternative Assessment	Policy Assessment Outcome			Commentary and Outstanding Issues
		SO	CE	CON/ENV	
<p>6: Development on Unallocated Sites in Built up Areas</p> <p>Defines what constitutes the built up area and sets out the criteria that non allocated development proposals will be determined against.</p>	<p>Options relate to whether land on the edge of an existing settlement should be considered as development in the built up area for the purposes of the policy or development in the Countryside.</p> <p>A - Proposals upon land on the edge of a settlement should be regarded as development in the countryside</p> <p>B - Proposals upon land on the edge of a settlement should be regarded as development in the built up area where they adjoin a settlement</p> <p>C - Proposals upon land on the edge of a settlement should be regarded as development in the built up area where they are well contained by existing built development</p> <p>SA Recommended: either</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option A - only where exceptions are made for housing, community or economic development; or • Combination of Option B and C <p>Option Selected: Option A</p>				<p>The SA of this policy as it has developed has ensured that better and wider consideration is given to the compatibility of unallocated sites with planned uses of land, the ecological value of open land within built up areas and the need for any loss of open land to be appropriately mitigated and compensated for. There are no outstanding issues as those raised previously during the assessment of the reasonable alternative approaches have been addressed through the exceptions contained within other Plan policies.</p>
Building a Strong Competitive Economy					
<p>7: Visitor Attractions</p> <p>Sets out the criteria by which the provision of new visitor attractions or the expansion of existing facilities will be permitted</p>	<p>Whilst there were no alternatives considered reasonable to the policy presented, several alternatives were considered as part of the policy development process. It was not however, considered a reasonable approach to rely on the NPPF, saved policies or a 'no policy approach' because there were significant policy gaps in the 'saved' policies. The 'do nothing' option was also not a reasonable alternative, in addition to allocating specific sites.</p> <p>In terms of the detail of the new criteria-based policy, two approaches were considered: criteria which support appropriate new visitor attractions whilst ensuring they are regulated, particularly in the countryside (Option A) and criteria which are less restrictive</p>				<p>Following the acceptance of all SA recommendations, the original SA score has been strengthened. The inclusion of a SA mitigation measure has afforded further protection to the landscape, townscape and heritage assets. The policy conforms with the sustainability objective. There are no outstanding issues.</p>

Policy	Reasonable Alternative Assessment	Policy Assessment Outcome			Commentary and Outstanding Issues
		SO	CE	CON/ENV	
	and exclude qualifying locational criteria (Option B). Ultimately it was determined Option A was the only reasonable and sustainable option.				
<p>8: Visitor Accommodation</p> <p>Sets out the criteria by which the provision of new visitor accommodation or the expansion of existing accommodation will be permitted.</p>	<p>Whilst there were no alternatives considered reasonable to the policy presented, several alternatives were considered as part of the policy development process. It was not however, considered a reasonable approach to rely on the on the NPPF, saved policies or a 'no policy approach' because there were significant policy gaps in the 'saved' policies. The 'do nothing' option was therefore also not a reasonable alternative, in addition to allocating specific sites.</p> <p>In terms of the detail of the new criteria-based policy, two approaches were considered: criteria which support appropriate new visitor accommodation whilst ensuring they are regulated, particularly in the countryside (Option A) and criteria which are less restrictive and exclude qualifying locational criteria (Option B). Ultimately it was determined Option A was the only reasonable and sustainable option.</p>				As a result of SA recommendation, the policy now affords further protection from visitor accommodation as proposals need to demonstrate clear opportunities to make their location more sustainable, minimising the impact visitor accommodation has on existing development and ensuring that any new development is sensitive to its surrounding area, with no unacceptable impact on local roads. The policy is believed to conform with the sustainability objectives. There are no outstanding issues.
<p>9: Retail Hierarchy and Town Centre Development</p> <p>Defines and sets out the roles of sub regional, large town, small town, district and local retail centres in the County</p>	<p>The policy, in part, represents a continuation of those centres defined in the saved policies. However, the NPPF sets-out specific requirements to ensure the vitality of town centres which requires a more consistent and robust policy approach. Given the approach in the saved policies was largely out of date against the NPPF, maintaining this was not considered reasonable. Consistently with the principles of the NPPF, and based on the evidence provided in the Retail and Town Centre Uses Study (2017), it was also considered that there were no reasonable alternatives or spatial options to ensuring that this policy reflects national requirements and aspirations as well as protecting and enhancing the vitality of the County's various town centres.</p>				As a result of the SA recommendations the SA has recommended the addition of a definition for 'in centre locations'. This definition provides clarity to the policy. There was uncertainty with regards to the potential impacts in terms of climate change adaptation; air, water and soil quality; and waste management. However, these mitigation measures will be applied in conjunction with other policies in the plan and therefore uncertainty is minimised. The policy conforms with the principles of sustainable development. There are no outstanding issues.
Supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy					

Policy	Reasonable Alternative Assessment	Policy Assessment Outcome			Commentary and Outstanding Issues
		SO	CE	CON/ENV	
<p>10: Development in the Countryside</p> <p>Restrictive policy towards development in the countryside. Sets out the exceptions by which new development in the countryside will be considered.</p>	<p>Four approaches to protecting the countryside from inappropriate development were subject to assessment. In all cases the options relate to development that does not specifically require a countryside location. The options included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A - Define Individual settlement boundaries beyond which development will not be permitted • B - Develop criteria based policy to restrict development in the open countryside • C - As for option A but with the addition of exceptions policies to allow development outside of settlement boundaries where certain exceptions are met. • D - As for option B but with the addition of exceptions policies to allow development which is contrary to criteria based policy where certain exceptions are met. <p>SA Recommended: Option D</p> <p>Option Selected: Option D</p>				<p>The SA of this policy as it has developed has strengthened the economic and environmental effects predicted with particular regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadening the scope of the policy with respect to non agricultural rural enterprise • Giving consideration to the potential impacts of development relating to hobby farming and small holdings • Giving broader consideration to potential heritage and landscape effects of replacement dwellings and conversions • Recognising that low carbon and renewable energy development should be exempt from the policy • Ensuring that the potential adverse impacts of the operation of new development within the countryside is taken into account. <p>There are no outstanding issues.</p>
<p>11: Rural Housing and Employment Exception Sites</p> <p>Sets out the exceptions by which proposals for affordable housing and employment uses (that are not related to rural land based enterprises) will be considered in rural areas.</p>	<p>Two options were considered in order to examine where rural exceptions, under certain circumstances can be made, to support the delivery of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A: Affordable housing only • B: Affordable housing and employment <p>SA Recommended: Option B</p> <p>Option Selected: Option B</p>				<p>Ensuring that the policy is delivered in accordance with other policies in the Plan will mitigate effects against climate change objectives. In all other respects the policy was found to be compatible with the principles of sustainable development and will contribute specifically to meeting and sustaining the social and economic needs of rural communities. Issues that were raised following the assessment of the options relating to ensuring the prioritisation of occupancy by those with a local connection have been addressed by the policy wording. There are no outstanding issues.</p>

Policy	Reasonable Alternative Assessment	Policy Assessment Outcome			Commentary and Outstanding Issues
		SO	CE	CONENV	
<p>12: Permanent Rural Workers Dwellings</p> <p>Sets out the factors, proposals for new rural workers dwellings outside the built up area will need to demonstrate. Policy is restrictive in nature.</p>	<p>There are not considered to be any reasonable alternatives for this policy as NPPF requirements make it clear that in some circumstances there should be exceptions made to allow rural development where there is an essential need.</p>				<p>The SA recommendations focused on strengthening the environmental safeguards of the policy. Nevertheless, the plan should be read as a whole and therefore protection for biodiversity and geodiversity will be afforded through Policy 42: Biodiversity and Geodiversity. The policy conforms with sustainable development principles and there are no outstanding issues.</p>
<p>13: Equestrian Development</p> <p>Sets out that equestrian development is an appropriate countryside use and will be permitted where a range of criteria are met.</p>	<p>Paragraph 83 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires planning policies to support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas (including the diversification of agriculture), communities and visitors and which respect the character of the countryside. Accordingly, there were not considered to be any reasonable alternatives to the inclusion of a policy within the emerging County Durham Plan which aims to support equestrian development as an appropriate countryside use.</p>				<p>Overall, positive social, environmental and economic effects are predicted. The changes made to the policy as a result of SA recommendations have increased the recognition and scope of the potential individual and cumulative impacts of equestrian proposals to biodiversity, landscape, heritage, waste and water resources. A broader recognition of potential impacts has improved the overall level of protection afforded to these receptors as a result. However, no changes to the original effects predicted are required, which remain positive. There are no outstanding issues.</p>
<p>14: Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land and Soil Resources</p> <p>Restrictive policy which sets out the circumstances by which development of the best and most versatile agricultural land will be permitted.</p>	<p>As the County Durham Plan should be consistent with the principles set out in the NPPF in respect of best and most versatile agricultural land and the need to protect and enhance soils there are no reasonable alternatives to ensuring that the approach outlined in the policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gives consideration to the economic and other benefits of best and most versatile agricultural land; and • seeks to use poorer quality agricultural land. <p>The policy maintains the business as usual approach as saved policies within former district local plans and the County Durham minerals and waste local plans, as opposed to prohibiting the development of the best and most versatile agricultural land set out criteria by which its development will be considered.</p>				<p>Following SA, the protection afforded to the best and most versatile agricultural land by the policy has been strengthened, particularly in relation to temporary forms of development. The overall clarity of the policy has also been approved in a number of areas. As a result of accepted SA recommendations it is now possible to predict positive effects against the sustainable minerals development objective. There are no outstanding issues.</p>
Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes					

Policy	Reasonable Alternative Assessment	Policy Assessment Outcome			Commentary and Outstanding Issues
		SO	CE	CON/ENV	
<p>15: Addressing Housing Need</p> <p>Policy sets out the proportions of housing that should be affordable and suitable for older persons.</p>	<p>There were no reasonable alternatives to consider for the amount of affordable housing provision set out in the policy. The following options were considered around the provision of older persons housing which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option A: Allow developers to make their own decisions on house types and building standards • Option B: Require developers to build a proportion (10%) of houses within housing schemes to the new optional building regulations standard aimed at making homes more accessible and adaptable • Option C: Require developers to build bungalows, level access flats, multi-generational housing, sheltered housing or extra care as a proportion (10%) of all new housing developments • Option D: Allocation of sites specifically for older persons housing <p>SA recommendation: Option C</p> <p>Option Selected: Option C</p> <p>It should be noted that due to the updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2018) Shelter and Extra care has been removed from Option C and included under the Specialist Housing criteria to align with viability evidence. This did not change the original assessment for Option C.</p>			-	<p>The policy will help to increase housing options for those who are unable to afford housing on the open market and whose needs are currently not met through the open market such as older persons and specialist housing. As such, this will allow more people to access the housing market and reduce deprivation across the county. There are concerns that policy may not meet affordable housing need in the short term but the amount of provision required from developers will be regularly reviewed to reflect changing economic conditions. Based on this, expected contributions could change meaning there could be positive or negative impacts and therefore the impact depends on implementation. There are no outstanding issues with the policy.</p>

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<p>16: Durham University Development, Purpose Built Student Accommodation and Houses in Multiple Occupation</p> <p>Sets out the criteria by which planning permission for new University facilities and the refurbishment of existing buildings will be considered. Allocates purpose built student accommodation sites and sets out restrictive criteria towards additional purpose built accommodation. The policy is also restrictive towards HMO's in order to maintain mixed and balanced communities.</p>	<p>The policy represents the 'business as usual' option given that it broadly reflects the Interim Policy on Student Accommodation currently in operation, even though minor amendments have been made following a period of implementation. The 'do nothing' approach or approaches that would restrict the proposed growth ambition of Durham University (in relation to student accommodation) were not considered reasonable. Therefore the following approaches were considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option A: Preferred Option Policy Option B: 'No policy' approach was nonetheless considered a reasonable alternative given that arguably other Local Plan policies could provide a mechanism for managing new built development relating to student accommodation with Durham City. <p>SA recommendation: Option A</p> <p>Option Selected: Option B</p>				<p>Policy is likely to have overall positive effects on the sustainability objectives with more certainty around the social and economic objectives due to the economic impact the University has in the town. Allocating sites in and near the city centre will ensure facilities and services are all within close proximity. There are not considered to be any outstanding issues, although impact upon environmental objectives will ultimately depend upon site specific proposals.</p>
<p>17: Sites for Travellers</p> <p>Sets out the criteria by which any proposals for new or extensions to existing sites will be considered over the Plan period.</p>	<p>The Traveller Site Needs Assessment (TSNA), prepared in accordance with the Government's guidance document 'Planning Policy for Traveller sites (August 2015), concluded that was no need for any additional pitches up to 2035. However the TSNA also assessed the needs of those meeting the earlier and wider 2012 definition of 'Gypsy and Traveller'. This identified an additional need for six pitches. Policy and supporting text confirm that an additional family site has been approved since the assessment and that future need would be met by current supply, due to the number of double pitches that are only accommodating one household. It is therefore probable that need would be met over the plan period. It is therefore not reasonable to allocate sites such as windfalls, as evidence from pitch turnover, limited need and high vacancy rate suggest there no no immediate need to identify additional pitches as an alternative.</p>				<p>SA recommendations referring to sites being within a short walking distance of a public transport route, services and facilitates and sites being at risk of flooding have been acknowledged. With the changes recommended through the SA process, the policy will be effective in ensuring any future applications for Traveller sites are tested robustly.</p>

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<p>18: Children's Homes</p> <p>Sets out the criteria by which applications for children's care homes will be permitted</p>	<p>The Government set up a national coordination unit in May 2016 in order to develop options for how facilities can be better planned, co-ordinated and joined up at a national level. A key review by Sir Martin Narey suggested that children should be placed within 20 miles of their home. Whilst this policy cannot stipulate such requirements, it can and does demonstrate that sites should only be delivered in safe and secure environments and communities away from crime risk and with good management structures in place. It is therefore considered that there were no reasonable alternatives to the inclusion of a policy like the one presented.</p>		-	-	<p>The SA highlighted that local and community facilities should be accessible for children's homes. This furthered the certainty on social sustainability objectives. As such, the policy accords with the principles of sustainable development and there are no further outstanding issues.</p>
<p>19: Type and Mix of Housing</p> <p>Policy seeks to secure an appropriate mix of dwelling types taking into account existing imbalances in the housing stock</p>	<p>Maintaining flexibility and assessing the type and mix of housing on a site by site basis is the only reasonable alternative. Flexibility needs to be maintained in order to deliver the right mix of housing size and tenure to suit the prevailing local circumstances at the time and to ensure development can be sympathetic to local character and take individual site constraints into account. This maintains the business as usual approach.</p>				<p>Overall, positive social, economic and environmental effects are predicted. The policy conforms with the principles of sustainable development. There are no outstanding issues.</p>
Protecting Green Belt Land					
<p>20: Protecting Green Belt Land</p> <p>Aims to protect the greenbelt from new development</p>	<p>The circumstances when and where development in the Green Belt should be approved are essentially covered by the NPPF. The Policy therefore confirms these same 'very special circumstances' and 'exceptions'. It was deemed there are no reasonable alternatives to either inclusion of the policy or the elements contained therein, given that instances where development in the Green Belt may be deemed 'not inappropriate' are detailed within the NPPF.</p>				<p>Policy is predicted to have generally positive social and economic effects. It is generally positively worded in terms of impacts on the Environment, including providing a further layer of protection. Policy does however set out where exceptions can occur. The policy conforms with the principles of sustainable development.</p>
<p>21: Non-Strategic Green Belt Amendments</p> <p>Removes specific, small areas of land from the Durham City and Chester-Le-Street greenbelt</p>	<p>During Issues and Options consultation representations were invited related to whether minor changes to the existing boundary could be justified and whether exceptional circumstances exist for the change. Two sites are included within the County Durham Plan.</p>	-	-		<p>The policy conforms with the principles of sustainable development. Whilst the suggested changes have been incorporated it is predicted to be dependant upon implementation, with positive effects if development is appropriate to the scale of its location and is design led.</p>
Delivering Sustainable Transport					

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<p>22: Delivering Sustainable Transport</p> <p>Sets out how new development should deliver sustainable transport.</p>	<p>The NPPF sets out the need to promote sustainable transport through their Local Plans and emphasises a holistic approach to reducing the need to travel, developing a system that is balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes as well as require development that generate significant amounts of movement to be supported by a Transport Assessment (paragraphs 29-32). Hence, although other Plan policies will help to reduce the need to travel and create sustainable communities through the spatial approach and allocations, it is considered that there were no reasonable alternatives to the inclusion of this policy if the County Durham Plan is to conform with national planning policy.</p>				<p>Several SA recommendations have been made all of which were accepted and provide more certainty in the sustainability objectives. The suggestions of the SA have now been incorporated into the policy, leading to positive social, economic and environmental effects.</p>
<p>23: Durham City Sustainable Transport</p> <p>Sets out the measures to relive existing highway network problems around Durham City, including demand management measures, provision of a Northern Relief Road and a Western Relief Road.</p>	<p>4 main and associated options were assessed in relation to improving the transport network around Durham City:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A - Maintain business as usual conditions • B - Implement sustainable travel measures outlined in the Durham City Sustainable Delivery Plan (DCSTDP), reallocate space to sustainable modes on Millburngate Bridge and provide a Northern Relief Road (NRR). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B(i) - As for option B but the alignment of the NRR utilises the Belmont Viaduct • B(ii) - As for option B but the alignment of the NRR requires a new crossing of the River Wear • B(iii) - As for option B but with an ECML over-bridge • B(iv) - As for option B but with an ECML underpass • C - Introduce a Western Relief Road (WRR) • D - Implement options B and C <p>SA Recommended: Option D with B(iv). Further environmental assessment is required to inform the effects of Bi vs Bii</p>				<p>Whilst the policy will best future-proof Durham City's transport network and reduce levels of congestion and associated negative social, economic and environmental effects, the SA has identified the need for further assessment of the beneficial and negative effects of the measures, particularly in respect of quantifying effects to any physical evidence associated with the registered Neville's Cross Battlefield and the associated heritage, landscape and biodiversity effects of different types and design of river crossing and junctions. The outstanding issues identified within the SA would need to be addressed at the planning application stage. Proposals will need to be accompanied by a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).</p>

Policy	Reasonable Alternative Assessment	Policy Assessment Outcome			Commentary and Outstanding Issues
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	Option Selected: Option D with the alignments associated with Bi,ii,iii and iv safeguarded				
<p>24: Allocating and Safeguarding transport Routes and Facilities</p> <p>Policy allocates Sherburn Retail link road, Horden Rail station and safeguards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disused Leamside Line Bowburn Relief road 	<p>Two options were considered around the safeguarding of transport routes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A: Do not safeguard the route of the Barnard Castle Relief Road (BaU option) B: Safeguard the route of the Barnard Castle Relief road <p>SA Recommended: Option A</p> <p>Option Selected: Option A</p>				<p>The SA of this policy as it has developed has better aligned it with the Habitats Regulations Assessment of Horden Rail station, improving clarity and has highlighted the need for further detailed environmental assessment of proposals in the event that planning proposals are forthcoming for the allocated and safeguarded routes and facilities.</p>
<p>25: Provision of Transport Infrastructure</p> <p>Sets out the criteria that new highway schemes and transport infrastructure will be tested against.</p>	<p>The NPPF supports transport policies which can play a role in facilitating sustainable development, and suggests that local planning authorities should support a pattern of development which facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport. There are therefore not considered to be any reasonable alternatives to the approach outlined within policy.</p>				<p>The policy will have a positive impact on most social, economic and environmental objectives. However, the impact on some of the objectives will depend on implementation and the type of scheme which comes forward in terms of its size and scale. Nevertheless, these recommendations have further strengthened the policy. As such, there are no outstanding issues.</p>
Supporting high quality infrastructure					
<p>26: Developer Contributions</p> <p>Identifies the mechanisms that will be used to ensure new development contributes to the provision and/or improvement of physical, social and environmental infrastructure</p>	<p>There were a number of options considered at Preferred Options stage including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CIL across the whole of the County CIL across viable areas only CIL not used. S106 used to deliver developer contributions <p>The current NPPF consultation is proposing to reform the current system by removing the pooling restrictions on S106, therefore allowing different contributions to go towards the same piece of</p>				<p>Whilst environmental impacts are likely to depend upon implementation, SA concludes that the policy is likely to have positive impacts overall. There are no outstanding issues with the policy.</p>

Policy	Reasonable Alternative Assessment	Policy Assessment Outcome			Commentary and Outstanding Issues
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	Infrastructure. Whilst the local plan viability study ^(vii) confirms four value band areas, it was determined by the study that even applying CIL to higher value area is likely to exert downward pressure on viability and therefore make it difficult to secure S106 contributions against certain policy requires, such as affordable housing. The CDP needs to provide a mechanism for securing developer contributions in order to make development acceptable in planning terms. It was therefore decided that there were no reasonable alternatives to the preferred option to use S106.				
27: Green Infrastructure Aims to protect existing green infrastructure and rights of way from new development and ensure that new provision of green infrastructure is of a sufficient quantity and quality.	The 'business as usual' option was not considered to be a reasonable alternative as the NPPF stipulates that Local Plans and planning policy should be developed based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space and that LPAs should set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure.				As a result of SA recommendations, the policy conforms with the principles of sustainable development. There are no outstanding issues in terms of the SA.
28: Utilities Telecommunications and Broadcast Infrastructure Sets out the criteria by which the proposals for new or extensions to existing energy generation (excluding renewable energy), utility transmission facilities, telecommunication masts or other broadcast or broadband equipment will be permitted	The NPPF requires local authorities to support high-quality communications infrastructure when preparing Local Plans setting out specific requirements to be included. It was also considered necessary for a policy to cover utilities infrastructure as it was considered that certain elements of such development could not be covered adequately by other Plan policies. As such, there were no reasonable alternatives to consider within the policy. The SA has therefore focused on whether the policy presented has been robust, included the appropriate safeguards and covered all necessary aspects.				Assessment of this policy has determined that impacts are predicted to be positive/very positive against most social, economic and environmental objectives with a high degree of certainty in some cases. The policy accords with the principles of sustainable development. There are no outstanding issues.
29: Safeguarded Areas Aims to ensure that new development does not jeopardise the safety or operation of, either by its location or	There are no reasonable alternatives to the businesses as usual approach which aligns with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Town and County Planning (Safeguarded Aerodromes, Technical Sites and Military Explosives Storage Areas) Direction 2002; and 		-	-	Where the policy will have more than a minor effect against the sustainability objectives these will be positive. There are no outstanding issues.

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Policy	Reasonable Alternative Assessment	Policy Assessment Outcome			Commentary and Outstanding Issues
		SO	CE	CON/ENV	
design, major hazard sites or pipelines, Newcastle International Airport, Durham Tees Valley Airport, High Moorsely Meteorological radar, Fishburn Airfield, Shotton Airfield and Peterlee Parachute Drop Zone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town and Country Planning (Safeguarded Meteorological Sites) (England) Direction 2014; and Section 6 (24a) of the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Regulations 2015. 				
Requiring Good Design					
<p>30: Sustainable Design in the Built Environment</p> <p>Sets out design requirements for new development including for residential extensions and alteration, signage, adverts, street furniture and public art</p>	<p>A number of different policy approaches were considered reasonable and were subject to separate SA including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option A: Have no prescribed energy target for development Option B: Incorporation of 10% carbon reduction target for all new development Option C: Incorporate requirement to deliver the Home Quality Mark (HQM) Option D: Incorporate requirement to include BREEAM requirement for non-domestic development <p>and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option E: Adoption of Government internal space standards Option F: Do not adopt Government internal space standards <p>SA Recommendation: An amalgamation of Options B, C and D.</p> <p>Option Selected: Options B, D and E taken forward within Policy. Option C will be encouraged</p>				<p>The policy has improved over the plan preparation stage. Overall it is asserted that the policy performs very well against most SA criteria, with the potential for significant positive effects.</p>

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Promoting Healthy Communities					
<p>31: Hot Food Takeaways</p> <p>Discourages large concentrations of hot food takeaways within town centres and near schools</p>	<p>Two policy approaches were considered reasonable and subject to SA. These were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option A (Business as Usual): Do not intervene and allow all A5 uses subject to planning permission and other Plan policies' requirements. Option B: Planning applications for A5 uses will only be approved where the proposal would not result in more than 5% of the premises within the centre being in A5 use and A5 uses within 400m of a school or college building will not be permitted. <p>SA recommendation: Option B</p> <p>Option Selected: Option B</p>				<p>Principally positive social, economic and environmental impacts were identified. In some cases, however, impacts were determined likely to be either insignificant or uncertain. Importantly, significant health benefits were identified along with the potential to reduce health inequalities and help alleviate deprivation across the County. As such, there are no outstanding issues to raise.</p>
<p>32: Amenity and Pollution</p> <p>Restricts development that would incur an unacceptable loss of amenity and/or give rise to unacceptable levels of pollution.</p>	<p>There are no reasonable alternatives to ensuring that Plan policy seeks to prevent pollution and protect amenity. This maintains the business as usual approach.</p>				<p>As a result of the SA assessment, the requirement to refuse sensitive development types within 200 metres of waste water/sewage treatment facilities has been removed in recognition that impacts to amenity and health can occur beyond 200 metres. This change resulted in an improvement in effects predicted against health objectives. In addition, further clarity and emphasis has been placed on protecting working conditions and the flexibility of the policy has been improved in respect of the types and sources of pollutants it takes into account. Overall, the policy accords with the principles of sustainable development and there are no outstanding issues.</p>

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<p>33: Despoiled, Degraded, Derelict, Contaminated and Unstable Land</p> <p>Aims to prevent and address any contaminated land and instability issues through new development</p>	<p>Due to requirements as set-out in the NPPF, there are no reasonable alternatives to assess in relation to the issue of despoiled, degraded derelict, contaminated and unstable land. The NPPF therefore represents the business as usual case.</p>				<p>Previous SA recommendations improved the clarity being provided around the definitions of degraded and derelict land. The policy conforms with the principles of sustainable development. There are no outstanding issues in terms of the SA.</p>
Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change					
<p>34: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy</p> <p>Supports renewable and low carbon energy development in appropriate locations.</p>	<p>There are strategic (e.g. NPPF and Climate Change Act 2008) and local (e.g. Covenant of Mayors and County Durham Climate Change Strategy 2015) aspirations, commitments and legal requirements to reduce carbon emission and support renewable energy development. Given the emerging County Durham Plan should be consistent with the principles of the NPPF and the aforementioned local commitments it was considered that there were no reasonable alternatives or options to assess.</p>				<p>Predominately positive social, economic and environmental effects were identified as a result of assessment. A high degree of certainty in terms of the likelihood of these effects was also cited. Against several environmental objectives minor effects were recorded. This is because the policy will only support proposals in 'appropriate locations'. Hence, irrespective of the technology type or scale of development, proposals will only be supported if they meet the requirements of other Local Plan policies; depending upon the pertinent issues. Other recommendations have been incorporated to better reflect the innovative opportunities around low carbon technologies that exist in the County including specific opportunities for renewable heat. Overall, there are also no outstanding issues concerning the policy.</p>
<p>35: Wind Turbine Development</p> <p>Sets out criteria against which wind turbine development will be determined. No wind turbine allocations are made.</p>	<p>In June 2015 the Government revised its approach to wind energy development, which established two strategic options for Local Planning Authorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Option A) develop a policy based on the identification of suitable wind turbine areas. • (Option B) or 'do nothing' approach which would confirm that wind energy was no longer supported in the County with no suitable areas identified. 				<p>Predominantly positive social, economic and environmental effects were identified as a result of assessment. Against several environmental objectives minor effects were recorded. This is because the policy will only support 'appropriate' proposals in 'suitable locations'. This is somewhat mitigated through the Wind Turbine Evidence Paper which suggests different size turbines may be suitable in differing areas depending upon landscape sensitivity and character and technical and environmental constraints. Furthermore, wind turbine development proposals will only be supported if they meet the requirements of other Local Plan policies; depending</p>

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	It was concluded that only Option A was reasonable. Given the change in approach from government, the 'business as usual' approach as represented by national policy and guidance now replaced was not considered a reasonable option.				upon the pertinent issues. This will ensure potential significant adverse effects are either avoided or mitigated. Amendments made to the policy as a result of the SA around individual or cumulative impacts made it more robust. There are no outstanding issues to raise.
36: Water Management and 37: Water Infrastructure (36) Aims to ensure that new development is not subject to and will not create flood risk. Also aims to ensure no net increase in surface water run off, and incorporation of appropriate SuDS. (37) Sets out the approach to the disposal of foul water, sewage and waste water infrastructure and flood defence infrastructure.	The NPPF sets requirements for water management and states that Local Plans should ensure inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk. It also provides a number of criteria which should be included in a Local Plan. Given the emerging County Durham Plan should be consistent with the principles of the NPPF, it was considered that there were no reasonable alternatives or options to assess.				The SA recommendations have been accepted in part, however reasonable justification has been provided. Changes to the policy as recommended through the SA process will have a positive impact on the certainty of effects on SA objectives. Therefore, the policy conforms with the sustainability objectives and there are no outstanding issues.
38: Durham Heritage Coast and Wider Coastal Zone Policy sets out criteria for new development within the Heritage Coast and wider coastal zone	The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Marine and Coastal Act 2009 require local planning authorities to maintain, enhance and protect the character of the undeveloped coast, especially where it is defined as Heritage Coast. There are therefore no reasonable alternatives to the inclusion of a restrictive policy within the Plan which reflects the objectives and purposes of Heritage Coasts, including controlling development within the wider coastal zone which can impact on the setting and views of the Heritage Coast. This maintains the business as usual approach as set out in saved policies.				As a result of this and previous stages of SA, the policy is now predicted to avoid significantly negative environmental effects and have more positive overall social, economic and environmental effects. The policy also better aligns with the objectives and purposes of heritage coasts and gives increased recognition to the Port of Seaham. There are no outstanding issues.
Conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment					
39: North Pennines AONB Sets criteria for developments in the North Pennines AONB	No reasonable alternatives are considered to exist to the approach outlined in the policy which reflects the statutory duty of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, requirements of the NPPF				Positive social, economic and environmental effects were predicted with significantly positive effects identified against landscape, biodiversity/geodiversity and heritage

Policy	Reasonable Alternative Assessment	Policy Assessment Outcome			Commentary and Outstanding Issues
		SO	CE	CON/ENV	
	and gives weight to locally approved planning and design guides. The policy maintains the business as usual approach as set out in the NPPF and national guidance.				objectives. The policy conforms with the principles of sustainable development and there are no outstanding issues.
40: Landscape Highlights instances where proposals would have unacceptable adverse impacts on landscape character and quality	The emerging County Durham Plan should be consistent with the principles within the NPPF, European Landscape Convention, the County Durham Landscape Character Assessment and County Durham Landscape Strategy. It is therefore considered that there are no reasonable alternatives or options to including such a policy to ensure consistency and compliance with the European, national and Local policy and guidelines and therefore maintains the business as usual approach.	-	-		Given the intent and scope of this policy assessment determined, with a high degree of certainty, that there would be positive effects against biodiversity/ geodiversity, landscape/ townscape and the historic environment. Against all other objectives impacts were predicted to be either minor or no clear link. The policy conforms with the principles of sustainable development. There are no outstanding issues to raise.
41: Trees, Woodlands and Hedges Policy aims to protect trees, woodlands and hedges	The emerging County Durham Plan is consistent with the principles within the NPPF, and County Durham Landscape Strategy, therefore it is considered that there are no reasonable alternatives or options to including such a policy to ensure consistency and compliance with the requirements and aspirations of the NPPF (which maintains the Business as Usual approach). Policy enables the protection of the County's trees, woodlands and hedges whilst allowing development needs to be met.		-		Overall positive social and environmental effects were identified. It was considered that the policy did not have a significant link to economic objectives. The policy conforms to the sustainability objectives. There are no outstanding issues to raise.
42: Biodiversity and Geodiversity Sets out the overarching approach to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity.	As the emerging County Durham Plan should be consistent with the principles in the NPPF in respect of conserving and enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity there are not considered to be any reasonable alternatives to ensuring that the approach in the policy is delivered. Whilst, saved policies seek to protect and enhance biodiversity, specifically seeking net gains in biodiversity through new development has been the business as usual approach since the publication of the NPPF in 2012.				The clarity and emphasis of the policy has improved as a result of the SA. The policy conforms with the principles of sustainable development and there are no outstanding issues to raise.
43: Internationally Designated Sites Sets out the approach to the protection of Natura 2000 sites, Ramsar sites and European Marine Sites	In order to ensure the protection of Internationally Designated Sites, there are not considered to be any reasonable alternatives to ensuring that Plan policy reflects the requirements of legislation. This maintains the 'business as usual' approach as reflected by the saved environmental policies of the former district Local Plans and the NPPF.				The policy is compatible with the principles of sustainable development with positive social, economic and environmental effects identified. The SA process has helped to further highlight the importance of the strategic counteracting measures identified within the HRA: Developer Guidance and Requirements document. This is likely to improve the clarity and implementation of the policy. There are no outstanding issues.

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<p>44: Protected Species and Nationally and Locally Protected Sites</p> <p>Sets out the approach to the protection of SSSI's, National Nature Reserves, Protected and Priority species, local nature reserves and local wildlife sites.</p>	<p>As a policy on protected species and nationally and locally protected sites should to be consistent with the principles within NPPF and relevant legislation, it was considered that there were no alternatives to the approach prescribed in the policy, including recognising the important role of local sites within County Durham. The majority of the former District and Borough Local Plans, along with the Minerals and Waste Local Plans include separate policies for the differing hierarchy of designated wildlife sites and species, therefore the business as usual approach is maintained.</p>				<p>The changes made to the policy as a result of integrated SA alongside the development of the policy have improved its clarity and its accuracy in respect of reflecting the 'precautionary principle' and differing legislative requirement relating to nationally and European protected species. The justification provided for not insisting on the expansion of protected species is accepted. However, effects predicted against the biodiversity and geodiversity objective will remain positive as opposed to significantly positive as there is some uncertainty as to whether achieving net gains in biodiversity will result in all cases, in the expansion of protected species populations. There are no outstanding issues concerning this policy.</p>
<p>45: Historic Environment</p> <p>Sets out the approach to the protection of scheduled monuments, listed buildings, historic battlefields, registered parks and gardens, conservation areas, non designated assets and heritage at risk</p>	<p>No reasonable alternatives are considered to exist if the Local Plan is to meet its statutory requirements and be in accordance with current national policy and guidance on the historic environment. This includes the 'business as usual' option, as represented by the saved policies from the former District Local Plans, given that they do not reflect the notion of 'significance' and using this as a basis for determining development impacts.</p>				<p>The policy has further emphasised the Landscape and Townscape and Historic Environment sustainability objectives. The policy conforms with the principles of sustainable development and there are no outstanding issues to raise.</p>
<p>46: Durham Cathedral and Castle World Heritage Site</p> <p>Sets criteria for development impacting upon the world heritage site and its outstanding universal values</p>	<p>Although the UK Government is legally obligated to protect the WHS and OUV and there is an up to date management plan in place, it only provides an advisory framework for decision-making and is not a statutory document. As such there are not considered to be any reasonable alternatives to including a policy in the Local Plan to ensure it meets this statutory requirement. The Preferred Option broadly maintains the 'business as usual' approach as represented by the relevant saved policies in the former Durham City Local Plan and the WHS Management Plan.</p>				<p>Significant positive effects were considered certain against landscape/ townscape and the historic environment objectives, with the potential for such effects over the long-term for the economy and climate change adaptation. The policy conforms with the sustainability objectives. There are no outstanding issues to raise concerning this policy.</p>
<p>47: Stockton and Darlington Railway</p>	<p>The reasonable alternative was the 'business as usual' option of the non-inclusion of the Stockton and Darlington Railway policy with reliance on the Historic Environment Policy to cover protection, safeguarding and enhancement of the assets.</p>		-		<p>Overall there are considered to be generally positive effects with particular positives around communities, education and health and landscape and historic</p>

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Aims to safeguard and encourage interpretation of the route of the historic Stockton and Darlington Railway of 1825, associated branch lines, structures, archaeological remains and setting					environment. Minor effects were considered against all other objectives. As a result of SA, the policy is now more positive worded and will help to enable the use of these historic routes for recreation and potentially commuting. The enhancement of routes may also help to stimulate the local economy through recreational and historic industrial tourism.
Minerals and Waste					
48: Sustainable Minerals and Waste Resource Management Sets out the overarching approach to the promotion and facilitation of a sustainable resource economy	No reasonable alternatives were identified considering national planning policy and guidance requirements. The 'business as usual' option was considered not a reasonable because, as represented by the 'saved' policies as they do not provide a comprehensive approach to sustainable resource management; either in terms of specific requirements as well as geographic coverage of the County. In this respect, 'do nothing' was therefore also not a reasonable alternative.				The acceptance of the SA recommendations have ensured consistency and clarity throughout the plan and supporting text. It is believed the original predicted scores have not changed as a result of the SA. The policy conforms to the sustainability objectives. There are no outstanding issues.
49: Safeguarding Minerals Sites, Minerals Related Infrastructure and Waste Management Sites The policy aims to protect existing operations from incompatible forms of development	No reasonable alternatives are considered to exist to the approach outlined in the policy. The business as usual approach is also not considered to be a reasonable approach to maintain as it would not provide the level of protection considered essential to ensure a continued steady and adequate supply of minerals from County Durham, particularly in relation to safeguarding mineral sites from incompatible proximal development.				The SA has improved the clarity of the policy in respect of ensuring the appropriateness of suitable alternatives take into account social and environmental issues. A stronger emphasis is also placed on amenity issues when considering the compatibility of non-minerals and non-waste development with current operations. The remit of the policy applies more comprehensively to minerals facilities and infrastructure as a result of SA. The policy conforms with the sustainability objectives and there are no further issues to raise.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50: Primary Aggregates 51: Locational Approach to the future supply of primary aggregates 52: Meeting Future Aggregates Requirements Collectively these policies which have been split from one former policy (Meeting the Need for Primary	Reasonable alternatives exist in relation to the locational working of Carboniferous Limestone and Sand and Gravel. These include: <u>Carboniferous Limestone</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A: Only outside of the North Pennines AONB and in areas not subject to international or national biodiversity designations B: As (a) but in addition proposals for extensions to existing quarries and the reworking of former carboniferous limestone 				Whilst the recommended Carboniferous Limestone option has not been selected it is understood that there are likely to be few instances where an extension to, or reworking of an existing site will not constitute major development. In addition, whilst the potential negative effects predicted against Option A relating to future employment at existing sites, minerals supply and transportation to northerly markets still apply it may be possible for some proposals within the North Pennines AONB to demonstrate exceptional circumstances.

Policy	Reasonable Alternative Assessment	Policy Assessment Outcome			Commentary and Outstanding Issues
		SO	CE	CON/ENV	
<p>Aggregates) into three to aid clarity, support making sufficient land available for mineral working to enable the maintenance of a steady and adequate supply of primary aggregates. The policies identify further need for Carboniferous Limestone and set out the locational approach to the working of Magnesian Limestone, Carboniferous Limestone, Dolerite and Sand and Gravel. Further working of Magnesian Limestone and Dolerite is restricted. No minerals allocations are made by these policies.</p>	<p>quarries within the AONB which have not been restored properly (provided they also create or safeguard employment, do not have an adverse impact on European sites and provide substantive landscape, biodiversity and biodiversity benefits) should also be considered</p> <p>SA Recommended: Option B</p> <p>Option Selected: Option A</p> <p><u>Sand and Gravel</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A: Proposals to deepen existing magnesian limestone sites • B: Proposals to laterally extend existing magnesian limestone sites • C: New sand and gravel sites, working fluvial or glacial sand and gravels wherever the resources occurs • D: New sand and gravel working fluvial or glacial sand and gravels in locations outside of environmentally important areas and in locations in close proximity to markets • E: Don't allocate new sites or extend existing sites <p>SA Recommended: Combination of Options A, B and D</p> <p>Option Selected: Combination of Options A, B and D</p>				<p>Overall, the SA of the Primary Aggregates Policy / Policies as they have developed has strengthened the protection afforded to heritage assets. The SA process has also highlighted issues to be taken into account when developing forthcoming policies in the Minerals and Waste DPD which will be used in conjunction with the County Durham Plan policies.</p> <p>The caution raised about the prioritisation of approaches to sand and gravel working has been overcome by the inclusion of safeguards within the policy which require that all proposals demonstrate that there will be no unacceptable adverse impacts on the environment (this would include those adhering to the locational approach).</p> <p>Whilst there will be some inevitable adverse effects to the environment as a result of meeting the identified needs for primary aggregates over the Plan period all steps have been taken within the policies to ensure that these are reduced. There are no outstanding issues.</p>
<p>53: Brick Making Raw Materials</p> <p>Supports proposals which contribute to meeting the raw material needs of brickworks in County Durham and restricts proposals for new working which is intended to serve brickworks outside of County Durham.</p>	<p>No reasonable alternatives are considered to exist to the approach outlined in the policy which reflects the requirements of the NPPF and contributes to the principles of sustainable minerals development. The approach also reflects how the industry currently operates in County Durham and how it has operated in the past, thus maintaining the 'business as usual' approach.</p>	-			<p>The acceptance of SA recommendations relating to restoration proposals increases the certainty of long term positive effects against biodiversity and landscape objectives. The acceptance of SA recommendations also more closely aligns the policy with the NPPF in respect of meeting any potential needs for a wider variety of brick making raw materials if required. There are no outstanding issues concerning the policy.</p>

Policy	Reasonable Alternative Assessment	Policy Assessment Outcome			Commentary and Outstanding Issues
		SO	CE	CON/ENV	
<p>54: Surface Mined Coal and Fireclay</p> <p>Conforms with the approach in the NPPF i.e. proposals will be permitted where they do not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment/communities or provide benefits which outweigh harm. Policy sets out the type of benefits that would be taken into account.</p>	<p>Paragraph 211 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that permission should not be given for the extraction of coal unless it is or can be made environmentally acceptable, or it provides national, local or community benefits which outweigh the likely impacts. As any other approach would not be consistent with the policies in the NPPF and there are no known reasons to depart from national policy, there are not considered to be any reasonable alternatives to reflecting this approach within Plan policy. Subject to minor amendment to take into account the requirement to also consider national benefits, the selected approach maintains the 'business as usual' approach set out within saved policies of the County Durham Minerals Local Plan (adopted December 2000).</p>				<p>The SA of this policy as it has developed has improved the protection afforded to avoiding the sterilisation of fireclays. However, as the policy is in conformity with the NPPF in respect of the consideration of outweighing benefits there is an inherent outstanding uncertainty as to whether surface mined coal proposals in County Durham will have either positive or negative environmental and social effects.</p>
<p>55. Natural Building and Roofing Stone</p> <p>Supports proposals for new and extensions to existing natural building and roofing stone quarries where it can be demonstrated that it will help maintain a steady, adequate and diverse supply of natural building and roofing stone.</p>	<p>Three options were considered as reasonable alternatives in relation to where Natural Building and Roofing Stone should be worked in County Durham:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A: Only outside of the North Pennines AONB and in areas not subject to international or national biodiversity designations B: Locate the majority of new working to areas outside of the North Pennines AONB and international or national biodiversity designations but allow some small scale working in certain circumstances within the AONB (Business as Usual Option) C: Do not provide any locational guidance <p>SA recommendation: Option B</p> <p>Option Selected: Option B</p>				<p>Following SA, the circumstances for allowing non major working in the AONB have been tightly defined within the policy. In addition, reflecting the locational approach to future working within the policy strengthens it and gives it more weight when determining planning applications. The acceptance of recommendations relating to restoration proposals also increase the certainty of long term positive effects against landscape and biodiversity objectives. There are no outstanding issues.</p>
<p>56. Reopening of Relic Stone Quarries for Heritage Projects</p>	<p>No reasonable alternatives are considered to exist to the approach outlined in the policy. The 'business as usual' approach of no policy on relic building stone quarries is not a reasonable alternative as</p>	-			<p>The policy aligns with the principles of sustainable development and there are no outstanding issues.</p>

Policy	Reasonable Alternative Assessment	Policy Assessment Outcome			Commentary and Outstanding Issues
		SO	CE	CON	
Supports proposals to reopen relic stone quarries identified by Historic England on a temporary and time limited basis where certain criteria are demonstrated	sites within County Durham have been identified by the Strategic Stone Study and the NPPF requires local authorities to consider how to meet demand for stone needed for heritage repair.				
57. Safeguarding Mineral resources Aims to protect mineral resources from unnecessary sterilisation by non minerals development	There are not considered to be any reasonable alternatives to the Mineral Safeguarding Areas that have been established as the process for defining these is set out in guidance published by the British Geological Survey (BGS) and requires use of information on mineral resources provided by both the BGS and the Coal Authority. There are also not considered to be any reasonable alternatives to adopting an approach which avoids the sterilisation of mineral resources by non-minerals development unless certain exempting factors can be demonstrated. This maintains the business as usual approach as set out in saved polices of the County Durham Minerals Local Plan (2000).				The policy conforms with the principles of sustainable development. There are no changes to be made to the effects originally and there are no outstanding issues.
58. The Conservation and Use of High Grade Dolomite Aims to specifically protect and conserve County Durham's high grade dolomite resources	Due to the national importance of high grade dolomite deposits within the county, additional protection is considered necessary through Plan policy to ensure that resources are only extracted where need can be demonstrated and used for the purposes for which their specific qualities are essential. This additional layer of protection reflects the long term business as usual approach of the Council to high grade dolomite as set out within the County Durham Minerals Local Plan (December 2000). The only alternative; to not continue to reflect the business as usual approach, is not considered reasonable as the Plan would not offer sufficient protection for this significant resource.				The policy conforms with the principles of sustainable development and there are no outstanding issues to raise.
59. Preferred Areas for Future Carboniferous Limestone Extraction Allocates land to the east of Hulands Quarry and land to the west of Heights Quarry for the winning and working of Carboniferous Limestone	Four options were considered as reasonable alternatives: A. Hulands Quarry Eastern Extension B. Western Extension to Heights Quarry				The proposed quarry extensions will contribute significantly to the identified need for Carboniferous Limestone and the additional information provided, mitigation measures and safeguards included within the policy text will ensure that such need can be met in a way which minimises the harm to communities and the environment.

Policy	Reasonable Alternative Assessment	Policy Assessment Outcome			Commentary and Outstanding Issues
		SO	CE	CON/ENV	
	<p>C. Area of Investigation east of Heights Quarry</p> <p>D. Washpool Craggs, Bollilhope Common (and permanent mineral processing plant at Broadwood Quarry)</p> <p>The business as usual option of relying on planning proposals for the extraction of carboniferous limestone to be forthcoming over the Plan period would not be consistent with the NPPF in respect of planning for a steady and adequate supply of aggregates. It is therefore not considered a reasonable alternative.</p> <p>SA recommendation: Option A or Option A + B if the tests for major development within the North Pennines AONB can be met in relation to Heights Quarry.</p> <p>Option Selected: Options A and B</p>				
<p>60. Strategic Area of Search to the South of Todhills Brickworks</p> <p>Allocates an area of search to the south of the brickworks in order to ensure the maintenance of sufficient feedstock</p>	<p>The decision to allocate the area of search maintains the 'business as usual' approach as it is a longstanding allocation within the County Durham Minerals Local Plan (adopted December 2000). There are no obvious significant constraints to working the proposed area of search and the option to not allocate the site would not provide the necessary 25 year stock of permitted reserves for Todhills brickworks as required by the NPPF. Accordingly, there were therefore no other reasonable alternatives to assess.</p>				<p>The acceptance of the SA recommendations will help to minimise social and environmental effects. Outstanding issues relate to the potential loss or reduction in extent of best and most versatile agricultural land associated with the area of search.</p>
<p>61. Waste Management Provision</p> <p>Sets out the criteria by which proposals for the provision of new or enhanced waste management capacity will be permitted. No allocations or potential areas for such are identified by this policy.</p>	<p>The following reasonable alternatives were considered:</p> <p>A. Make provision for all of County Durham's Waste (net self-sufficiency).</p> <p>B. Make provision for all County Durham's waste and as much as possible from elsewhere, in order to maximise economic and employment opportunities in waste management.</p> <p>C. Make provision for less waste than arises in County Durham, on the basis that a significant proportion will be managed outside the county.</p>	-	-		<p>No outstanding issues. The policy is positively worded and could have long term positive impacts through possible enhancements of sites.</p>

Policy	Reasonable Alternative Assessment	Policy Assessment Outcome			Commentary and Outstanding Issues
		SO	CE	CON/ENV	
	<p>SA recommendation: Option A</p> <p>Option Selected: Option A</p> <p>However the policy also confirms that the issue is cross boundary, dealt with at a regional level, with many streams coming in and out of the County.</p>				
<p>62 Location of New Waste Management Facilities</p> <p>Sets out the criteria by which proposals for waste facilities in appropriate, sustainable locations will be permitted. No allocations or potential areas for such are identified by this policy.</p>	<p>It is a primary ambition of National Planning Policy for Waste (NPPW) to ensure that waste authorities identify, in their local plans, sites and/or areas for new or enhanced waste management facilities in appropriate locations. This includes the identification of broad types of waste management facility that would be located on the allocated site. There were however no waste management facilities that came forward through the 'call for sites'. Therefore a flexible criteria based approach has been developed which will allow development in certain locations providing they meet key criteria. This maintains the business as usual approach.</p>	-			There are no new recommendations as a result of the SA. The policy conforms to the sustainability objectives and there are no outstanding issues.

6 What are the cumulative and significant effects of the County Durham Plan

6.1 The SA process requires that the likely significant effects of the Plan on the environment are identified, described and evaluated. However, in addition to the significant and individual effects of Plan policies and their alternatives, the SA process also requires an assessment of cumulative effects. This is because many sustainability issues result from the accumulation of multiple, small and often indirect effects, rather than a few large, direct effects. For example, the fragmentation of wildlife corridors as a result of piecemeal development.

6.2 To record the cumulative effects, it was necessary to produce a table that summarised the effects of each policy against the SA objectives, as below. The cumulative effects tables also clearly shows the significant effects of each policy. It should be noted that this table highlights the identified predicted cumulative effects of the emerging Plan's policies based on their overriding effects, and so in some cases, the detailed short, medium, and long-term impacts may differ.

6.3 The following table provides a commentary on the predicted significant and cumulative effects of the County Durham Plan against the SA Objectives.

SA Objective	Individual Significant Effects	Cumulative Effects
<p>1.To provide everybody with the opportunity to live in a decent and affordable home</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>Positive cumulative effects are predicted against this SA objective</p>
	<p>Housing Allocations, Durham City Sustainable Urban Extensions, Rural Housing, Green Belt and Utilities Telecommunications and Other Broadcast Infrastructure are the policies predicted to have significant positive effects against this objective.</p> <p>The quantity of housing proposed (24,852) by the Plan is based on the Government's standard method and assessment of Local Housing Need, adjusted for recent past delivery (which will also serve to deliver more affordable homes) . The standard method takes into account household growth and market signals in County Durham. The steps taken to apply a lapse rate to the housing allocated in the emerging Plan to account for the potential non-delivery of commitments, (these contribute a substantial proportion towards the overall numbers of housing needed), also provides greater certainty that the houses needed will be delivered.</p> <p>In addition, the housing allocations policy identifies 28 suitable housing sites for development over the Plan period. These allocations will provide houses suitable to align with addressing the housing need and the type and mix of housing required in County Durham. Two out of the 28 housing allocations are the urban extension sites in Durham City, which places housing in a high market value area, providing confidence over their delivery and ability to also generate affordable housing and other infrastructure.</p> <p>The Plan also confirms that affordable housing is deemed an exception to inappropriate development in the Green Belt, in line with the NPPF. Making exceptions in relation to the provision of affordable housing in rural areas on sites which are adjacent to existing settlements will contribute to meeting the identified need for affordable housing in rural areas. The Plan also contributes to housing decency through the provision of essential infrastructure to cater for modern lifestyles and high quality design, for example the provision of high speed broadband connection.</p>	<p>The County Durham Plan aligns with the Government's standard method (adjusted for recent past delivery) to assessing housing need, thereby ensuring that the quantity of housing proposed takes into account household growth and market signals within County Durham. Steps have also been taken to ensure that the quantity of housing needed is delivered through applying a lapse rate on supply to the housing allocated, to factor in the risk of housing commitments (which contribute a significant proportion of the housing needed), not being delivered over the Plan period. In addition, only sites that are considered to be deliverable have been selected for allocation in the Plan.</p> <p>In respect of ensuring that a mix of housing type and size is available in the County, ensuring that existing imbalances in the housing stock are taken into account when considering all new housing developments will ensure that a suitable mix of housing type and size will be available in the county, including opportunities for self or custom build schemes. The flexible approach taken by the Plan also ensures that the right mix of housing size and tenure can be delivered to suit the prevailing local circumstances at the time and will ensure housing development can be sympathetic to local character and take individual site constraints into account. The housing needs of different groups in the community such as travellers, students and older persons are also likely to be met by the approaches outlined within specific Plan policies.</p>
	<p>Negative</p>	<p>Please note that the Plan also maximises opportunities for the delivery of affordable housing through the housing distribution selected, site allocations and making exceptions for provision in rural areas. Adjusting the minimum Local</p>
	<p>None Identified</p>	<p></p>

		Housing Need figure to take account of past delivery will also serve to deliver more affordable homes. The Plan also commits to regularly reviewing affordable housing provision throughout the Plan period, meaning that the proportion of provision requested could increase through an increases in land values.
2. To promote strong, secure communities	Positive	Positive cumulative effects are predicted against this SA objective
	<p>The following policies are predicted to have significant positive effects against this objective; Children's Homes, Type and Mix of Housing, Developer Contributions, Safeguarded Areas and Student Accommodation</p> <p>The Plan will ensure that existing imbalances in the housing stock are taken into account when considering all new housing developments. This will contribute positively to creating sustainable, mixed and inclusive communities. The provision of housing types and tenures that meet people's need throughout life, as supported by the Plan is also vital as conversely, frequent house moves, children's homes, insecure tenures and homelessness disconnect people from being part of a community and the associated benefits of such. Developer contributions will also assist in the provision and improvement of community facilities and services. In relation to community safety, the emerging Plan also ensures that population growth close to major hazard sites and major accident hazard pipelines are managed in order to ensure that the consequences of a major accident can be mitigated. Indirectly, protecting the Met Office radar at High Moorsley will also contribute to ensuring the public receive timely and essential weather information which can contribute to community preparedness for extreme weather events, enhancing levels of safety and security.</p>	<p>The distribution of development proposed and the housing and employment sites allocated in the Plan will help to ensure the long term vibrancy and viability of existing communities, particularly within County Durham's larger towns and villages. The supporting Infrastructure Delivery Plan which sets out the infrastructure requirements associated with allocations in the Plan, along with the Developer Contributions policy will ensure that timely and adequate investment in social and environmental infrastructure needed to support communities will be provided. Some of the larger housing allocations will also incorporate onsite facilities such as schools and local centres which will contribute positively to the formation of cohesive communities.</p> <p>The Plan will also sustain rural communities within County Durham by allowing development in the countryside which: underpins agriculture and other rural land based business; protects and enhances community facilities; meets affordable housing needs and provides accommodation for rural workers. The distribution of development and supporting sustainable travel measures will also reduce the need to travel by car and associated adverse impacts of traffic on communities, particularly within Durham City which exhibits high levels of in-commuting. However, it is recognised that mitigation measures may be required to alleviate any localised re-routing effects as a result of the introduction of new highways infrastructure.</p>
	Negative	
	None Identified	

<p>3. To improve education, training and life-long learning, and maintain a healthy labour market</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>Positive cumulative effects are predicted against this SA objective</p>
	<p>Student Accommodation and Utilities Telecommunications and Other Broadcast Infrastructure are the policies predicted to have significant positive effects against this objective.</p> <p>The Plan will enable the ongoing development of Durham University so that it can compete as a high quality education-led, mixed-use establishment including arts and cultural uses. The Plan also requires access to fast, reliable broadband which is increasingly important as teaching methods are shifting towards more interactive ways of learning including homework submission and parent feedback. Supporting telecommunications infrastructure and installation of broadband infrastructure to new residential development will improve access to education.</p>	<p>The measures taken by the Plan to ensure that a sufficient quantity of housing is provided and delivered over the Plan period will contribute positively to sustaining pupil numbers, local schools and skills within the workforce. Good access to existing education is provided as a result of the sites selected for allocation and measures have been taken to identify new schools provision for some of the larger allocations to cater for an increase in pupil numbers. The Plan also supports good access to education by requiring developers to ensure that all new residential and commercial developments are served by a high speed broadband connection. The employment land allocations and minerals site allocations will contribute positively to maintaining and increasing education and training opportunities in the County along with raising aspirations. Ongoing development of Durham University will also ensure that it can compete as a high quality education-led, mixed-use establishment including arts and cultural uses.</p>
	<p>Negative</p>	
<p>None Identified.</p>		
<p>4. To reduce health inequalities and promote healthy lifestyles</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>Positive cumulative effects are predicted against this SA objective</p>
	<p>The following policies are predicted to have significant positive effects against this objective; Rural Exceptions, Delivering Sustainable Transport; Developer Contributions; Hot Food Takeaways; Amenity and Pollution, Contaminated Land and Trees Woodlands and Hedges.</p> <p>Rural housing and employment exceptions will contribute towards sustaining rural communities and the viability of existing local healthcare services such as local GP surgeries. Developer contributions will also assist in the provision of health and leisure facilities and may address existing deficiencies. Preventing large concentrations of hot food takeaways and restricting these in close proximity to schools or colleges will contribute towards healthier lifestyles and the emerging Plan seeks to protect existing and new residents from proposals which would lead to unacceptable impacts upon amenity and/or give rise to unacceptable levels of pollution such as noise, light or air pollution. Sensitive land uses such as hospitals for example, will be given particular attention in this regard. The protection and provision of green infrastructure and the natural environment will</p>	<p>The distribution of development and sites selected for allocation in the Plan have good access to services and facilities overall, including public transport which will support active modes of travel. Opportunities also exist through the new development proposed to address existing deficiencies in open space provision and leisure. The employment, minerals, housing development and associated supporting infrastructure proposed are also likely to safeguard and increase levels of direct and indirect employment in County Durham which will contribute positively to health and well-being. For example, a review of more than 400 scientific studies on the relationship between work and health concluded that being out of work was generally bad for your health and well-being. ^(a)</p>

	<p>also impact positively upon health and well-being as will increasing opportunity for active travel. Please note that the potential for significantly positive health benefits may also occur as a result of the rejection of proposals that would lead to unacceptable pollution.</p>	<p>Specific policies in the Plan also aim to tackle particular health issues such as obesity and causes of ill health such as noise, light and air pollution. For example, the Hot Food Takeaway policy prevents large concentrations of hot food takeaways and restricts these in close proximity to schools or colleges. Policies which seek to protect the natural environment and ensure the provision of green infrastructure alongside new development will also contribute positively to both mental and physical wellbeing.</p> <p>However, it is acknowledged that both the northern and western relief road are likely to impact upon existing recreational amenity and increase noise levels .</p> <p>Whilst it has also been identified that increasing pressure will be placed on healthcare services and facilities in Durham City, the demand can be managed by increasing opening hours and bringing more space into clinical use as prioritised by the NHS.</p>
	<p>Negative</p>	
	<p>None Identified</p>	
<p>5. To reduce the need to travel and promote use of sustainable transport options</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>Positive cumulative effects are predicted against this SA objective</p>
	<p>The following policies are predicted to have significant positive effects against this objective, delivering sustainable transport and Allocating and Safeguarding Transport Routes and Facilities.</p> <p>The allocation of Horden Rail Station in the emerging Plan and its delivery is likely to facilitate 71,000 trips from the station per year by 2024, representing 100% demand build up and reducing vehicle kilometres by 850,000 km per annum in the north east region. ^(viii) The station will also fill an appreciable gap in service provision given the lack of intermediate stations between Hartlepool and Seaham. At present there is a 21 km gap between stations which restricts access for a substantial number of residents to the rail network. The safeguarding of the Leamside Line will also support potential future reductions in private car travel. The emerging Plan also requires the transport implications of all development to be addressed at the planning application stage and for proposals to deliver sustainable transport by meeting a number of set criteria in accordance with the 'pedestrian and cycle first principle.'</p>	<p>Whilst it is recognised that the quantity of development proposed will increase traffic growth, its distribution and the sites selected for allocation in the Plan have good access to services and facilities overall, including public transport, thereby supporting sustainable modes of travel. The distribution of housing and employment are also broadly complimentary which will contribute towards minimising distances travelled to work. Measures included in the Plan to support sustainable mode shift and remove through traffic from the City centre will also help to overcome the challenge of space for sustainable travel in the City's historic, restricted and congested streetscape. Elsewhere in the county, sustainable travel is supported by the allocation of Horden Rail Station, safeguarding of the Leamside Line</p>

viii DCC (2016) Horden Peterlee Station – Full Business Case.

	Negative		
	None Identified		and the requirement for all new development to comply with the 'pedestrian and cycle first principle.' Whilst it is acknowledged that the implementation of a Western Relief Road will increase road capacity it will help enable housing in Durham City which provides the best opportunities for sustainable modes of travel in respect of accessibility to services, facilities, employment and public transport.
6. To alleviate deprivation and poverty	Positive		Positive cumulative impacts are predicted against this SA objective
	The allocating and Safeguarding Transport Routes and Facilities policy is predicted to have significant positive against this objective.		
	The Plan will improve physical access to jobs, including accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport. The development of physical infrastructure is also likely to be positive, including schemes such Horden Rail Station. The allocation of Horden Rail Station will contribute to alleviating access constraints and inequalities in East Durham to wider community services and facilities within County Durham and the Tyne and Wear and Tees Valley conurbations. East Durham and Horden in particular have high levels of youth unemployment and low levels of car ownership. ^(ix) Coupled with these issues, poor public transport services exist to access the employment centres of Newcastle, Sunderland and Middlesbrough, particularly using existing bus services to access rail services via the Durham Coast Line at Seaham and Hartlepool. The Horden Rail Station will help to overcome such issues.		Whilst a proportion of the housing sites allocated within the Plan are within higher value market areas to ensure housing delivery, 50% of the sites are allocated within low value areas areas which will improve the diversity of the housing offer in these areas and may contribute towards regeneration initiatives. As a result of the development supported, the Plan is also likely to contribute towards reducing levels of unemployment and improve physical access to jobs, including by means other than a car. The allocation of Horden Rail Station in particular, will contribute to alleviating access constraints and inequalities in East Durham to wider community services and facilities within County Durham and the Tyne and Wear and Tees Valley conurbations. Furthermore, the portfolio of employment sites either allocated, safeguarded or protected within the Plan will have a positive impact in reducing deprivation and poverty through more, better and accessible jobs.
	Negative		
	None Identified.		
7. To develop a sustainable and diverse economy with high levels of employment	Positive		Significantly positive cumulative impacts are predicted against this SA objective
	The following policies are predicted to have significant positive effects towards this objective; Quantity of development; Employment Land, Aykley Heads, Durham City Sustainable Urban Extensions, Rural Exceptions, Allocating and Safeguarding Transport,		The Spatial Strategy of the Plan will help to ensure the County's economic strengths are maximised by meeting the identified quantitative and qualitative demand for employment (i.e. B1, B2 and B8 uses) and by allocating comparative

	<p>Utilities Telecommunications and Other Broadcast Infrastructure, Renewable and Low Carbon Energy and Safeguarding Mineral Resources, Mineral Related Infrastructure and Waste Management Sites.</p> <p>The Plan ensures that sufficient housing will be delivered over the Plan period which contributes to labour market flexibility. The co-location of housing within the ‘employment hubs’ of Durham City and Newton Aycliffe and the internationally/ regionally important economic market areas of the A1 and A19 Corridors (ELR 2018) will support new and existing businesses and their future growth. The quantity of development proposed will also support the construction industry and is also likely to focus employment growth to areas that are attractive to the market, which should contribute to their longer term stability and success. The Plan is likely to increase spend in the local economy, helping to retain local shops and associated direct and indirect employment, helping to sustain a more resilient economy. Diversity, quality and quantity of training opportunities will be improved given the employment allocations distributed throughout the County. The allocation of Aykley Heads will specifically address the lack of a modern business quarter in Durham City. Allocated and safeguarded transport routes and facilities will also significantly improve access to employment centres and are likely to reduce congestion (e.g. Horden rail station). All new development will be require to support broadcast infrastructure which will help facilities access fast and reliable broadband. This is increasingly important for attracting investment into County Durham and is becoming a key consideration when businesses are deciding on locations to invest. Renewable and Low Carbon Energy could also help create resilience in the economy, through the creation of new opportunities. The Plan will also protect economically important mineral resources.</p> <p>Negative</p> <p>None Identified.</p>	<p>levels of housing in complimentary locations. The portfolio of employment sites either allocated, safeguarded or protected within the Plan will not only encourage inward investment and new organisations to locate in the County, but also support the expansion of existing businesses and respond to changing economic needs. Notably, the proportion of housing allocated to Durham City, South and East Durham is likely to support the strategic investment in the following sites: Aykley Heads, Integra 61, Meadowfield Industrial Estate, Newton Aycliffe Industrial Estate, Merchant Park, Forest Park, NETPark, and Jade Park. In addition to creating new employment and associated training opportunities at a variety of levels across different economic sectors and the County, the Plan will safeguard existing jobs that support more local markets and caters for the unique circumstances within rural area. It is also considered that improved accessibility to employment, and by more sustainable modes of transport, is likely to be achieved if identified infrastructure is delivered in accordance with new development. Overall this will help to ensure the economic vitality, diversity and resilience of the County's economy over the long-term.</p> <p>In relation to transport infrastructure and economic, there is wide acceptance that there is a direct link between the productivity of a City and its external and internal transport infrastructure and linkages to other cities or regions. The implementation of sustainable travel measures, a Northern Relief Road and a Western Relief Road will best help to future-proof Durham City's highways network in respect of supporting the housing and jobs growth needed in County Durham and will contribute towards sustaining and improving Durham City's overall productivity, role and importance as a key employment centre within the County and wider North East region. The Horden Rail Station will also significantly improve access to employment opportunities between East Durham, Tyne and Wear and the Tees Valley conurbations.</p>
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<p>8. To reduce the causes of climate change</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>Positive cumulative impacts are predicted against this SA objective</p>
	<p>Sustainable Design, Renewable and Low Carbon Energy, Trees Woodlands and Hedges and Biodiversity and Geodiversity are the policies predicted to have significant positive effects against this objective.</p> <p>Strong support is given in the Plan to appropriate low carbon and renewable energy schemes. For example, appropriate locations are identified for turbines of various scales which will aid the green energy sector in identifying any future opportunities within County Durham. The support given in the Plan should ensure that County Durham reduces its reliance on non-renewable and energy intensive sources. In addition, through the protection afforded through policy to peatland, trees and woodlands, existing carbon sinks within the County will also be protected. The requirement for domestic development to attain a 10% improvement in carbon emissions over building regulations will assist in reducing the carbon footprint of development, whilst assisting in reducing instances of fuel poverty. The requirement for development that is not connected to the gas network to use low/zero carbon energy technologies as their primary heating source will also assist in reducing energy costs and fuel poverty in rural areas. Furthermore the attainment of BREEAM Very Good for non-domestic development will assist in ensuring development considers and incorporates more sustainability features.</p>	<p>Whilst the quantity of development proposed and associated infrastructure in the Plan will inevitably increase greenhouse gas emissions due to both construction, in use and transport related emissions, opportunities to mitigate effects have been taken by the Plan. The distribution (Sustainable Communities) and sites selected to meet it have good access to services and facilities, including public transport, thereby supporting sustainable modes of travel.</p> <p>The allocation of Horden rail station is likely to have positive impacts by providing an alternative to car travel for a wider proportion of the population in the East of the County, whilst the safeguarding of the Leamside line, could in the long term, assist in taking freight off the main highway network.</p> <p>Electric vehicles are supported through the Plan and with recent Government announcements, regarding the phasing out of diesel vehicles, electric vehicle charging infrastructure is supported in the plan.</p>
	<p>Negative</p>	
	<p>None Identified.</p>	<p>Strong support is given to appropriate low carbon and renewable energy schemes. In particular to such low carbon technologies for developments where connection to the gas network is unviable. Furthermore appropriate locations are identified for turbines of various scales which will aid the identification of future opportunities within County Durham.</p> <p>The Plan also gives protection to trees, woodlands and peatland which assist in maintaining important carbon sinks.</p> <p>The requirement for domestic development to attain a 10% improvement in carbon emissions over building regulations will assist in reducing the carbon footprint of development, whilst assisting in reducing instances of fuel poverty. The requirement for development that is not connected to the gas network to use low/zero carbon energy technologies as their primary heating source will also assist in reducing</p>

		energy costs and fuel poverty in rural areas. Furthermore the attainment of BREEAM Very Good for non domestic development will assist in ensuring development considers and incorporates more sustainability features.
9. To respond and enable adaptation to the inevitable impacts of climate change	Positive	Positive cumulative impacts are predicted against this SA objective
	<p>Sustainable Design, Water Management and Infrastructure and Trees Woodlands and Hedges are predicted to have significant positive effects against this objective.</p> <p>The Plan policies will ensure that development minimises its vulnerability and provides resilience to impacts from climate change. The requirement for development to incorporate green infrastructure and manage surface water run-off will help the County to adapt to the impacts of climate change such as flood risk by reducing the volume of storm water that flows into sewers and streams. The incorporation of green infrastructure will also assist in habitat and species migration. The Plan will also help to protect trees and vegetation which help to provide shading and cooling in urban environments.</p>	The Plan will ensure that development minimises its vulnerability and provides resilience to impacts from climate change. The requirement for development to incorporate green infrastructure and manage surface water run off will help the County to adapt to the impacts of climate change such as flood risk by reducing the volume of storm water that flows into sewers and streams. The SFRA has confirmed that no development allocations have flood risk. The incorporation of green infrastructure will also assist in habitat and species migration. The Plan will also help to protect trees and vegetation which help to provide shading and cooling in urban environments.
	Negative	
None Identified.		
10. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity	Positive	Negative cumulative effects are predicted against this SA objective
	<p>A number of policies within the Plan are directly connected with the protection and enhancement of biodiversity. These include Green Infrastructure; Water Management and Infrastructure, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Biodiversity and Geodiversity, Protected Species and Nationally and Locally Protected Sites and Internationally Designated Sites.</p> <p>These policies are considered likely to provide protection commensurate with the status of designations within County Durham and ensure that new development contributes towards establishing ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and net gains. Particular recognition is given within the Plan to the value of the County Durham's local wildlife sites and the supporting Habitats Regulations Assessment and associated avoidance strategy may help not only to ensure no future adverse effects to coastal Natura 2000 sites but improve upon existing conditions.</p>	Whilst a number of policies in the Plan will ensure that unplanned development coming forward over the Plan period will protect and enhance County Durham's biodiversity and geodiversity and whilst the sites allocated in the Plan will not result in direct land take from designated sites, negative cumulative effects are predicted. The quantity of development proposed in the Plan will result in the removal of habitat and increase urbanisation effects such as noise and disturbance. The proximity of some allocations, to locally and/or national wildlife designations could have adverse peripheral effects. The potential presence of protected and priority species has been identified in

	<p>Negative</p> <p>The policies predicted to have significant negative effects against this objective are Durham City's Sustainable Transport and Housing Allocations (potential).</p> <p>In relation to the Durham City Sustainable Transport policy, significant adverse effects to biodiversity have been predicted against the Northern Relief Road only. Whilst the corridor of this road has only been safeguarded as opposed to allocated, in the event that the land is developed for this purpose, and regardless of the alignment selected, it will transect Frankland and Kepier Wood Local Wildlife Site (ancient woodland - irreplaceable habitat) and could impact to a greater or lesser extent on Low Newton Junction Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Brasside Pond Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).</p> <p>The housing allocation policy has the potential to result in significant adverse impacts on this objective if development is not phased with mitigation and in certain circumstances given sufficient time to establish prior to the occurrence of harm.</p>	<p>connection with some employment and housing allocations and both relief roads. Whilst it is acknowledged that new development can also provide opportunity for net gains in biodiversity, it is considered that there is insufficient detail to determine whether this will be achieved. This would need to be considered further as proposals are worked up in more detail for the planning application stage. Where necessary, proposals should be accompanied by suitable mitigation/compensation strategies.</p>
<p>11. To protect and enhance the quality and character of landscape and townscape</p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>A number of policies within the Plan are directly connected with the protection and enhancement of landscape character and quality. These include Durham Coast, AONB, Landscape Character, Historic Environment and World Heritage Site.</p> <p>These policies give great weight to protecting and conserving landscape and scenic beauty in the North Pennines AONB and the special character of the Durham Coast and Heritage Coast. The policies, serve to ensure that major development within these landscapes are restricted. The requirement for new development to have regard to the County Durham Landscape Assessment and County Durham Landscape Strategy should also ensure the conservation and enhancement of County Durham's diverse and contrasting landscapes, including locally valued landscapes and areas which fall outside of landscape designations and definitions.</p> <p>Negative</p> <p>Durham City's Sustainable Transport is the only policy thought to have significant negative effects towards this objective.</p>	<p>Negative cumulative effects are predicted against this SA objective</p> <p>Whilst a number of policies in the Plan will ensure that unplanned development coming forward over the Plan period will conserve and enhance landscape character and scenic beauty negative cumulative effects are predicted. The cumulative impacts and scale of some of the employment land and housing allocations and their location within parts of the County which have a strategy of 'conserve' in accordance with the County Durham Landscape Strategy are assessed as having some residual adverse impacts on local landscape character, particularly as they represent a fundamental change in land use in County Durham e.g from agricultural to employment/housing . The allocation of an extension to Heights Quarry within the North Pennines AONB for Carboniferous Limestone extraction will also have some residual harm to the special qualities of the AONB but this would be limited in its magnitude and very localised in its effect. Effects are coupled with the predicted significant residual landscape and visual impacts as a result</p>

	<p>Whilst the corridor of the Northern Relief road has only been safeguarded as opposed to allocated, in the event that the land is developed for this purpose there would be a number of residual effects that would be likely to remain significant. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects on the local character of the landscape in the Finchale & Keping Gorge and Brasside character areas. • Effects on the visual amenity of recreational users of the countryside and particularly users of Frankland Lane, footpaths in Keping woods and footpaths south of Keping woods to Carrville. <p>Additional significant effects could arise if a new River Wear crossing and taller cable stay bridge option is selected.</p> <p>There would also be a number of residual effects that would be likely to remain significant for a Western Relief road. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects on the character of the local landscape between Durham City and Bearpark in the <i>Baxterwood & Aldin Grange</i> and <i>Bearpark Hall, Stotgate & Whitesmocks</i> character areas. • Effects on the visual amenity of local residents in parts of Bearpark, Aldin Grange and the western edge of Durham City. • Effects on the visual amenity of recreational users of the countryside and particularly users of the Lanchester Valley Railway path, the Pilgrim's Way (Club Lane), footpaths between Durham City and the road corridor and across the Broom ridge. • Effects on views from the C17 Tollhouse Road – Auton Stile. <p>Whilst there may be local adverse landscape impacts from housing and employment development these are not considered to be significant individually.</p>	<p>of implementing relief roads within Durham City. Whilst not a landscape designation, the development proposed in the emerging County Durham Plan will also entail the release of land from Durham City's greenbelt. Compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining greenbelt have been proposed which will help to minimise adverse effects.</p>
<p>12. To protect and enhance cultural</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>Positive cumulative effects are predicted against this SA objective</p>

<p>heritage and the historic environment</p>	<p>AONB, Historic Environment, World Heritage Site and Stockton and Darlington Railway are predicted to have significant positive effects against this objective. The Plan directly supports proposals which will sustain and enhance the significance of County Durham's wide variety of heritage assets including the World Heritage Site for future generations. Several policies within the emerging Plan also support bringing buildings back into optimal use. The Plan also takes a joined up approach with neighbouring authorities to protect the route of the Stockton and Darlington Railway which is a significant industrial heritage asset. Furthermore, the Plan requires development to have regard to the North Pennines AONB Planning Guidelines and Building Design Guide as a material consideration. This will contribute positively to maintaining and enhancing the historic character of the North Pennines AONB.</p> <p>Negative</p> <p>Durham City's Sustainable Transport is the only policy predicted to potentially have significant negative effects against this objective. There is potential for significantly negative impacts to the setting of Durham City Conservation Area and the Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site in the event that a tall bridge structure is selected as part of a Northern Relief Road's River Wear crossing. However, please note that the corridor of this road is only safeguarded within the Plan as opposed to allocated and an alternative alignment which could utilise the Belmont viaduct and avoid potentially significant adverse effects has also been safeguarded.</p>	<p>The Plan directly supports proposals which will sustain and enhance the significance of County Durham's wide variety of heritage assets including ancient monuments, open spaces, buildings, archaeological sites, conservation areas and the Heritage Coast and World Heritage Site for future generations. Several policies within the Plan also support safeguarding and enhancing historic assets, which may help to bring buildings back into optimal use. The Plan also takes a joined up approach with neighbouring authorities to protect the route of the Stockton and Darlington Railway which is a significant industrial heritage asset. Many of the effects relating to other allocations will depend on the specific design and layout of the sites. The Plan may also improve access to and understanding / appreciation of heritage assets, across the County. However, it is acknowledged that in respect of understanding further the effects on the Registered Battlefield of Neville's Cross, further wide ranging archaeological surveys and investigation, will be required at the planning application stage, building upon existing evidence collated. In particular, further trial trenching should be undertaken.</p>
<p>13. To protect and improve air, water and soil resources</p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>Amenity and Pollution, Water Management and Infrastructure and Trees Woodlands and Hedges are the policies predicted to have significant positive effects against this objective. The emerging Plan will refuse proposals which will have unacceptable adverse impacts on air quality. The protection afforded through the emerging Plan to County Durham's trees and woodlands are also likely to significantly benefit air, water and soil quality.</p> <p>Negative</p> <p>None Identified</p>	<p>Negative cumulative effects are predicted against this SA objective</p> <p>In relation to this objective negative cumulative effects are predicted in relation to soil resources only.</p> <p>Whilst a number of policies in the Plan will ensure that unplanned development coming forward over the Plan period will protect and conserve soil resources, including best and most versatile agricultural land and peatland, and whilst a greater quantity of brownfield land as opposed to greenfield land is allocated for housing,, with the addition of employment land and relief roads a greater overall quantity of greenfield land is likely to be lost to development. It is also possible that a substantial quantity of best and most versatile agricultural land (B&MV) may be lost to development given that a comprehensive national survey of Grade 3 land is not available and consequently it is</p>

		<p>not possible to differentiate between Grade 3a land which constitutes B&MV agricultural land and Grade 3b land which does not, without detailed sites specific soil assessments.</p> <p>In relation to air quality, sustainable patterns of growth have been supported in the emerging Plan, and further air quality modelling confirms that existing conditions in respect of the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) are expected to improve significantly in Durham City by 2037.</p> <p>Please note that impacts on water resources are positive, there are no supply or waste water constraints within County Durham and policies will ensure the proper management and protection of water quality.</p>
14. To reduce waste and encourage the sustainable and efficient use of materials	Positive	Positive cumulative impacts are predicted against this SA objective
	<p>The policies predicted to have significant positive effects against this objective are, Sustainable Design, Sustainable Minerals and Waste Resource Management, High Grade Mineral Resources, Waste Management Provision, Location of Waste. Waste policies deal with waste in line with the waste hierarchy helping to minimise any adverse impacts and will assist in regional net self-sufficiency by managing waste streams as near as possible to their production. Some of the above mentioned policies also ensure the careful consideration and conservation of resources, including mineral resources.</p>	<p>Whilst there will be an increase in waste arisings (e.g. household and commercial) over the plan period, which is due to the increase in the quantity of development proposed over the plan period, impacts are not considered significant because the specific waste policies, deal with waste in line with the waste hierarchy, helping to minimise any adverse impacts, such as waste going to landfill. The Local Authority will make use of spare capacity within the region assisting in regional net self-sufficiency by managing waste streams as near as possible to their production. Furthermore due to the policies in place, waste from construction is likely to be minimised with the requirement for a waste audit for more significant developments a key consideration.</p>
	Negative	
None Identified.		
15. To improve the sustainability of minerals extraction and use and	Positive	Significantly positive cumulative effects are predicted against this SA objective
	<p>The policies predicted to have significant positive effects against this objective are; Sustainable Minerals and Waste Resource Management, Safeguarding Minerals and Waste Infrastructure, Safeguarding Mineral Resources, High Grade Mineral Resources. In relation</p>	<p>The emerging Plan will help to meet an identified need for Carboniferous Limestone and the raw material needs of brickworks in County Durham over the Plan period. In doing</p>

<p>reduce adverse impacts on communities and the environment</p>	<p>to minerals development, the emerging Plan will help to meet an identified need for minerals development, including Carboniferous Limestone, whilst ensuring that steps are taken to conserve mineral resources across the County, including high grade minerals resources and ensure that unacceptable adverse impacts to the communities and the environment as a result of minerals working do not occur.</p>	<p>so, the least environmentally constrained sites have been allocated within the Plan. The minerals policies will also ensure that the potentially adverse impacts of minerals extraction on communities and the environment will be reduced and/or mineral resources conserved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • taking a restrictive approach to proposals where need can be met by existing permissions; • prioritising new working towards existing sites as opposed to new sites; • steering unallocated working away from the North Pennines AONB, SAC's and SPA's, Heritage Coast and heritage designations in order to protect biodiversity, landscape and the historic environment. • ensuring that the working of relic building stone quarries are temporary and time limited; • ensuring that high grade resources are only used for the purposes for which their specific qualities are essential; and • ensuring that non minerals development does not sterilise economically important resources and the operation of existing sites and infrastructure.
	<p>Negative</p>	
	<p>Non Identified.</p>	

a. G. Waddell, A.K.Burton (2006) Is work good for your health and wellbeing on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions

6.4 The following section considers proposals to monitor significant environmental effects.

7 Monitoring Proposals

7.1 The SEA Directive and SA process requires the significant environmental effects of implementing the plan or programme to be monitored:

"Each Party shall monitor the significant environmental, including health, effects of the implementation of the plans and programmes... in order, inter alia, to identify, at an early stage, unforeseen adverse effects and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action"

[Article 12, the SEA Directive]

7.2 This section therefore presents the monitoring proposals and the measures that will be undertaken to address any unforeseen adverse effects. Monitoring needs to be focused on significant effects, e.g. those:

- That indicate a likely breach of international, national or local legislation, recognised guidelines or standards;
- That may give rise to irreversible damage, with a view to identifying trends before such damage is caused; and
- Where there was uncertainty in the SA, and where monitoring would enable preventative or mitigation measures to be taken.

7.3 The monitoring proposals developed will therefore:

- Provide baseline data for monitoring of the plan;
- Monitor the significant effects of the plan;
- Track any unforeseen effects; and
- Assist in taking action to reduce adverse impacts.

7.4 The significant and cumulative effects table highlights the key policies that are predicted to have significant positive and/or significant negative effects against health and environmental SA objectives. As a result, the following measures are proposed to highlight how these effects can be monitored over the plan period:

Monitoring Proposals

Relevant SA Objective	Monitoring Indicator	Target
To reduce health inequalities and promote healthy lifestyles ^(a)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Life expectancy at birth 2. Obesity levels 3. % units within sub regional, large town, small town and district centres in use or with planning permission for A5 (hot food takeaways) 4. Accessibility by % of homes in close proximity to services and facilities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing trend above the baseline figure 2. Improving trend above the baseline figure 3. A5 not increasing to or exceeding 5% 4. Minimum of 80%

Relevant SA Objective	Monitoring Indicator	Target
To reduce the need to travel and promote use of sustainable transport options	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CO₂ emissions from transport 2. Total number of local passenger journeys on the bus network 3. % of employees walking or cycling to work 4. % of pupils walking, cycling or using public transport to school 5. Level of nitrogen dioxide at Durham City AQMA 6. Provision of electric vehicle charging points 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Year on year reductions in transport related CO₂ emissions 2. Bi-annual increases in passenger journeys 3. Increasing trend above the baseline figure 4. Increasing trend above the baseline figure 5. Year on year reduction of nitrogen dioxide in AQMA 6. Delivery in line with the Council's Parking and Accessibility guidelines
To reduce the causes of climate change	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proportion of housing receiving a 'good' building for life accreditation 2. Improvement in carbon emissions over building regulations in domestic development 3. Reduction in carbon emissions within County Durham 4. Installed renewable energy schemes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 100% 'good' status 2. 10% improvement in carbon emissions over building regulations 3. carbon emission reduction of 55% by 2030 (based upon 1990 levels) 4. Increasing trend above the baseline figure
To respond and enable adaptation to the inevitable impacts of climate change	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing provision of green infrastructure 2. % of major developments which include SuDS 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Delivery in line with standards set out in the Open Space Needs Assessment 2. 100%
To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. % of major proposals achieving net gains in biodiversity 2. Area and condition of designated sites: international sites, SSSI, Local Sites and Local/National Nature Reserves 3. Net loss of trees/woodlands/hedges as a result of new development 4. Ancient woodland (ha) 5. Impacts on the integrity of coastal internationally designated wildlife sites 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 100% 2. Favourable / unfavourable recovering status 3. No net loss of trees/woodlands/hedges 4. No loss / deterioration without exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy 5. No adverse impacts - implementation of HRA coastal avoidance strategy and associated monitoring measures
To protect and enhance the quality and character of landscape and townscape	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop and monitor the implementation of a comprehensive landscape mitigation strategy for Durham City relief road(s) as part of any planning condition 2. No of major developments within the North Pennines AONB and Durham Heritage Coast 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Timely implementation of measures in line with targets identified within landscape mitigation strategy 2. Zero approved without demonstrating exceptional circumstances, public interest and for the Heritage Coast, compatibility with its special character

Relevant SA Objective	Monitoring Indicator	Target
To protect and enhance cultural heritage & the historic environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Harm to, or loss of the significance of heritage assets No of proposals enhancing and better revealing the significance and understanding of heritage assets, including undiscovered archaeological features Number of Grade I and II* Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments and Conservation Areas on Historic England's 'Heritage at Risk' Register 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> No unjustified harm or loss of heritage asset Demonstration of public benefits Increasing trend above the baseline Decreasing number year on year
To protect and improve air, water and soil resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Level of nitrogen dioxide at Durham City AQMA Number of AQMA's in County Durham Increase the number of water bodies improved as a direct consequence of new development; Loss of best and most versatile agricultural land 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Year on year reduction of nitrogen dioxide in AQMA No new or extensions to AQMA's declared Increasing trend above the baseline figure No unjustified loss and where significant loss could occur, a lack of alternatives to be demonstrated.
To reduce waste and encourage the sustainable and efficient use of materials	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> % of waste reduced, reused, recycled, composted and recovered No of existing waste management facilities in County Durham 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing trend above the baseline figure No significant loss in waste management facilities
To improve the sustainability of mineral extraction and use and reduce adverse impacts on communities and the environment (b)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Extent of permitted reserves Number of eligible schemes within Mineral Safeguarding Areas that are supported by a Mineral Assessment No of proposals approved which sterilise areas underlain by high grade dolomite or lead to the sue of these resources for lower grade purposes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance of land banks for crushed rock and sand and gravel and 25 year stock of permitted reserves for brickworks 100% Zero

a. Please note that the other environmental indicators identified in this table also relate to this SA objective

b. Please note that the other environmental indicators identified in this table also relate to this SA objective

8 Conclusion and Outstanding Issues

8.1 The Sustainability Appraisal has been integrated with the plan-making process and has performed a key role in developing, assessing and recommending the most sustainable approaches to directing and managing future development within County Durham. The SA has also ensured that the policies which reflect the approach selected, better align with the principles of sustainability. The following narrative provides an overview of the Plan's contribution to County Durham's sustainability.

- 8.2** The quantity of development proposed in the Plan takes account of past levels of delivery and take up rates and is therefore more likely to meet the housing needs of County Durham and ensure that employment land will be used more appropriately and productively to the benefit of communities and the economy.
- 8.3** The approach selected to the distribution of the housing needed will also contribute towards sustainable patterns of growth, ensuring that there is a balance of housing across the whole County, whilst focusing development in and around towns where there are good opportunities for employment and access to services and facilities, public transport, healthcare and education. Importantly the distribution of housing and employment land broadly compliment one another, which will further help to ensure good access to a wide range of employment and training opportunities and may serve to attract skilled professionals to live and work in the County.
- 8.4** Whilst harm to Durham City's Green Belt is recognised, this harm will be mitigated by the sites selected, their site-specific requirements, supporting masterplans and the proposed compensatory measures to improve environmental quality and access. Please note that in relation to highways infrastructure, regardless of which approach to housing distribution is taken, evidence has confirmed that the current configuration of Durham City's road network will not effectively support background levels of traffic growth across County Durham without transport interventions.
- 8.5** The approach to employment land distribution will ensure that demand for employment land in the most attractive economic market areas is met, contributing to their longer term stability and success. Furthermore, the Plan is likely to deliver economic benefits across the whole County including in more rural areas. Policies such as Rural Housing and Employment Exceptions directly support economic growth and the expansion of local businesses that are appropriate to the unique circumstances within rural areas.
- 8.6** Rural communities will also be sustained as the Plan supports development in the countryside which underpins agriculture, other rural land based business, hobby farming, essential infrastructure, community facilities, equestrian development, affordable housing and the needs of rural workers, whilst protecting the countryside from inappropriate forms of widespread development.
- 8.7** The Plan performs positively in terms of meeting the challenge of climate change, with specific policies highlighting the need to minimise the use of non-renewable and unsustainable resources and by seeking to achieve zero carbon buildings. The requirement for domestic developers to achieve a 10% improvement upon building regulations minimum is significantly positive, whilst the requirement for off gas properties to utilise low carbon technologies as the main heating source is equally positive, socially, economically and environmentally. Support for renewable energy developments is included alongside wind turbine development (in appropriate areas).
- 8.8** The Plan ensures that no development is located in areas which are most vulnerable to flood risk and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDs) have been identified as the preferred mechanism to manage surface water flooding, which are likely to have other beneficial effects. All development must also take into the predicted impacts of climate change and applications for additional flood defence infrastructure where required are supported.

8.9 In relation to sustainable travel and in addition to the distribution of development and sites selected, the allocation of Horden Rail Station and support given to demand management, walking, cycling, and public transport improvements will increase levels of sustainable mode shift. The allocation of a Western Relief Road, whilst increasing road capacity in the City will ensure that the A167 and key junctions are more capable of coping with existing and future levels of background traffic growth in County Durham. By doing so, a Western Relief Road will contribute to enabling housing growth within Durham City which is the most accessible location in County Durham in relation to the range of services, facilities, employment and opportunities for sustainable travel. Safeguarding the route of a Northern Relief road in the Plan will also protect the opportunity to re-prioritise space on Milburngate Bridge for sustainable travel modes and provide added benefits to air quality.

8.10 The environmental policies in the Plan should ensure that development proposals coming forward over the Plan period will protect and contribute towards the enhancement of nationally and locally protected heritage, landscapes and biodiversity. A suitable coastal avoidance strategy has also been proposed through the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Plan to provide specific protection for coastal internationally designated sites, including protection from any impacts arising as a result of development in neighbouring authorities. Whilst it is acknowledged that some of the allocations in the Plan will have an adverse impact on biodiversity, landscape and heritage, most effects can be minimised through proposed mitigation and where necessary compensation. Monitoring of these issues has been proposed within the previous section.

8.11 In relation to minerals development, the Plan will help to meet an identified need for minerals development, including Carboniferous Limestone, whilst ensuring that steps are taken to conserve mineral resources across the County, including high grade minerals resources and ensure that unacceptable adverse impacts to the communities and the environment as a result of minerals working do not occur. The locational approach to unallocated minerals working within County Durham will also contribute towards protecting the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Durham Heritage Coast, Internationally designated Wildlife Sites and heritage designations in order to protect biodiversity, landscape and the historic environment.

8.12 The Plan deals with waste in line with the waste hierarchy, maximising the reduction, re-use, recycling and recovery of waste and will assist in regional net self sufficiency by managing waste streams as near as possible to their production.

Outstanding Issues

- Western Relief Road (WRR) - Whilst it is appreciated that points below will be concluded within any future planning application and Environmental Impact Assessment, it is still appropriate that SA highlight these as outstanding issues
 - The type and design of junctions required for the WRR should be selected to minimise landscape and visual impacts.
 - The landscape mitigation strategy for the WRR will need to balance as far as is possible the need to maintain openness and the setting of the registered Neville's Cross battlefield and other heritage assets whilst screening the most significant visual impacts of the new road and associated traffic movements.

- In respect of understanding further the effects on the Registered Battlefield of Neville's Cross, further wide ranging archaeological surveys and investigation will be required at the planning application stage which build upon existing evidence collated. In particular, further trial trenching should be undertaken.
- Northern Relief Road (NRR) - In the event that proposals are forthcoming for the safeguarded corridor
 - Specific ecological assessment of the impacts to Brasside Pond SSSI are required
 - Landscape, heritage and ecological assessment will be required of the specific design of a new River Wear crossing if selected
 - In the event that the existing Belmont viaduct is selected, further information on the specific engineering and structural works required to make it suitable for highways traffic is required along with a historic impact assessment of the alterations to the significance of the heritage asset.
- Loss of best and most versatile agricultural land - further assessment and consideration of best and most versatile agricultural land will need to be undertaken at the planning application stage
- Minerals - additional policies, including those on restoration and aftercare will need to be developed and assessed as part of the Minerals and Waste DPD.



⠠ Braille  Audio  Large print

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