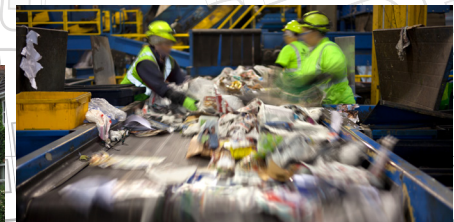


**County Durham Plan**

# **Sustainability Appraisal Preferred Options 2018**

## **Non-Technical Summary**



*Altogether better*





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### 1 Introduction

#### Background to the County Durham Plan

**1.1** The new Local Plan - the County Durham Plan, will provide the policy framework for managing development and addressing key planning issues within the County up to 2035 and once adopted, will replace the saved planning policies that are currently in use.

**1.2** The NPPF sets out that the purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking (paragraph 14 of the NPPF). The concept of sustainable development is linked in the NPPF to achieving positive growth whilst ensuring that better lives for ourselves does not mean worse lives for future generations. The emerging County Durham Plan can contribute positively to sustainable development by ensuring that development meets and sustains the needs of County Durham's communities and economy whilst at the same time protecting and enhancing the built and natural environment.

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

**1.3** Sustainability Appraisal (SA) ensures that sustainable development is at the heart of the plan-making process by assessing the extent to which the emerging County Durham Plan and the policies contained therein, when judged against reasonable alternatives and will consider, address and suggest mitigation against all likely significant effects on the social, economic and environmental effects of the emerging County Durham Plan. It assesses and provides recommendations to improve individual policies throughout the development process identifying key issues and suggesting mitigation in order to make the policies and ultimately the Plan more sustainable. The SA process only shows how sustainable the policies and plans are likely to be and gives recommendations for mitigation. It does not however ensure that development will ultimately be sustainable. The emerging County Durham Plan authors may decide not to adopt the SA recommendations. In such cases there is a requirement to justify this against the SA Framework (see section 4 below).

#### Legislative Framework

**1.4** The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local planning authorities to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of each of the proposals in a Local Plan during its preparation with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 165 of the NPPF also states that:

'A sustainability appraisal which meets the requirements of the European Directive on strategic environmental assessment should be an integral part of the plan preparation process, and should consider all the likely significant effects on the environment, economic and social factors.'

**1.5** SA is a systematic process designed to evaluate the predicted social, economic and environmental effects of development planning. European and UK legislation requires that the CDP is also subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA); a process that considers the effects of development planning on the environment. Government guidance advises that these two processes should be carried out together and outlines a number of stages of SA work that need to be carried out as the emerging County Durham Plan is being prepared:

- 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
- Stage E: Post Adoption Monitoring and of the Plan

## **The Non-Technical Summary**

**1.6** This document is the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Non-Technical Summary of the emerging County Durham Plan Preferred Options and sets out the background and approach used to undertake the SA, along with the main outcomes and recommendations that emerged from the appraisal process.

## **2 Background and Purpose of SA**

**2.1** The emerging County Durham Plan has been subject to SA throughout its development to date. The previous stage of assessment was Issues and Options, which was consulted upon over the summer of 2016. During that 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. The following associated documents were produced:

- Interim Sustainability Appraisal of the County Durham Plan - Issues and Options
- Interim Sustainability Appraisal of the County Durham Plan - Issues and Options - Appendices

**2.2** Prior to Issues and Options a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report was produced in February 2016 which identified the sustainability issues and problems 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.

**2.3** For ease of reference the outcomes of these 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>

**2.4** The current stage of Plan development outlines the preferred approach taken to the quantity and distribution of new development in addition to the allocation of specific sites and approach to managing development coming forward over the Plan period. The purpose of this report is therefore to:

1. present the SA of additional reasonable alternatives that were forthcoming following the consultation at the Issues and Options stage of Plan preparation and further evidence collation and;
2. present the assessment of the selected preferred approach.

### 3 Supporting Assessments

**3.1** A number of further assessment processes have informed the findings of the sustainability appraisal. These include Habitats Regulations Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

#### 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 should be reported upon separately there are a number of linkages between the two processes. These include:

- Evidence gathering 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 document (June 2016). A further HRA document including an appropriate assessment and coastal avoidance strategy has been published alongside the Preferred Options consultation.



## 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 approach' to allocating sites according to flood risk is taken.<sup>(i)</sup>

**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.<sup>(ii)</sup>

**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.

## 4 What does Sustainability Appraisal Involve?

### Methodology

**4.1** This section describes the methodology adhered to throughout the assessment of the emerging County Durham Plan.

**4.2** The methodology was developed principally in accordance with Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (DCLG 2015). Whilst recognising that the most up to date guidance is contained within the PPG, regard has also been given to 'Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents' (ODPM, 2005) given that this is still considered to provide a useful interpretation of meeting the requirements of the SEA Directive in the development of SA of Local Plans. Planning Advisory Service (PAS) SA guidance contained online under the 'Principles of Plan Making' also provided further information which has been taken into account.

**4.3** Each stage of the emerging County Durham Plan's preparation has been appraised systematically using the SA Framework to ascertain the extent to which the various options, policy proposals and proposed allocations would meet the sustainability objectives. In assessing each, a colour and symbol rating has been assigned to each sustainability objective based on 7 categories of predicted effects:

<sup>i</sup> See paragraph 100 of the NPPF

<sup>ii</sup> 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

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

**4.4** In order to determine the significance of effects in a consistent manner, due regard has been 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; and
- The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, (European) Community or international protection status.

**4.5** Detailed comments and effects are recorded within SA matrices which are provided in the Appendices to the main SA Report, whilst a summary of the Reasonable Alternatives, Preferred Options, and Conclusions together with any cumulative and significant impacts on the the key social, economic and environmental effects are provided within the main body of this non technical summary.

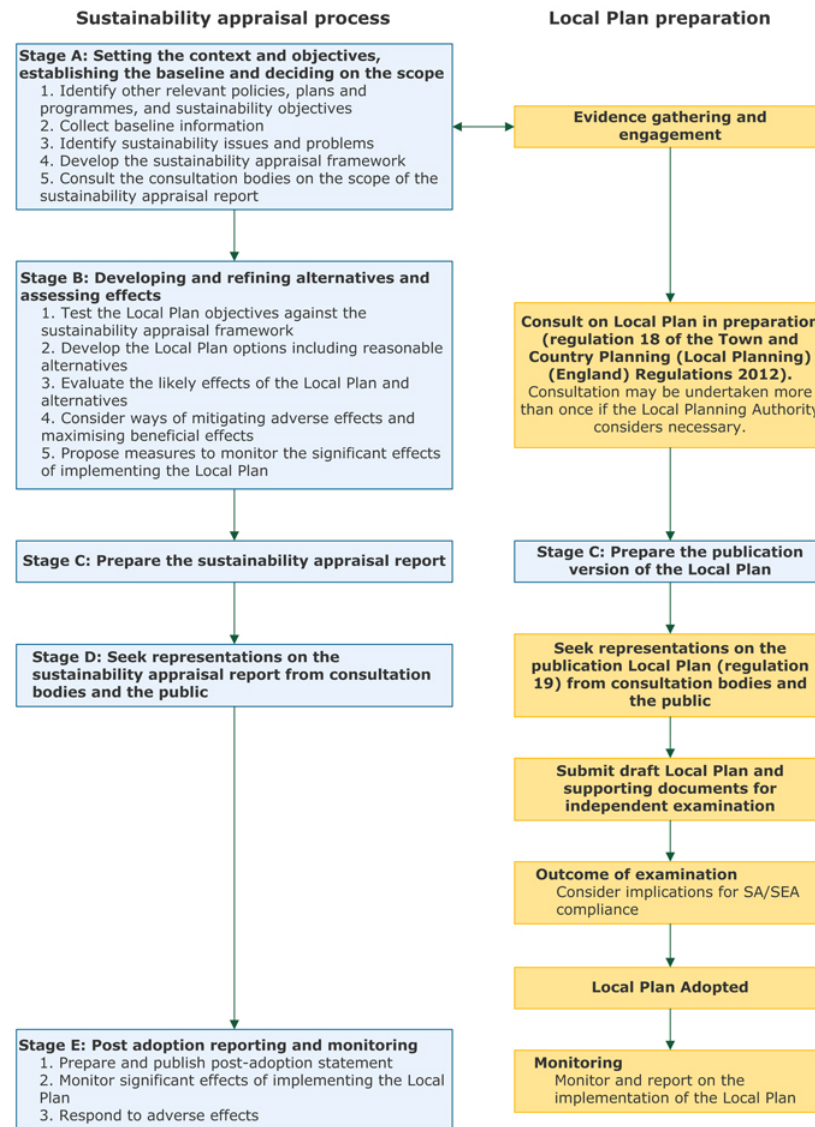
**4.6** The need to deal with limitations and uncertainties is not uncommon to the SA process. The appraisal of development plans is rarely straightforward and the outcome may include considerable levels of uncertainty including for example:

- Scientific uncertainties: variability in data, its availability (at the right time), and collection measures will always exist to a greater or lesser degree;
- Lack of precision: environmental, social and economic issues can be difficult to quantify or measure with a high degree of accuracy;
- Natural variability: there is often considerable natural variability in sustainability issues (e.g. the weather and people's actions);
- Prediction and evaluation of significant effects: assessing policies on a strategic scale with associated wide-ranging implications means it is difficult to apply thresholds for when an effect of a policy is likely to be 'significant' or to assess the potential impacts to the high degree of detail that would enable greater certainty (particularly over the long-term); and
- Implementation: uncertainty surrounding precisely how ambitions will be implemented on the ground and the degree to which they would be achieved in practice (particularly as many different delivery partners will be involved); and so a 'face value' assumption need to be made that the policies will be fully-implemented.

**4.7** It therefore not always possible to accurately predict sustainability effects. Where this is the case, this has been reflected in the assessment matrix. The SA that has been undertaken has followed the five stage approach set out in the PPG as depicted in the following figure.<sup>(iii)</sup>

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

Figure 1 The Five Stage Approach to SA



**4.8** Whilst the SA process is subdivided into five key stages, guidance emphasises that SA is an iterative process which should be fully integrated into the Plan making process from the earliest stages, both informing and being informed by it. The guidance also sets out the requirements for the preparation of the following reports:

- Scoping Report - (documenting Stage A work) which should be used for consultation on the scope of the SA at the early stages of plan preparation; and
- SA Report - (documenting stages A and B) which should be used in the public consultation on the draft Local Plan. The SA report fully encompasses the requirement to produce an Environmental Report under the SEA Directive.

### **Setting the Context and Objectives - Stage A (Scoping)**

**4.9** 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, these being impact prediction, evaluation and monitoring. The 2016 Scoping Report includes:

- A review of international, national and local plans and programmes that could influence the development of the SA and County Durham Local Plan.
- The current state of the environment and how it has changed over time
- The identification of key sustainability and environmental characteristics and considerations
- Environmental protection objectives

**4.10** Following the review of the Policies, Plans and Programmes and underpinning baseline information within the Scoping Report, the following key sustainability issues have been identified (The full list of key issues is included within the 2016 Scoping report):

1. Continued high levels of deprivation with economic, health and education disparities between the County the north east region and/ or the Nation.
2. Persistent social, economic and physical disparities between parts of the County including particular concentrations of poor quality housing, degraded environments, poor health and unemployment.
3. An ageing population, with uncertainty about whether their needs will be adequately met.

4. Pockets of poor quality housing with risk of further deterioration in associated low demand housing areas.
5. Deficit in the provision of certain types of housing that meet social, economic and demographic characteristics of the County's existing and future residents.
6. A continued focus on a narrow economic base with particular dependencies on declining economic sectors.
7. Declining rural service centres and a declining rural economy.
8. The demographic profile of the County will lead to a shrinking workforce and loss of associated skills and experience from the workplace.
9. Increased car traffic and congestion with continued strong commuting patterns to major conurbations.
10. Climate change: by the 2050s: 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.
11. Accelerated erosion of coastline, affecting internationally protected maritime grassland and other habitat.
12. Increased frequency and severity of floods affecting settlements, water systems, economy, transport, habitats and built heritage.
13. 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.
14. 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.
15. Continued need to protect and enhance the distinctive character and quality of County Durham's landscape.
16. 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.
17. Increased demand for water and need for waste water treatment from new households and development.
18. Increased production of renewable energy but unclear direction for future development: in particular major wind development.
19. Reducing but high levels of household waste and stabilising reuse, recycling and composting activity.

20. Richness of minerals resources and the impact of minerals operations on communities and the environment.
21. Good air quality Countywide but with poor quality hotspots in Durham City and Chetser-le-Street.
22. Significant areas of contaminated land in County Durham remain due to its mining and industrial heritage.

**4.11** The SA framework is central to the SA process and consists of SA objectives and more detailed decision making criteria. The framework provides a way of predicting whether the Plan's objectives, reasonable alternatives and preferred policies are the best possible ones for sustainability and can be seen as a methodological yardstick against which the social, economic and environmental effects of a plan can be tested. In order to formulate the objectives to include in the framework, the key sustainability issues that were identified, including how they manifest themselves geographically in County Durham and the topics that the SEA Directive requires to be reflected were taken into account. The SEA topics include:

- Biodiversity, flora and fauna
- Population and human health
- Soil
- Water
- Air
- Climatic factors
- Material assets
- Cultural heritage and landscape

**4.12** Following a five week consultation (February 2016) with the statutory bodies (Natural England, English Heritage and the Environment Agency) the SA framework was agreed and utilised throughout Stage B of the SA process (Appraisal). The following table shows the SA objectives, more detailed decision making criteria and which key sustainability issues they relate to.

Sustainability Appraisal Objectives	Criteria: Will the County Durham Plan...	Key Sustainability Issues
1. To provide everybody with the opportunity to live in a decent and affordable home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the requirement for affordable housing is met across a range of tenures?</li> <li>• Decrease the number of vacant properties and properties that don't meet the decent homes standard?</li> <li>• Site new housing in deliverable locations linked to identified need?</li> <li>• Ensure that a mix of housing type and size is available in the county?</li> <li>• Improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty?</li> </ul>	<p>2. 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> <p>4. Pockets of poor quality housing with risk of further deterioration in associated low demand housing areas.</p> <p>5. Deficit in the provision of certain types of housing that meet social, economic and demographic characteristics of the County's existing and future residents.</p>
2. To promote strong, secure communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance a sense of safety and security?</li> <li>• Deter / prevent crime?</li> <li>• Reduce the adverse impacts of traffic (including HGVs) on communities?</li> <li>• Encourage a sense of community or wider engagement in community activities or local democracy?</li> <li>• Promote mutual understanding of different ethnic and cultural groups?</li> <li>• Help cater for the needs of an ageing population?</li> <li>• Increase cultural awareness through enhancing and promoting the local historic environment?</li> </ul>	<p>1. Continued high levels of deprivation with economic, health and education disparities between the County the north east region and/or the Nation.</p> <p>3. An ageing population, with uncertainty about whether their needs will be adequately met.</p> <p>9. Increased car traffic and congestion with continued strong commuting patterns to major conurbations.</p>
3. To improve education, training and life-long learning, and maintain a healthy labour market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the quantity or quality of education, training opportunities or facilities?</li> </ul>	<p>1. Continued high levels of deprivation with economic, health and education disparities between the County the north east region and/or the Nation.</p>

Sustainability Appraisal Objectives	Criteria: Will the County Durham Plan...	Key Sustainability Issues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve access to education or training opportunities?</li> <li>• Promote lifelong learning?</li> <li>• Raise educational and employment aspirations?</li> </ul>	<p>8. The demographic profile of the County will lead to a shrinking workforce and loss of associated skills and experience from the workplace.</p>
<p>4. To reduce health inequalities and promote healthy lifestyles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to promotion of healthier lifestyles and healthy leisure opportunities? (e.g. cycling and walking)</li> <li>• Improve access to public open space / multi-functional green infrastructure?</li> <li>• Reduce health inequalities?</li> <li>• Improve access to healthcare?</li> </ul>	<p>1. Continued high levels of deprivation with economic, health and education disparities between the County the north east region and/or the Nation.</p> <p>2. 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>
<p>5. To reduce the need to travel and promote use of sustainable transport options</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the need for travel / transport (e.g. by ensuring local needs are met locally or by telecommunication)?</li> <li>• Help people to access jobs, services and facilities easily?</li> <li>• Protect / increase the range of shops, services, amenities and employment opportunities in town and village centres?</li> <li>• Promote / widen opportunities for 'greener' modes of travel (walking, cycling public or shared transport)?</li> <li>• Ensure development is served by an appropriate level of transport infrastructure including public and sustainable transport networks?</li> <li>• Move freight from road to rail / sea?</li> </ul>	<p>7. Declining rural service centres and a declining rural economy.</p> <p>9. Increased car traffic and congestion with continued strong commuting patterns to major conurbations.</p>



Sustainability Appraisal Objectives	Criteria: Will the County Durham Plan...	Key Sustainability Issues
6. To alleviate deprivation and poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help those on lower incomes?</li> <li>• Contribute towards local regeneration initiatives, or benefit areas suffering from economic deprivation?</li> <li>• Improve economic, social and environmental conditions in the most deprived areas and for the most deprived groups?</li> <li>• Improve physical access to jobs?</li> <li>• Help reduce unemployment?</li> <li>• Encourage higher incomes?</li> </ul>	<p>1. Continued high levels of deprivation with economic, health and education disparities between the County the north east region and/or the Nation.</p> <p>2.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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguard employment or create new employment opportunities?</li> <li>• Promote business expansion / development?</li> <li>• Promote growth in key economic sectors?</li> <li>• Encourage clean technologies to locate in the area?</li> <li>• Reduce road congestion and help reduce journey times to key employment sites?</li> <li>• Encourage young people to stay in the area?</li> <li>• Encourage the use of local labour, goods and services?</li> <li>• Improve the diversity / resilience of the economy?</li> <li>• Help realise the economic potential of the County's natural and historic assets in a sustainable way?</li> </ul>	<p>6. A continued focus on a narrow economic base with particular dependencies on declining economic sectors.</p> <p>7.Declining rural service centres and a declining rural economy.</p> <p>8.The demographic profile of the County will lead to a shrinking workforce and loss of associated skills and experience from the workplace.</p> <p>9.Increased car traffic and congestion with continued strong commuting patterns to major conurbations.</p>

Sustainability Appraisal Objectives	Criteria: Will the County Durham Plan...	Key Sustainability Issues
8. To reduce the causes of climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the demand for energy or increase energy efficiency of buildings, transport or industry?</li> <li>• Minimise greenhouse gas emissions from waste management?</li> <li>• Contribute to the development / wider use of renewable energy sources?</li> <li>• Contribute to the absorption of carbon dioxide?</li> </ul>	<p>9. Increased car traffic and congestion with continued strong commuting patterns to major conurbations.</p> <p>18. Increased production of renewable energy but unclear direction for future development: in particular major wind development.</p>
9. To respond and enable adaptation to the inevitable impacts of climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimise the risk of/ from flooding or coastal erosion?</li> <li>• Discourage inappropriate development in areas at risk from flooding?</li> <li>• Ensure that new development does not give rise to flood risk elsewhere?</li> <li>• Help to cope with climate extremes, e.g. design of buildings and urban areas?</li> <li>• Allow for habitats or species of biodiversity importance to adapt to climate change?</li> </ul>	<p>10. 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.</p> <p>11. Accelerated erosion of coastline, affecting internationally protected maritime grassland and other habitat.</p> <p>12. Increased frequency and severity of floods affecting settlements, water systems, economy, transport, habitats and built heritage.</p> <p>13. 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.</p>
10. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect or enhance internationally designated wildlife/ geological sites?</li> <li>• Protect or enhance nationally designated wildlife/ geological sites and protected species?</li> <li>• Protect or enhance UK and Durham Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitats and species?</li> <li>• Protect or enhance other areas of local importance for biodiversity or geodiversity (LNR's, CWS, CGS, semi-natural ancient woodland)?</li> </ul>	<p>11. Accelerated erosion of coastline, affecting internationally protected maritime grassland and other habitat.</p> <p>13. 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.</p>

Sustainability Appraisal Objectives	Criteria: Will the County Durham Plan...	Key Sustainability Issues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prevent deterioration and fragmentation of habitat and establish and maintain sustainable habitat networks?</li> <li>Improve access to or understanding of local biodiversity/ geodiversity resources?</li> <li>Ensure adequate and appropriate mitigation for any biodiversity loss which may occur as a result of development?</li> <li>Create new areas or sites of biodiversity/ geodiversity value?</li> </ul>	
11. To protect and enhance the quality and character of landscape and townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect and enhance designated protected landscape areas (i.e. AONB, DurhamHeritageCoast)?</li> <li>Protect and enhance local landscape character and quality?</li> <li>Protect and maintain the openness of the green belt?</li> <li>Ensure that new developments reflect the distinctive character and appearance of the local area?</li> <li>Encourage good quality design in new development?</li> <li>Protect and enhance the vitality and viability of the county's town centres and main village centres?</li> <li>Protect and improve the quality of public areas/ discourage fly tipping and reduce litter?</li> <li>Help regeneration of degraded built environments?</li> </ul>	<p>2.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> <p>7.Declining rural service centres and a declining rural economy.</p> <p>13. 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.</p> <p>14.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.</p> <p>15. Continued need to protect and enhance the distinctive character and quality of County Durham's landscape.</p>

Sustainability Appraisal Objectives	Criteria: Will the County Durham Plan...	Key Sustainability Issues
12. To protect and enhance cultural heritage & the historic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and enhance the character, appearance or setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets?</li> <li>• Reduce the number or severity of designated and non-designated heritage assets at risk?</li> <li>• Protect and enhance locally and regionally important designated and non-designated heritage assets?</li> <li>• Realise the economic and educational potential of designated and non-designated heritage assets and help make them accessible?</li> <li>• Recognise the contribution of conserving and enhancing existing buildings and other heritage assets to local distinctiveness, sustainable resource use and climate change mitigation?</li> <li>• Ensure the recording and appropriate protection of undiscovered archaeological features in areas of potential development?</li> <li>• Promote the maintenance, sensitive adaptation and re-use of buildings?</li> </ul>	<p>14. 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.</p> <p>15. 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and improve local air quality?</li> <li>• Protect and maintain or improve surface &amp; groundwater quality or the physical integrity of aquifers?</li> <li>• Reduce the amount of water used?</li> <li>• Keep water consumption / emission within local carrying capacity limits?</li> <li>• Improve areas of historic land contamination and prevent contamination to new areas?</li> <li>• Encourage the location of development on previously developed land, while taking account of biodiversity value that may be present?</li> </ul>	<p>16. 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.</p> <p>17. Increased demand for water and need for waste water treatment from new households and development.</p> <p>21. Good air quality Countywide but with poor quality hotspots in Durham City and Chetser-le-Street.</p> <p>22. Significant areas of contaminated land in County Durham remain due to its mining and industrial heritage.</p>

Sustainability Appraisal Objectives	Criteria: Will the County Durham Plan...	Key Sustainability Issues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimise the loss of better quality agricultural land to development?</li> <li>Promote good soil management in land reclamation?</li> </ul>	
14. To reduce waste and encourage the sustainable and efficient use of materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage an increase in the reduction, re-use, recycling and recovery of energy from waste (progress away from landfill and up the "waste hierarchy")?</li> <li>Encourage the use of recycled / reused materials?</li> <li>Minimise the use of new non-renewable resources?</li> <li>Reduce the adverse impacts of waste management facilities to acceptable levels?</li> <li>Encourage the community to take responsibility for reducing its own waste?</li> <li>Promote the maintenance, sensitive adaptation and re-use of buildings?</li> </ul>	19. Reducing but high levels of household waste and stabilising reuse, recycling and composting activity.
15. To improve the sustainability of minerals extraction and use and reduce adverse impacts on communities and the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help meet an identified need for minerals?</li> <li>Reduce the adverse impacts of minerals processing and extraction to acceptable levels?</li> <li>Reduce the energy used in minerals extraction, processing and transport?</li> <li>Ensure the efficient use of minerals resources?</li> <li>Avoid the sterilisation of economically important mineral resources?</li> <li>Promote good practice in land reclamation having regard to sustainable after-use appropriate to the locality?</li> </ul>	20. Richness of minerals resources and the impact of minerals operations on communities and the environment

## 5 What are the outcomes of the Sustainability Appraisal?

### Developing and Refining Alternatives and Assessing Effects - Stage B (Appraisal)

**5.1** There may be several ways in which a Plan may fulfil its objectives, these are known as options or reasonable alternatives. SA promotes a better consideration of options / alternatives as by the time most projects or actions are proposed in plans, many options / alternatives have already been closed off because of higher-level decisions. SA affects the decision-making process at a stage where more alternatives are available for consideration and helps the Council to understand the sustainability implications of each option before a decision is made regarding which option or combination of options should be selected as the preferred approach. In addition, to the development and assessment of alternatives an SA of the Preferred approach has also been undertaken to highlight opportunities to avoid or mitigate any adverse effects of the preferred approach and enhance positive outcomes.

**5.2** In common with all the assessments undertaken, in order to better determine the permanence and scale of potential impacts, the assessments considered effects in relation to the short, medium, and long-term, as well as the likely geographic scale of such impacts and any indirect effects.

### Assessment of Alternatives

**5.3** The alternative options developed and assessed at the Issues and Options stage of Plan development related to the key spatial options (i.e. how much development and where). Further alternatives were developed following the Issues and Options stage and were assessed against the same SA process. In all cases, consideration was given to whether the 'Business as Usual' (BAU) approach to any given issue was a reasonable alternative to maintain. For example, Business as Usual approaches commonly related to whether existing saved former district local plan policy or the default NPPF position should be maintained. Its precise meaning for each policy area is summarised in this report and dealt with in more detail in the main SA report.

### Assessment of the Vision

**5.4** The Spatial Vision of the Plan aims to reflect the key challenges facing the County and provide the 'hooks' for the policies which seek to address those identified issues over the plan period. The majority of social and economic impacts identified in relation to the Spatial Vision were assessed as positive, and the potential for significant positive effects were identified against some SA objectives. The vision will help to ensure existing and future residents have access to a range of well-designed homes, jobs, services, facilities and infrastructure 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.

**5.5** However, the assessment determined there was potential for significant adverse effects on biodiversity, geodiversity, landscapes, townscapes and the historic environment; primarily because there was insufficient detail regarding the protection afforded to the natural, built or historic environment. The potential for significant adverse effects was primarily determined by the geographic scale (i.e. county-wide), the sensitivity of our diverse range of valuable assets and areas as well as the likely quantity of new development proposed. To avoid such effects and help secure enhancements where possible, additional wording on the natural, built and historic environment was suggested and incorporated.

## Assessment of the Strategic Objectives

**5.6** 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 refine the objectives of the Plan and where conflict has been identified, further identify potential avoidance / mitigation measures at an early stage of Plan development.

**5.7** The Plan objectives have been amended since the publication of the Issues and Options consultation in June 2016. The eighteen objectives as originally presented in the Issues and Options document were influenced by the SA and Issues and Options consultation. New objectives were drafted and assessed against the fifteen SA objectives, with the assessment suggesting further changes to some of the policies. Detail can be found in Appendix C of the main SA report.

## Assessment of Emerging Plan Policies and their Alternatives

No	Policy	Reasonable Alternative Assessment	Preferred Option/Policy Assessment	Conclusions and Outstanding Issues
1	<b>General Development Principles (GDP)</b>  Purpose: To set out broad overarching principles that all development proposals will be assessed against. These largely concern social and environmental considerations and provide a hook for more detailed policies within the Plan which set out specific requirements	The NPPF (paragraph 17) establishes a set of 12 principles that should underpin plan making and decision taking. Whilst there are no requirements for local authorities to set their own core planning principles, the decision to establish a set of principles locally specific for County Durham, supports and builds upon paragraph 17. Whilst no options were put forward at Issues and Options Stage, it was identified that having a GDP policy would provide an effective decision making tool when determining planning applications as it contains all key development principles in one place. It was not considered a reasonable alternative to rely either on the NPPF (Business as Usual), given the recent consultation or existing local plan policies as there are significant differences in terms of scope and content.	Positive social, economic and environmental effects are broadly predicted, although some environmental effects are considered to be uncertain, due to the wording in the initial sentence 'where relevant'.	The acceptance of the SA recommendations, in particular the removal of the wording ' <i>Where relevant</i> ' (with regards policy requirements) will provide more certainty with regards to positive social and environmental effects identified.  Policy ultimately has either positive or significant positive effects against all SA objectives and as such complies with the principles of sustainable development.
2	<b>Quantity of Development</b>  Purpose: Sets out how many new homes and how much employment land is required over the Plan period.	Alternatives Included:  <u>Housing:</u>  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.	Positive social and economic effects are predicted. Economic and housing effects are assessed as significantly positive. However, the potential for negative environmental effects are predicted some of which will be residual effects.	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 order to contribute to meeting the quantity of development proposed, an allowance for bringing empty housing back into use has been made. In respect of the housing and employment



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		<p><u>Employment Land:</u></p> <p>A - Maintain current supply (Business as Usual) - 755ha</p> <p>B - Labour demand - 114.8 ha</p> <p>C - Labour supply - 121.1 ha</p> <p>D - Past Take-up Rates - 269.5 ha</p> <p>SA recommended Options B (Housing) and D (Employment Land) and whilst B was taken forward as housing policy, a combination of B, C and D was selected for employment land.</p>		<p>sites that have been allocated to meet the quantity of development proposed, with the implementation of mitigation, significant adverse effects will be avoided. The allocations are also predicted to have positive effects against a number of social objectives and significantly positive economic effects.</p> <p>Outstanding issues relate to the need for further design detail and associated environmental assessment of highways infrastructure in Durham City.</p>
3	<p><b>Employment Land Allocations</b></p> <p>Purpose: The policy predominantly allocates undeveloped land and plots within existing industrial estates for compatible employment uses. i.e. B1 Business, B2 General Industrial and B8 Storage and Distribution. However, some extensions to existing sites and new employment land sites are also proposed for B1, B2 and B8 uses.</p>	<p>The risks of allocating insufficient employment land of the correct size and quality across the County is deemed a substantial 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 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 Preferred Option Policy as presented.</p>	<p>In relation to social and economic objectives, effects were determined to be overwhelmingly positive; with the potential for significant long-term positives. This was specifically related to the potential to improve the quality and quantity of employment-related training opportunities and help to maintain a healthy labour force with an improved skills base; help to alleviate deprivation and those on lower incomes; and develop a resilient and diverse economy. In environmental terms, effects were less certain (i.e. potential for positive and negative impacts), with the possibility of adverse impacts identified against several objectives: e.g. carbon emissions, biodiversity, landscape, soil resources and waste arisings.</p>	<p>No changes to the policy were recommended as a result of SA. 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 taken into account through the development management process, and so there are no outstanding issues to raise.</p>
4	<p><b>Aykley Heads</b></p> <p>Purpose: Allocates an employment site known as Aykley Heads within Durham City for B1(a) uses (offices)</p>	<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</p>	<p>Overall a variety of positive effects were identified against social, economic and environmental objectives. The approved</p>	<p>The policy, supported by the approved masterplan for the Aykley Heads site, reflects previous SA recommendations and conforms to the principles of sustainable development. As such,</p>

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		<p>office development <sup>(iv)</sup>. All the other sites assessed were discounted for various reasons (e.g. availability, suitability, capacity to meet identified need), and so it was determined that there are no reasonable alternatives to the proposed site allocation at Aykley Heads.</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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Only reusing existing land currently used for employment, excluding any Green Belt land.</li> <li>B. As above but also including land at County Hall car park currently in the Green Belt.</li> <li>C. As above but also including former police leisure centre and playing fields currently in the Green Belt.</li> <li>D. As above but only use Green Belt land when other areas have been redeveloped.</li> </ul> <p>On balance it is considered that Option D has the potential to be a sustainable approach for the re-development of this site. Primarily this is because it will not only enable economic benefits to be maximised, but also enable a more considered and detailed approach to be taken in terms of potential mitigation measures (and time for them to become effective) as well as viability/ deliverability issues.</p> <p>Option B was selected as whilst the former police playing fields could provide a longer term opportunity, it will depend on the success of the existing strategic employment site. As</p>	<p>masterplan associated with the policy also gives a high degree of certainty, in addition to policy requirements, that development and supporting infrastructure will be delivered as intended. Importantly for a strategic employment site long-term significant positive effects were identified in relation to raising educational aspirations, alleviating deprivation and contributing to a more resilient economy. The policy and associated masterplan also provide necessary protection as well as seek to deliver enhancements to the the site and Durham City in terms of its biodiversity, landscape, townscape and historic environment. In many cases the short-term effects were considered insignificant due to the proposed timescales for development and associated phasing.</p>	<p>there are no changes to be made to the effects originally predicted and there are no outstanding issues to raise.</p>

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		such it is concluded that at this stage, the site should be considered if and when it happens as part of a future review of the Plan.		
5	<b>Housing Land Allocations</b>  Purpose: Allocates sites to accommodate the new homes needed to ensure that housing need is met	<p>The 'Do Nothing' option was discounted as a reasonable alternative as it is a requirement for Local Plans to allocate land for housing to meet housing need. The 'Business as Usual' option is represented by the framework established by the NPPF and government guidance. Given that the Preferred Option is in accordance with this, it is considered that it reflects this approach. With regards both these potential options, there are no reasonable alternatives.</p> <p>The alternatives considered and subject to SA in terms of housing distribution which has informed the housing allocations, is detailed in the main SA report, section 4.2.4.</p> <p>All the Green sites (as classified on the County Durham SHLAA) which performed better in SA terms were considered reasonable alternatives to the proposed Housing Allocations in Policy 5. The justification as to why these specific sites were not allocated, despite receiving a higher overall sustainability score when compared to some sites allocated in that particular Plan Monitoring Area, is detailed in the main SA Report.</p>	<p>Overall there is a high degree of certainty that the housing allocations will secure a range of positive social and economic effects, with the potential for significant positives over the long-term against SA objectives 1 and 7). Some adverse social effects were predicted against the potential to create safe and secure communities, health inequalities, and the ability to promote sustainable transport. However, the severity of such effects have the potential to be minimised by mitigation measures. Residual adverse health impacts were identified due to the likely pressures on NHS facilities and their ability to manage increased need with limited resources.</p> <p>Generally assessment predicted that significant social and environmental adverse effects would be either avoided or mitigated as a result of site-specific requirements and proposals in supporting documents such as the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2018) and Durham City Sustainable Transport Delivery Plan (2018). Possible positive effects were also noted against climate change mitigation.</p> <p>Despite potential for mitigation to address important environmental constraints, due to the scale of new housing development and associated infrastructure, as well as relevant ecological and landscape sensitivities, residual adverse effects were predicted in terms of impacts on protected species,</p>	<p>The housing allocations are a result of various stages of assessment that have included detailed involvement from SA, primarily 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 is considered that Policy 5 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 determination 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>

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			<p>habitats and landscapes. Overall historic environment impacts were considered to be determined by the scale, massing, design and materials used for individual developments.</p> <p>In terms of air, water and soil resources a mixture of potential impacts were identified. Even though the allocation of brownfield land was a priority in the site selection process, and there is the potential for land remediation, overall residual adverse impacts on soil resources were noted; particularly given that the loss of grade 3 agricultural land cannot be mitigated.</p>	
6	<p><b>Durham City's sustainable Urban Extensions</b></p> <p>Purpose: 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>The SA Main Report and Policy 5 above establishes in detail the reasonable alternatives considered and assessed in terms of new housing in County Durham. Specifically this section presents the alternatives considered, assessed and discounted along with either supporting recommendations or justification, relating to the distribution of housing as well as individual allocations.</p> <p>In order to identify sufficient land which meets the Spatial Strategy, it was necessary to firstly exhaust all other possible opportunities including previously developed land, optimising densities and discussions with neighbouring authorities. Further to this, it was necessary to consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary. As such a thorough assessment was undertaken to exhaust all possible alternatives to achieving the Spatial Strategy around Durham City. This process was supported by an independent review 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>Overall positive social and economic effects were identified, with the potential for some environmental improvements across the two proposed sites. Importantly significant positives were identified in relation to the delivery of affordable housing, regeneration and alleviating deprivation, supporting a more diverse and resilient economy with increased levels of employment.</p> <p>In terms of supporting sustainable patterns of growth, this policy was also determined that it was likely housing development on these sites would contribute to a reduction in the need to travel and promotion of alternative modes of transport (e.g. walking, cycling, and bus).</p>	<p>The stages undertaken (SHLAA and Exceptional Circumstances), arrive at the two strategic housing sites in Policy 6. The Plan will contribute towards the delivery of sustainable patterns of housing growth as well as a suitable mix of housing to not only meet the County's identified needs (including that for affordable and older persons' housing), but also residents' aspirations in line with the Spatial Strategy Justification. In line with mitigation recommendations, the required detailed masterplans for the sites will need to demonstrate how net-gains for biodiversity will be achieved.</p>

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		<p>In exhausting these possibilities, land suitable for 140 dwellings in Durham City has been identified and allocated within the draft Plan. However this is insufficient to meet the Spatial Strategy Justification, and therefore it was necessary to understand whether there was potential for a strategic site within the Green Belt surrounding Durham City.</p> <p>Of the 47 Green Belt sites submitted as part of the Call for Sites (2016), 7 adjoining Durham City had 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 review. 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>Through the SHLAA process all proposed sites have been subject to detailed assessment in order to identify development constraints and required mitigation which has subsequently informed their suitability for housing, estimated yields and policy requirements. This has been particularly important in terms of potential biodiversity, landscape, townscape and historic environment impacts. Most notably this approach has enabled potential significant adverse effects to either be avoided or mitigated. Despite robust mitigation measures, due to the scale and location of proposed sites residual adverse landscape and townscape impacts have been identified. Although sustainable construction methods must be adopted, an unavoidable increase in waste arisings (i.e. construction and operation) from the quantum and type of development proposed (e.g. housing, schools, infrastructure, etc) was recognised.</p>	
7	<p><b>Development on Unallocated Sites in Built up Areas</b></p> <p>Purpose: Defines what constitutes the built up area and sets out the criteria against which development that is not specifically allocated in the Plan will be permitted.</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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A - Proposals upon land on the edge of a settlement should be treated as development in the countryside</li> </ul>	<p>Please note that the following effects relate to the implementation of the criteria within the policy. Positive social, economic and environmental effects were predicted, a small number of changes and areas requiring further clarity were proposed in order to strengthen the policy and to align with the SA recommendations made following the assessment of the reasonable alternatives. These recommendations were accepted and there are no outstanding issues.</p>	<p>The amendments made as a result of SA have enhanced the likelihood of the positive effects predicted occurring and there are no outstanding issues. The outstanding issues raised following the SA of the reasonable alternatives have been addressed by both the Development in the Countryside policy which allows development in the countryside which enhances, local</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>B - Proposals upon land on the edge of a settlement should be considered as development in the built up area where it adjoins a settlement</li> <li>C - Proposals upon land on the edge of a settlement should be considered as development in the built up area where it is well contained by existing built development</li> </ul> <p>The policy will combine options B and C due to the outcome of the SA</p>		services and community facilities and by the Rural Housing and Employment Exception Sites policy which makes exceptions for affordable housing and employment related development.
8	<b>Visitor Attractions</b>  Purpose: Sets out the criteria by which the provision of new visitor attractions or the expansion of existing facilities will be permitted	<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, former District Local Plans, 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.</p> <p>Allocating specific sites was not considered a reasonable option as it was likely to prejudice tourism development which comes in a wide variety of urban and rural locations. 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 and exclude qualifying locational criteria (Option B). Ultimately it was determined Option A was the only reasonable and sustainable option.</p>	<p>Overall positive effects were identified, with the potential for significant positive economic impacts. However, depending on scale, scope and location of visitor attractions it was considered there was potential for some adverse social and environmental effects. The main potential adverse impacts identified related to increasing the need to travel (by car), associated emissions, and indirectly the availability of affordable housing.</p>	<p>SA recommendations including: the amending of policy to ensure development articulates all benefits and any potential impacts and mitigation and the monitoring of air quality were accepted with regards to large-scale visitor attractions. Whilst some mitigation recommendations were rejected there is agreement over the justification provided, as they are covered by other plan policies.</p>
9	<b>Visitor Accommodation</b>  Purpose: Sets out the criteria by which the provision of new visitor accommodation or the	<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, former District Local Plans, or a 'no policy</p>	<p>Social impacts of this policy were primarily predicted to be insignificant, given that minor effects were noted against several of the objectives (e.g. stronger communities, education and health). However, potential</p>	<p>No changes to the policy were recommended as a result of SA; therefore the effects originally predicted still stand. Recommendations regarding mitigation, including the monitoring of</p>



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	expansion of existing accommodation will be permitted.	<p>approach' because there were significant policy gaps in the 'saved' policies. The 'do nothing' option was therefore also not a reasonable alternative.</p> <p>Allocating specific sites was not considered a reasonable option as it was likely to prejudice tourism accommodation which comes in a wide variety of urban and rural locations and types and styles.</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>	<p>indirect adverse impacts were deemed possible in relation to the County's housing market. Direct positive economic effects, and significant positive effects over the long-term, were identified. Such predictions extended to helping to alleviate deprivation. With the intent to manage growth of the visitor economy, the policy also includes some important environmental safeguards; and as such possible positive effects were identified. Due to the variables involved (e.g. size/ type of visitor accommodation, its location as well as type of visitors, length of their stay, and accessibility), impacts relating to climate change, reducing the need to travel, promotion of sustainable transport options and air quality were considered uncertain.</p>	<p>air quality; the provision of electric car charging points and maximising regeneration benefits have also been taken into account, and so there are no outstanding issues to raise.</p>
10	<b>Retail Hierarchy and Town Centre Development</b>  Purpose: Defines and sets out the roles of sub regional, large town, small town, district and local retail centres in the County	<p>The policy, in part, represents a continuation of those centres defined in the former District Plans. 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 former plans was not in accordance with 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>	<p>Assessment of this policy has determined that impacts are predicted to be primarily positive against social, economic and environmental objectives; with a high degree of certainty in some cases. There was uncertainty with regards to the potential impacts in terms of climate change adaptation; air, water and soil quality; and waste management.</p>	<p>The SA has recommended the addition of a criterion to the policy around the refusal of applications where it does not meet the sequential test or would have a significant adverse impact. Reference to 'pop up shops' has also been included in the supporting text. Other mitigation will be dealt with through the remaining local plan policies, including. There are no outstanding issues to raise.</p>
11	<b>Development in the Countryside</b>  Purpose: Restrictive policy towards development in the countryside. Sets out the	<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>	<p>Positive social effects, negative economic effects and a mixture of positive and very negative environmental effects were predicted.</p>	<p>The redrafted version of the policy addresses the majority of the SA recommendations (detail can be found in the Sustainability Appraisal PO 2018 - Chapter 4), including those which were predicted to give rise to significant</p>



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	exceptions by which new development in the countryside will be considered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A - Define Individual settlement boundaries beyond which development will not be permitted</li> <li>• B - Develop criteria based policy to restrict development in the open countryside</li> <li>• C - As for option A but with the addition of exceptions policies to allow development outside of settlement boundaries where certain exceptions are met.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul> <p>Option D was recommended and selected</p>		adverse effects. As a result of the changes made to the policy, effects predicted against the economic and some of the environmental SA objective are no longer considered to be negative. Outstanding issues raised following the assessment of the reasonable alternatives have been addressed by the policy and the changes made to it also enable a conclusion of no outstanding issues.
12	<b>Rural Housing and Employment Exception Sites</b>  Purpose: Sets out the exceptional circumstances by which proposals for affordable housing and employment uses (that are not related to rural land based enterprises) will be considered in rural areas.	Two options were considered in order to examine where rural exceptions, under certain circumstances can be made, to aid the delivery of:  A: Affordable housing only B: Affordable housing and employment  Option B was recommended and selected	Positive social, and economic effects are predicted. Significantly positive effects are predicted against the following sustainability objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decent and affordable homes</li> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Sustainable and diverse economy</li> </ul> Positive environmental effects are predicted against Heritage and Landscape with minor environmental effects predicted elsewhere.	The policy will contribute towards sustaining rural communities in County Durham. There are no outstanding issues concerning this policy.

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13	<b>Permanent Rural Workers Dwellings</b>  Purpose: Sets out the factors, proposals for new rural workers dwellings outside the built up area will need to demonstrate. Policy is restrictive in nature.	There are not considered to be any reasonable alternatives for this policy as NPPF requirements (including the revised NPPF) make it clear that in special circumstances there should be exceptions made to allow rural development where there is a functional requirement. However, national policy does not set out how those special circumstances will be determined leaving the local planning authority to set out conditions in the Local Plan.	There are positive economic, social and environmental implications of the policy. However, it is considered that environmental safeguards could be strengthened in the policy.	The majority of SA recommendations (detail can be found in the Sustainability Appraisal PO 2018 - Chapter 4) were accepted. There are no further issues as the justification for partly rejecting some of the recommendations is accepted.
14	<b>Equestrian Development</b>  Purpose: Sets out that equestrian development is an appropriate countryside use and will be permitted where a range of criteria are met.	Paragraph 28 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (and 84 of the consultation draft 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	Positive social, economic and environmental effects are predicted. However, it is considered that environmental safeguards within the policy could be strengthened.	The SA has improved the scope of the policy in relation to the recognition of potential impacts to environmental receptors and therefore level of protection afforded. There are no outstanding issues.
15	<b>Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land and Soil Resources</b>  Purpose: Restrictive policy which sets out the exceptional circumstances by which development of the best and most versatile agricultural land will be permitted.	As the emerging 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 reflects the aspirations mentioned above. 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.	Positive social, economic and environmental effects are predicted, although the wording of the policy and its predicted positive effects could be strengthened and enhanced further through the recommendations proposed.	The policy has been strengthened in relation to considering suitable alternative sites where development would involve the loss of a significant quantity of the best and most versatile agricultural land. The overall clarity of the policy has also been improved. There are no outstanding issues as the justification provided for not fully accepting the SA recommendations is accepted
16	<b>Addressing Housing Need</b>  Purpose: Policy sets out the proportions of housing that should be affordable and suitable for older persons.	There were no reasonable alternatives to consider for the amount of affordable housing provision set out in the policy. Paragraph 47 of the NPPF states that affordable housing need must be addressed in Local Plans. Increasing overall housing numbers which would increase affordable housing was not considered to be a reasonable alternative as there is no provision within the Government's new standard methodology to do so. Furthermore, increasing the	Overall, the policy has many positive impacts on sustainability criteria, particularly in relation to objectives: 2 (Strong, secure communities), 4 (Health inequalities and lifestyle), 5 (need to travel & sustainable transport), 6 (alleviate deprivation), 7 (economy & employment). However, some of the social impacts will depend on	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

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		<p>percentage of affordable housing was not considered a reasonable alternative as this would undermine viability of housing schemes.</p> <p>However, whilst there were no alternatives considered for the delivery of affordable housing, options were considered around the provision of older persons housing which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Option A:</b> Allow developers to make their own decisions on house types and building standards</li> <li>• <b>Option B:</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</li> <li>• <b>Option C:</b> 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</li> <li>• <b>Option D:</b> Allocation of sites specifically for older persons housing</li> </ul> <p>From the assessment of older persons options, Option C is considered the most sustainable and was selected as the preferred option.</p>	<p>implementation as the medium to long term provision of affordable housing will be regularly reassessed.</p>	<p>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.</p>
17	<p><b>Houses in Multiple Occupation, Student Accommodation and Purpose Built Student Accommodation</b></p> <p>Purpose: Sets out the criteria by which planning permission for new University facilities and the refurbishment of existing</p>	<p>The Preferred Option 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. Given the importance of this issue, Durham University's proposals, and current pressures around this type of housing, the 'do nothing' option was not considered reasonable. It was also considered not a reasonable for any</p>	<p>Positive social and economic effects are generally predicted with some opportunities for significant positive impacts over the long term. Impact upon environmental objectives are predicted to depend upon implementation due to the unknown impacts from the allocations, which would likely be decided through a planning application.</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</p>

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	<p>buildings will be permitted. 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 cohesive communities.</p>	<p>policy approach to restrict the proposed growth ambitions of Durham University as a means to address the issues relating to student accommodation.</p> <p>The '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. As such, this option (Option B) was assessed against the Preferred Option policy (Option A).</p> <p>In terms of the specific detail of the policy, several elements were considered but were considered not to be reasonable alternatives to the Preferred Options approach. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geographic Extent of Article 4 Direction</li> <li>• Houses in Multiple Occupation Percentage Threshold (10%)</li> <li>• Houses in Multiple Occupation Percentage Threshold 20%</li> <li>• Houses in Multiple Occupation Distance Threshold (100m radius)</li> </ul> <p>With regards proposed PBSA allocations, a range of sites were considered following the Call for Sites in 2016. The sites submitted were considered, with some being discounted for a range of reasons, leaving those allocated within the policy.</p>		<p>outstanding issues, although impact upon environmental objectives will ultimately depend upon site specific proposals.</p>

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18	<b>Sites for Travellers</b>  Purpose: The policy does not allocate new sites or pitches but sets out the criteria by which any proposals for such or extensions to existing sites will be considered over the Plan period.	The Traveller Needs Assessment concludes that there is an additional need of three sites over the next 10 year period. Policy supporting text confirms that the five year supply has been met, however no specific sites or broad locations have been identified over this medium to long term period. Instead there is an expectation that need would be provided through the development management process, where on average planning permission has been granted for new private pitches at a rate of 5 per year for the last five years. It is therefore probable that need would be met over the plan period. It is therefore not considered a reasonable alternative to allocate sites, as evidence from past trends demonstrates that there will be enough pitches to meet projected need through windfalls.	Positive effects relating to deprivation and economy, health and education. Some unknown impacts against social objectives	With the changes recommended through the SA process, the policy will be effective in ensuring any future applications for Traveller sites are tested robustly.
19	<b>Children's Homes</b>  Purpose: Sets out the criteria by which applications for children's care homes will be permitted	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 if the emerging County Durham Plan was to conform with national planning policy.	Predominately positive effects are predicted against social impacts. This is because the policy seeks only to permit developments in appropriate, safe and secure environments, which have an accompanying management plan supported by appropriate authorities, thus ensuring that all agencies are committed to the successful development and management of the facility.	Whilst the SA recommended changes, the reasons for non-acceptance given, are accepted (detail can be found in the Sustainability Appraisal PO 2018 - Chapter 4). There are therefore no changes to the effects originally predicted.
20	<b>Type and Mix of Housing</b>  Purpose: Policy seeks to secure an appropriate mix of dwelling types taking into account existing imbalances in the housing stock	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.	Generally positive social, economic and environmental effects are predicted. Significantly positive effects are predicted against strong, secure communities.	The policy conforms with the principles of sustainable development. There are no changes to the effects originally predicted or outstanding issues

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21	<b>Protecting Green Belt Land</b>  Purpose: Aims to protect the greenbelt from new development	<p>The circumstances when and where development in the Green Belt should be approved are essentially covered by the NPPF. The Policy therefore confirms those 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>As part of the consultation on the Issues and Options (2016), a number of proposals were put forward with regard to potential new areas of Green Belt, however none of the proposals demonstrated: why normal planning and development management policies would not be adequate; what major changes in circumstances have occurred; what the consequences of the proposal would be for sustainable development; the necessity of the Green Belt and its consistency with other strategic plans for adjoining areas and how the proposed Green Belt would meet the other objectives of the NPPF (Framework).</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.</p>	<p>The policy conforms with the principles of sustainable development. The suggested changes have been incorporated.</p>
22	<b>Non-Strategic Green Belt Amendments</b>  Purpose: Removes specific, small areas of land from the Durham City greenbelt which are considered to be anomalies, included in error when the green belt boundaries were initially established.	<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. Three sites are included within this Preferred Options Policy</p>	<p>As the Policy only takes land out of the Green belt and does not allocate land for development impacts against most objectives are minor. with only effects against Biodiversity and Landscape probable, with both being adverse with the potential for significant adverse effects.</p>	<p>The policy conforms with the principles of sustainable development. Whilst the suggested changes have been incorporated it is predicted that adverse landscape effects would be probable</p>

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23	<b>Delivering Sustainable Transport</b>  Purpose: Sets out how new development should deliver sustainable transport.	The NPPF states the need for Local Authorities to promote sustainable transport through their Local Plans and emphasises how Local Plans should take 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 a policy like the one presented if the emerging County Durham Plan was to conform with national planning policy. It is also considered that the policy broadly maintains the approach represented by the saved transport policies of former District Local Plans.	Predominately positive effects were identified; particularly against social and economic objectives. This is primarily because the policy seeks to address the potential adverse transport implications of new development whilst also delivering sustainable transport options; with the latter providing a wide-range of benefits. Potential adverse environmental effects were identified in relation to biodiversity, landscape, townscape, and the historic environment given that the policy does not include important safeguards to either avoid or mitigate potential adverse environmental impacts.	The acceptance of the SA recommendations will provide more certainty with regards to positive social and environmental effect identified. The inclusion of the new criterion (d) will also ensure there is no 'unacceptable harm' to the natural, built or historic environment. Overall it is now considered that there is the potential for positive effects against SA objectives 10, 11 & 12 over the short-, medium- and long-term. No outstanding issues were identified.
24	<b>Durham City Sustainable Transport</b>  Purpose: Sets out the measures to relieve existing highway network problems around Durham City, including demand management measures, provision of a North Relief Road and a Western Relief Road.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A - Maintain Business as Usual Conditions</li> <li>• B - Implement sustainable travel measures outlined in the Durham City Sustainable Transport Delivery Plan (DCSTDP), reallocate space to sustainable modes on Milburngate Bridge and provide a Northern Relief Road (NRR)</li> <li>• C - Introduce a Western Relief Road (WRR)</li> <li>• D - Implement options B and C</li> </ul> <p>In respect of relieving existing and future highways network performance issues in Durham City, option D provides the greatest benefits based on available evidence and in the absence of any other viable alternatives. However, further assessment will be required to fully understand the beneficial</p>	Generally positive social effects are predicted although effects could be mixed against the health and communities objectives. Positive and significantly positive long term economic effects are predicted. Generally negative effects are predicted against environmental effects whilst these could be significantly negative against landscape and biodiversity.	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 air quality and the associated heritage, landscape and biodiversity effects of different types and design of river crossing. The outstanding issues identified within the SA will need to be addressed for the next stage of Plan preparation.



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		and negative effects of Option D, particularly in relation to the type and design of the river crossings and impacts upon air quality. Option D was taken forward		
25	<b>Allocating and Safeguarding transport Routes and Facilities</b>  Purpose: Policy allocates Sherburn Retail link road, Horden Rail station and safeguards:  Disused leamside line;  Cycling super routes and primary and secondary cycle routes; and  Bowburn Relief road	Two options were considered around the safeguarding of transport routes:  A: Do not safeguard the route of the Barnard Castle Relief Road (BaU option)  B: Safeguard the route of the Barnard Castle Relief road  Option A was recommended and taken forward	Positive and significantly positive social effects. Significantly positive economic effects. Mixture of both positive and negative environmental effects	The assessment has resulted in more closely aligning the policy with the recommendations of the Habitats Regulations Assessment of Horden Rail Station, improving overall clarity.  Outstanding issues relate to the need for further detailed environmental impact assessment in the event that planning proposals are forthcoming for the safeguarded and allocated routes and facilities.
26	<b>Provision of Transport Infrastructure</b>  Purpose: Sets out the criteria that new highway schemes and transport infrastructure will be tested against	Whilst other plan policies take into account issues such as landscape impact, amenity and environmental impact, relying on these would not ensure that new highways schemes and transport infrastructure prioritises sustainable travel modes through the movement of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport. Therefore, given that the NPPF supports transport policies which can play a role in facilitating sustainable development, and suggests that LPAs should support a pattern of development which facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport, there are considered to be no reasonable alternatives to this policy.	The policy will have a positive impact on most social, economic and environmental objectives. These include promoting strong communities, improving education, promoting healthy lifestyles, promoting sustainable transport options, alleviating deprivation and poverty and developing a sustainable economy. 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.	The policy has been amended to clarify priority for those with mobility and visual impairments as well as those with dementia. There are no outstanding issues.
27	<b>Developer Contributions</b>  Purpose: Identifies the mechanisms that will be used to ensure new development contributes to the provision	There were a number of options considered at Preferred Options stage including:  • CIL across the whole of the County	Predominately positive effects were identified; particularly against social and economic objectives. This is primarily because the policy aims to ensure development proposals contribute to infrastructure improvements. Uncertain	Whilst environmental impacts are likely to depend upon implementation, SA concludes that the policy is likely to have positive impacts overall.

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	and/or improvement of physical, social and environmental infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CIL across viable areas only</li> <li>CIL not used. S106 used to deliver developer contributions</li> </ul> <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 Infrastructure. This however is only being allowed for Local Authorities which fall under the threshold based on the tenth percentile of average new build house prices, which includes County Durham <sup>(v)</sup>, meaning that whilst CIL could be charged, it would be unlikely to sustain a charge across the whole of the County. Whilst the local plan viability study <sup>(vi)</sup> confirms four value band areas, it was determined by the study that even applying CIL to higher value areas would have likely adverse impacts on the S106 regime: i.e. a CIL charge 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.</p>	<p>effects were identified against Biodiversity, Landscape, Heritage and Air/Water/Soils, due to the impact of possible infrastructure improvements. The pooling of S106 contributions may fund large scale environmental improvements such as strategic landscape or biodiversity enhancements or could fund large scale infrastructure projects such as roads. Therefore impacts upon the environment depend upon implementation and site specific considerations.</p>	
28	<b>Green Infrastructure</b>  Purpose: 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.	<p>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 GI.</p>	<p>Overall it was considered that the policy is generally positive in relation to sustainability objectives. There are particularly positive effects around promoting strong communities, promoting healthy lifestyles, developing a sustainable economy, responding to the impacts of climate change, protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity and protecting and enhancing</p>	<p>The policy conforms with the principles of sustainable development and the updated version of the policy will further strengthen this. There are no outstanding issues in terms of the SA.</p>

v Land Registry House Price Index

vi [Local Plan Viability Study](#)

No	Policy	Reasonable Alternative Assessment	Preferred Option/Policy Assessment	Conclusions and Outstanding Issues
			the landscape. However, whilst the policy is positive to most sustainability objectives there are some recommendations which would enhance the social, economic and environmental benefits of this policy.	
29	<b>Utilities Telecommunications and Broadcast Infrastructure</b>  Purpose: 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 (including the revised version of 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. Whilst the impacts were deemed to be positive, there were areas of the policy recommended to be strengthened. The policy had no/minor impact on some sustainability objectives including climate change, waste and minerals extraction.	The policy accords with the principles of sustainable development and the updated version of the policy further strengthens objectives 1 and 3. There are no outstanding issues.
30	<b>Safeguarded Areas</b>  Purpose: Aims to ensure that new development does not jeopardise the safety or operation of, either by its location or design, major hazard sites or pipelines, Newcastle International Airport, Durham Tees Valley Airport, High Moorsey Meteorological radar, Fishburn Airfield, Shotton Airfield and Peterlee Parachute Drop Zone.	In relation to the officially safeguarded civil aerodromes of Durham Tees Valley and Newcastle, the business as usual approach has involved following national guidance set out in The Town and County Planning (Safeguarded Aerodromes, Technical Sites and Military Explosives Storage Areas) Direction 2002. This guidance provides advice to local planning authorities on the factors to consider when determining planning applications for developments falling within the safeguarded areas. The Direction also requires the inclusion of a policy in Local Plans, stating that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>officially safeguarded areas have been established;</li> <li>certain applications will be subject to consultation; and</li> <li>that there may be restrictions on the height or detailed design of buildings or on development which might create a bird hazard.</li> </ul>	Positive effects in relation to strong secure communities, economic effects and climate change adaptation. All other effects are minor or there is no clear link between the policy and the sustainability objectives.	Where the policy will have more than a minor effect against the sustainability objectives these will be positive. Some renewable energy developments and habitat creation proposals may be restricted or refused to avoid compromising safety. There are no outstanding issues.

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		The option to not include a policy in the emerging County Durham Plan is therefore not considered a reasonable alternative as it would not conform with the requirements of the Direction or Paragraph 162 of the NPPF which requires local plans to take account of the needs of strategic infrastructure including nationally significant infrastructure.		
31	<b>Sustainable Design in the Built Environment</b>  Purpose: Sets out design requirements for new development including for residential extensions and alteration, signage, adverts, street furniture and public art	<p>A number of different policy approaches were considered reasonable and were subject to separate SA. The Included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Option A: Have no prescribed energy target for development</li> <li>• Option B: Incorporation of 10% carbon reduction target for all new development</li> <li>• Option C: Incorporate requirement to deliver the Home Quality Mark (HQM)</li> <li>• Option D: Incorporate requirement to include BREEAM requirement for non-domestic development</li> </ul> <p>and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Option E: Adoption of Govt internal space standards</li> <li>• Option F: Do not adopt Govt internal space standards</li> </ul> <p>Other options were considered, including accessibility standards, which will be considered in the Addressing Housing Need Policy. Options around improving water standards were not considered to be viable due to County Durham having no issues of drought.</p>	Overall the assessment of this policy has determined that impacts are predicted to be primarily positive against social, economic and environmental objectives, with a high degree of certainty with regards the likelihood of the positive social effects identified. This is because the policy is positively worded with the aim to create and reinforce sustainable communities.	The principles of the recommendations are accepted either through changes to policy wording or through alignment with other plan policies. Whilst the overall clarity of the policy has also been improved, no changes to the positive effects originally predicted have been made. A new stand alone policy should be considered at the next stage of the plan development which focuses upon climate change and energy.

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		SA recommended an amalgamation of options B,C and D and option E to be taken forward. None of the options have been taken forward into the policy or into the General Development Principles (GDP) Policy . However a summary statement has been included within the supporting text of the GDP policy, confirming that the options will be further investigated to determine the viability of incorporating them within the next stage of Plan Preparation.		
32	<b>Hot Food Takeaways</b>  Purpose: Discourages large concentrations of hot food takeaways within commercial centres	Two policy approaches were considered reasonable and subject to SA. These were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Option A (Business as Usual): Do not intervene and allow all A5 uses subject to planning permission and other Plan policies' requirements.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul> Option B was recommended and taken forward	Principally positive social, economic and environmental impacts were identified. Importantly, significant health benefits were identified along with the potential to reduce health inequalities and help alleviate deprivation across the County. In some cases, however, impacts were determined likely to be either insignificant or uncertain.	The policy conforms with the SA recommendations from the options appraisal and the principles of sustainable development. As such, there are no changes to be made to the effects originally predicted and there are no outstanding issues to raise.
33	<b>Amenity and Pollution</b>  Purpose: Restricts development that would incur an unacceptable loss of amenity and/or give rise to unacceptable levels of pollution.	Given the requirements in the NPPF, Plan objectives and the specific amenity and pollution considerations in County Durham, the preferred option is to include a policy which ensures that new development does not cause and is not put at risk from unacceptable pollution and amenity issues. Any other alternative / option would not adequately contribute to the health and wellbeing of existing or new inhabitants or protect the environment. The inclusion of a policy maintains the NPPF and existing plan approach as all former district local plans included amenity and pollution policies.	Positive social, economic and environmental effects are predicted. Significantly positive effects are predicted against air, water and soil resources	The policy accords with the principles of sustainable development and the re-drafted version strengthens predicted positive effects against health objectives. There are no outstanding issues.

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34	<b>Despoiled, Degraded, Derelict, Contaminated and Unstable Land</b>  Purpose: Aims to prevent and address any contaminated land and instability issues through new development	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.	Overall positive social, economic and environmental effects were predicted. In some cases minor or uncertain effects were identified.	The policy conforms with the principles of sustainable development. There are no outstanding issues in terms of the SA.
35	<b>Renewable and Low Carbon Energy</b>  Purpose: Supports renewable and low carbon energy development in appropriate locations. No allocations are made	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.	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. Importantly, significant positive effects were considered certain in terms of the economy and helping to reduce carbon emissions. 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. This will ensure potential significant adverse effects are either avoided or mitigated. Although there is arguably potential for some harm to occur with this approach, policy requirements will help to ensure this is minimal.	All 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. There are also no outstanding issues concerning the policy.

No	Policy	Reasonable Alternative Assessment	Preferred Option/Policy Assessment	Conclusions and Outstanding Issues
36	<b>Wind Turbine Development</b>  Purpose: Sets out criteria against which wind turbine development will be determined. No wind turbine allocations are made.	<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"> <li>• (Option A) develop a policy based on the identification of suitable wind turbine areas.</li> <li>• (Option B) or 'do nothing' approach which would confirm that wind energy was no longer supported in the County with no suitable areas identified.</li> </ul> <p>It was concluded that only Option A was reasonable. This conclusion was drawn from the current government approach to ensuring new wind turbine development, of any scale, is located in 'suitable areas' and the need to meet strategic (e.g. NPPF and Climate Change Act 2008, etc) and local (e.g. Covenant of Mayors and County Durham Climate Change Strategy 2015) aspirations, targets and legal obligations in relation to carbon emissions and renewable energy generation. 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.</p>	<p>Predominantly 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 noted. Importantly, significant positive effects were considered certain in terms of the economy and helping to reduce carbon emissions. Against several environmental objectives minor effects were recorded. This is because the policy will only support 'appropriate' proposals in 'suitable locations'. Hence, irrespective of the scale of wind turbine development, proposals will only be supported if they meet the requirements of other Local Plan policies; depending upon the pertinent issues. This will ensure potential significant adverse effects are either avoided or mitigated. Although there is arguably potential for some harm to occur with this approach, policy requirements will help to ensure this is minimal.</p>	<p>Amendments made to the policy as a result of the SA around individual or cumulative impacts make it more robust. There are no outstanding issues to raise.</p>
37/38	<b>Water Management Infrastructure</b>  Purpose: (37) 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. (38) Sets out the approach to the disposal of foul water, sewage and waste water infrastructure and flood	<p>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.</p>	<p>Predominantly positive effects in promoting sustainability objectives. The policy is likely to have a positive effect on objectives including promoting strong communities, promoting healthy lifestyles, developing a sustainable economy, reducing the causes of climate change, adapting to the impacts of climate change, protecting and enhancing biodiversity, enhancing the quality and character of the landscape and protecting air, water and soil resources. There were no known negative impacts identified from this policy.</p>	<p>Changes to the policy as a result of the SA recommendations are likely to strengthen sustainability objective 10. This positive change is due to de-culverting watercourses which can encourage greater biodiversity by providing additional natural habitats. There are no outstanding issues to be raised.</p>



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	defence infrastructure. No allocations are made in the policy.			
39	<b>Durham Heritage Coast and Wider Coastal Zone</b>  Purpose: 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. It is therefore considered that no reasonable alternatives exist, as the policy maintains the Business as Usual approach set out in the NPPF and national guidance.	Policy is predicted to have positive and uncertain social effects, negative economic effects and a mixture of positive and negative environmental effects. Significantly negative effects were also predicted in relation to landscape and biodiversity objectives.	The changes made address the main sustainability issues raised. These largely related to ensuring the policy aligns better with the objectives and purposes of heritage coasts. The policy is now predicted to avoid significantly negative environmental effects and have more positive overall social, economic and environmental effects. There are no outstanding issues to raise.
40	<b>North Pennines AONB</b>  Purpose: 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 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.	Positive social, economic and environmental effects were predicted with significantly positive effects identified against landscape, biodiversity/geodiversity and heritage objectives.	The policy conforms with the principles of sustainable development and there are no outstanding issues.
41	<b>Landscape Character</b>  Purpose: 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. This is because although the policy restricts development in terms of landscape sensitivities, it does not prevent identified needs being met.	The policy conforms with the principles of sustainable development. There are no changes to be made to the effects originally predicted and there are no outstanding issues to raise.
42	<b>Trees, Woodlands and Hedges</b>  Purpose: Policy aims to protect trees, woodlands and hedges	The emerging County Durham Plan should be consistent with the principles within the NPPF, and County Durham Landscape Strategy, therefore it is considered that there are	Overall positive social and environmental effects were identified. In some instances, such positive effects were likely to be	Although some SA recommendations have been rejected, justification has been provided. Where recommendations have been accepted



No	Policy	Reasonable Alternative Assessment	Preferred Option/Policy Assessment	Conclusions and Outstanding Issues
		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.	significant (e.g. Health and climate change). It was considered that the policy did not have a significant link to economic objectives. Nonetheless several amendments to the policy wording and supporting text were recommended to strengthen approach in relation to biodiversity, landscape/ townscape and the historic environment.	and amendments made these do not affect the original appraisal. There are no outstanding issues to raise.
43	<b>Biodiversity and Geodiversity</b>  Purpose: 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 / options to delivering Plan Objective 8 (natural environment) other than ensuring that the approach in the policy is delivered. Whilst, the former District and Borough Local Plans, along with the Minerals and Waste Local Plans include policies which sought 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.	Positive social, economic and environmental effects are predicted	The policy conforms with the principles of sustainable development and there are no outstanding issues to raise.
44	<b>Internationally Designated Sites</b>  Purpose: 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.	Positive social, economic and environmental effects are predicted with significantly positive effects predicted against the biodiversity objective.	The policy conforms with the principles of sustainable development and there are no outstanding issues to raise.
45	<b>Protected Species and Nationally and Locally Protected Sites</b>  Purpose: Sets out the approach to the protection of SSSI's, National Nature Reserves, Protected and Priority species, local nature reserves and local wildlife sites.	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.	Positive social, economic and environmental effects are predicted	The changes made enhance effects predicted against the biodiversity and geodiversity objective. There are no outstanding issues to raise concerning this policy.

No	Policy	Reasonable Alternative Assessment	Preferred Option/Policy Assessment	Conclusions and Outstanding Issues
46	<b>Historic Environment</b>  Purpose: 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	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 or determining development impacts.	Primarily positive effects were identified, with a high degree of certainty associated with several of these predicted impacts. 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 biodiversity. There was uncertainty as to the potential impacts under climate change mitigation and adaptation. Minor effects or no direct link was noted against all other objectives.	Following SA, the policy is now clearer on what will be expected in terms of the sustainable management of the County's historic environment. Despite this, it is considered that these changes do not affect the original predicted scores. Where recommendations have been rejected, justification has been provided and accepted.
47	<b>Durham Cathedral and Castle World Heritage Site</b>  Purpose: Sets criteria for development impacting upon the world heritage site and its outstanding universal values	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.	Overwhelming positive effects were identified, with a high degree of certainty associated with such predicted impacts. 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. Minor effects or no direct link was noted against all other objectives.	Following SA, the mitigation has been accepted around recognising the economic potential of the WHS and the approach to low carbon and renewable energy. There are no outstanding issues to raise concerning this policy.
48	<b>Stockton and Darlington Railway</b>  Purpose: 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	The Reasonable alternative was the 'business as usual' option of the non-inclusion of the S&DR policy with reliance on the Historic Environment Policy to cover protection, safeguarding and enhancement of the assets.	Overall there are considered to be generally positive effects with particular positives around communities, education and health and landscape and historic environment.	Following 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.

No	Policy	Reasonable Alternative Assessment	Preferred Option/Policy Assessment	Conclusions and Outstanding Issues
49	<b>Sustainable Minerals and Waste Resource Management</b>  Purpose: Sets out the overarching approach to the promotion and facilitation of a sustainable resource economy	No reasonable alternatives to preferred option policy considering national planning policy and guidance requirements. The 'business as usual' option was considered not a reasonable because, as represented by the 'saved' policies from the former local and district plans, it does 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.	Overall this policy is predicted to have permanent positive countywide effects against relevant SA objectives (e.g. communities, health, economic, biodiversity, landscape, the historic environment, waste and minerals). Given the intent of the policy, significant positive effects were identified against the latter two. There was also a high degree of certainty identified in relation to many of these positive effects. Nonetheless there was some uncertainty with regards impacts on climate change adaptation and resources (air, water and soil) considering they will be influenced by the location, scale, and design of facilities.	Response to recommendations is accepted due to the requirement for a waste audit being included as part of the supporting text in the GDP policy. It is noted, however that text stipulates that a waste audit would be 'useful' on proposals that generate significant volumes of waste. Further consideration should be given to improving the clarity of this response.
50	<b>Safeguarding Minerals Sites, Minerals Related Infrastructure and Waste Management Sites</b>  Purpose: 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.	Positive social and economic effects and a mixture of positive and minor environmental effects	The accepted changes have enhanced the clarity of the policy in relation to the consideration of social and environmental impacts, placed a stronger emphasis on potential amenity issues and has expanded the remit of the policy in relation to minerals facilities and infrastructure. It is accepted that safeguarding zones for sewage treatment works is suitably addressed within the Amenity and Pollution policy. There are no outstanding issues.
51	<b>Meeting the Need for Primary Aggregates</b>  Purpose: Supports making sufficient land available for mineral working to enable the maintenance of a steady and adequate supply of primary aggregates. Identifies further	No reasonable alternatives are considered to exist to ensuring Plan policy supports meeting existing primary aggregate needs and any future needs that may be identified over the Plan period. There are also no reasonable alternatives to the consideration and permitting of proposals which may exceed the identified need under certain circumstances. This reflects the requirements of the NPPF and maintains the business as usual approach.	Positive social and economic effects. Whilst the approach outlined will limit harm to the environment some negative environmental effects are unavoidable linked to meeting the need for primary aggregates over the Plan period.	The clarity of the policy has been improved and other recommendations will be taken into account in the drafting of forthcoming policies in the Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations Document. Whilst there will be some inevitable adverse effects to the environment as a result of meeting the identified needs for primary aggregates

No	Policy	Reasonable Alternative Assessment	Preferred Option/Policy Assessment	Conclusions and Outstanding Issues
	need for Carboniferous Limestone and sets out the locational approach to the working of Magnesian Limestone, Carboniferous Limestone, Dolerite and Sand and Gravel. No minerals allocations are made by this policy.	<p>Reasonable alternatives do exist in relation to the locational working of Carboniferous Limestone and Sand and Gravel. These include:</p> <p><b>Carboniferous Limestone</b></p> <p>A: Only outside of the North Pennines AONB and in areas not subject to international or national biodiversity designations;</p> <p>B: As (a) but in addition proposals for extensions to existing quarries and the reworking of former carboniferous limestone 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><b>Sand and Gravel</b></p> <p>A: Proposals to deepen existing magnesian limestone sites</p> <p>B: Proposals to laterally extend existing magnesian limestone sites</p> <p>C: New sand and gravel sites, working fluvial or glacial sand and gravels wherever the resources occurs</p> <p>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</p> <p>E: Don't allocate new sites or extend existing sites</p> <p>SA recommended option B for Carboniferous Limestone and a combination of sites A,B and D for Sand and Gravel. The site allocated in the Plan and approach of the policy aligns with Option A for Carboniferous limestone. Plan policy aligns with options A, B and D for Sand and Gravel.</p>		over the Plan period all steps have been taken within the policy to ensure that these are reduced.

No	Policy	Reasonable Alternative Assessment	Preferred Option/Policy Assessment	Conclusions and Outstanding Issues
52	<b>Brick Making Raw Materials</b>  Purpose: 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.	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.	Predominantly positive social, economic and environmental effects, albeit some adverse effects to landscape, biodiversity and possibly heritage may occur during the excavation of sites.	The acceptance of recommendations relating to restoration proposals increases the certainty of long term positive effects against biodiversity and landscape objectives. However, there are no changes to the original predicted effects as a result. There are also no outstanding issues concerning the policy.
53	<b>Surface Mined Coal and Fireclay</b>  Purpose: 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.	Paragraph 149 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (and 206 of the consultation draft NPPF) clearly states that permission should not be given for the extraction of coal unless it is or can be made environmentally acceptable, or if not, proposals provide national, local or community benefits which outweigh the likely impacts. As any other approach would not be in conformity with the requirements of the NPPF, there were not considered to be any reasonable alternatives to the approach presented within Plan policy. Policy maintains the 'business as usual' approach set out within the saved policies of the County Durham Minerals Local Plan (adopted December 2000).	Positive economic effects but inherent uncertainty against some social and most environmental objectives as to whether positive or negative effects will be achieved due to the requirement in the NPPF and therefore the policy to consider outweighing benefits where unacceptable adverse impacts are likely. Where positive effects are identified, longer term effects are uncertain due to the Government's commitment to phase out coal fired power stations.	Following the SA, the clarity of the policy has been improved in respect of avoiding the sterilisation of fireclays. However, as the policy is in conformity with the NPPF which allows environmentally unacceptable proposals where it is considered that national, local or community benefits outweigh the impacts, 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.
54	<b>Natural Building and Roofing Stone</b>  Purpose: 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.	Three options were considered as reasonable alternatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A: Only outside of the North Pennines AONB and in areas not subject to international or national biodiversity designations</li><li>• 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)</li><li>• C: Do not provide any locational guidance</li></ul>	Positive social, economic and environmental effects are predicted.	Following SA, the circumstances for allowing non major working in the AONB have been tightly defined within the policy. There are no outstanding issues.

No	Policy	Reasonable Alternative Assessment	Preferred Option/Policy Assessment	Conclusions and Outstanding Issues
		Option B was recommended and taken forward as it is more likely to ensure a steady, adequate and diverse supply of natural building and roofing stone.		
55	<b>Reopening of Relic Stone Quarries for Heritage Projects</b>  Purpose: Supports proposals to reopen relic stone quarries identified by Historic England on a temporary and time limited basis where certain criteria are demonstrated	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 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.	Minor or no social effects. Positive economic and environmental effects.	There are no changes to the SA effects originally predicted and no outstanding issues.
56	<b>Safeguarding Mineral resources</b>  Purpose: Aims to protect mineral resources from unnecessary sterilisation by non minerals development	No reasonable alternatives are considered to exist to the approach outlined in the policy which reflects the requirements of the NPPF and the outcomes of the Strategic Stone Study. This maintains the business as usual approach as set out in the County Durham Minerals Local Plan (2000).	Positive social, economic and environmental effects. Significantly positive effects identified against economic and minerals objectives.	The policy conforms with the principles of sustainable development and there are no outstanding issues.
57	<b>The Conservation and Use of High Grade Mineral Resources</b>  Purpose: Aims to specifically protect and conserve high grade mineral resources including high grade dolomite.	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 or for other minerals which may become considered as high grade during the Plan period.	Positive social, economic and environmental effects are predicted. Significantly positive effects are predicted against the following sustainability objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To reduce waste and encourage the sustainable and efficient use of materials</li> <li>• To improve the sustainability of minerals extraction and use and reduce adverse impacts on communities and the environment</li> </ul>	The policy conforms with the principles of sustainable development and there are no outstanding issues to raise.
58	<b>Preferred Area for Future Carboniferous Limestone Extraction</b>	Four options were considered as reasonable alternatives:  A. Hulands Quarry Eastern Extension	Positive social and economic effects are predicted. Some adverse environmental effects are predicted against climate change,	The site is predicted to have the least impact on environmental receptors of all the reasonable alternatives

No	Policy	Reasonable Alternative Assessment	Preferred Option/Policy Assessment	Conclusions and Outstanding Issues
	<p>Purpose: Allocates land to the east of Hulands Quarry for the winning and working of Carboniferous Limestone</p>	<p>B. Western Extension to Heights Quarry</p> <p>C. Area of Investigation east of Heights Quarry</p> <p>D. Washpool Crag, Bollihope 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>Option A was recommended and taken forward as it will assist in meeting the identified need without raising the potential for unacceptable adverse environmental impacts.</p>	<p>biodiversity and landscape objectives. However there is potential for positive longer term effects against the biodiversity objective.</p>	<p>proposed. Safeguards and requirements included within policy wording will ensure that proposals will only be permitted that have acceptable impacts on communities and the environment. These are considered sufficient to address the issue raised of potential cumulative effects to health as a result of other minerals working in the area.</p>
59	<p><b>Strategic Area of Search to the South of Todhills Brickworks</b></p> <p>Purpose: 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 site maintains the 'business as usual' approach as the area of search 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>Predominantly positive social, and economic effects. Mixture of positive and minor environmental effects with some residual adverse effects as a result of excavation.</p>	<p>The acceptance of the SA recommendations will help to minimise social and environmental effects. No outstanding issues are identified.</p>
60	<p><b>Waste Management Provision</b></p> <p>Purpose: 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>Reasonable alternatives were considered within the 2016 Issues and Options - Sustainability Appraisal. this considered three options:</p> <p>1. Make provision for all of County Durham's Waste (net self-sufficiency)</p>	<p>Predominantly positive social, economic and environmental effects. Many of the impacts are minor, however the key provision of aiming to drive the management of waste up the waste hierarchy has generally positive impacts, both socially and environmentally by potentially reducing the amount of waste going to landfill.</p>	<p>No outstanding issues. The policy is positively worded and could have long term positive impacts through possible enhancements of sites.</p>



No	Policy	Reasonable Alternative Assessment	Preferred Option/Policy Assessment	Conclusions and Outstanding Issues
		<p>2. 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>3. 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>The option brought forward is essentially options 1, as policy confirms the intention to aim for net self sufficiency, however 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>The policy approach demonstrates compliance with the EU Waste Framework Directive, which drives waste up the 'Waste Hierarchy'. Provision for future waste management in County Durham is based upon providing facilities to deal with the county's own waste arisings whilst acknowledging those flows which already exist (net self-sufficiency). In addition the County Durham Municipal Waste contract currently involves management routes outside the county. The strategy for residual Local Authority Collected Waste (LACW) therefore makes use of spare capacity within the region which will allow management of waste close to source and is more sustainable than providing strategic scale facilities unnecessarily within the county, which therefore constitutes the business as usual option.</p>		
61	<p><b>Location of New Waste Management Facilities</b></p> <p>Purpose: Sets out the criteria by which proposals for waste facilities in appropriate, sustainable locations will be</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</p>	<p>Predominantly positive economic and environmental effects. There is some potential for negative social and environmental effects, especially around communities and health, however this can be mitigated through the inclusion of the suggested mitigation.</p>	<p>Changes to policy as a result of sustainability appraisal recommendations, including reference in policy to designated sites and green belt will strengthen policy, especially around the social and environmental</p>



No	Policy	Reasonable Alternative Assessment	Preferred Option/Policy Assessment	Conclusions and Outstanding Issues
	permitted. No allocations or potential areas for such are identified by this policy.	through the 'call for sites'. The Local Authority therefore have applied a flexible criteria based approach which will allow development in certain locations providing they meet key criteria. The 'business as usual' option was considered, which in this case, comprises of the 'saved' policies from the former waste policies from the former local plans. The preferred option policy as presented consolidates the policies into one criteria based policy.		aspects of the policy. Whilst there remain some recommendations that have not been accepted, the justification for these has been accepted as they are included within other local plan policies or in the waste and minerals DPD. There are no outstanding issues.

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

**6.1** Cumulative and synergistic impacts of policies are identified to determine whether any policies that alone have insignificant effects are likely to generate significant positive or adverse effects in combination with other policies; or where several individual effects have an alternative combined effect. This was vital so that a view could be taken on the potential overall impacts of the emerging Local Plan.

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

Policy	SA Objectives														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
3	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
6	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
7	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
8	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
11	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
12	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
13	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
14	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
15	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
16	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
17	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
18	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
19	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
21	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
24	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
25	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
26	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
27	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
28	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
29	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
30	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
31	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
32	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
33	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
34	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
35	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
36	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
37/38	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
39	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
40	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
41	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
42	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
43	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
44	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
45	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
46	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
47	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
48	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
49	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
50	0	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
51	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
52	✓	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
53	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0
54	✓	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
55	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
56	0	✓	0	✓	0	✓	✓	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
57	0	✓	0	0	0	✓	✓	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
58	0	0	0	0	0	✓	✓	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
59	✓	✓	✓	0	✓	✓	✓	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
61	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overall Cumulative Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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

SA Objective	Commentary
1. To provide everybody with the opportunity to live in a decent and affordable home	<p>Whilst a number of policies will contribute significantly to the objective, positive as opposed to significantly positive effects are predicted overall against this SA objective. This is because issues of viability prevent requesting the proportions of affordable housing required to meet need. However, there are a number of other mechanisms for the delivery of affordable homes outside of the emerging Plan including Homes England providers and direct provision by Registered Provider. The amount of provision required from developers will also be regularly reviewed to reflect changing economic conditions. Please note that the emerging Plan also maximises opportunities for the delivery of affordable housing through site allocations and making exceptions for provision in rural areas.</p> <p>Significantly positive effect relate to the following factors:</p> <p>The quantity of housing proposed (25,992 new homes over the Plan period) is in line with the Government's standard approach to assessing housing need. This approach takes into account household growth and market signals in County Durham. The steps taken to apply an upward adjustment to the housing allocated in the emerging Plan to account for the potential non delivery of commitments which contribute a substantial proportion towards the overall numbers of housing needed, provides greater certainty that the houses needed will be delivered. The urban extension sites in Durham City place a large quantity of housing in a highest market value area, providing confidence over their delivery and ability to also generate affordable housing. Making exceptions in relation to the provision of affordable housing in rural areas on sites which are adjacent to existing settlements but for the purposes of policy are located in the countryside, will contribute to meet the identified need for affordable housing in rural areas. The emerging Plan also confirms that affordable housing is deemed an exception to the 'very special circumstances' that needs to be demonstrated for development in the Green Belt, in line with the NPPF. The policy also contributes to housing decency through the provision of essential infrastructure to cater for modern lifestyles and high quality design.</p>
2. To promote strong, secure communities	<p>Positive cumulative effects are predicted against this SA objective</p> <p>Significantly positive effects relate to the following factors:</p> <p>The emerging 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 emerging Plan is also vital as conversely, frequent house moves, 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>

SA Objective	Commentary
3. To improve education, training and life-long learning, and maintain a healthy labour market	<p>Positive cumulative effects are predicted against this SA objective</p> <p>Significantly positive effects relate to the following factors:</p> <p>The emerging Plan supports 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 emerging Plan also promotes 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. Therefore, supporting telecommunications infrastructure and installation of broadband infrastructure to new residential development will improve access to education.</p>
4. To reduce health inequalities and promote health lifestyles	<p>Positive cumulative effects are predicted against this SA objective.</p> <p>Significantly positive effects relate to the following factors:</p> <p>Rural housing and employment exceptions as supported by the emerging Plan 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 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 removal of through traffic through Durham City's Air Quality Management Area through the provision of a Northern Relief Road and reallocation of space to sustainable modes on Milburngate Bridge. However, further air quality assessment is required to quantify these effects further.</p>
5. To reduce the need to travel and promote use of sustainable transport options	<p>Positive cumulative effects are predicted against this SA objective.</p> <p>Significantly positive effects relate to the following factors:</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. <sup>(vii)</sup> 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 21km gap between stations which restricts access for a substantial number of residents to the rail network. The safeguarding of the Leamside Line and cycling routes 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</p>

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

SA Objective	Commentary
	<p>first principle.' Whilst significantly positive effects have not been predicted against Policy 24: Durham City Sustainable Transport, please note that this is only because the implementation of a Western Relief Road will increase road capacity in the City. Otherwise significantly positive effects would be predicted in recognition of the measures which will increase levels of sustainable mode shift in Durham City and help to overcome the barrier of space for sustainable modes within the City.</p>
<p>6. To alleviate deprivation and poverty</p>	<p>Positive cumulative impacts are predicted against this SA objective.</p> <p>Significant positive effects relate to the following factors:</p> <p>Improvements in physical access to jobs, including accessibility by public transport when new development is considered. The development of physical infrastructure is also likely to be positive, including schemes such Horden Rail Station.</p>
<p>7. To develop a sustainable and diverse economy with high levels of employment</p>	<p>Positive cumulative impacts are predicted against this SA objective.</p> <p>Significant positive effects relate to the following factors:</p> <p>Ensuring sufficient housing will be delivered over the Plan period which contributes to labour market flexibility. The quantity of development will also support the construction industry. The emerging 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. Allocated and safeguarded transport routes and facilities will increase access to employment centres and is likely to reduce congestion (e.g. Horden rail station). Renewable and Low Carbon Energy could also help create resilience in the economy, through the creation of new opportunities. The emerging plan will also protect important mineral resources.</p>
<p>8. To reduce the causes of climate change</p>	<p>Positive cumulative impacts are predicted against this SA objective.</p> <p>Significant positive effects relate to the following factors:</p> <p>The support given to renewable and low carbon energy and the approach taken to wind turbine development. The protection given to habitats including, peatland and trees and woodlands is likely to have a significant positive contribution</p> <p>Significant negative effects relate to the following factors:</p> <p>The quantity of development associated with housing allocations is likely to result in an increase in carbon emissions from both construction and 'in-use' as well as transport related emissions</p>

SA Objective	Commentary
9. To respond and enable adaptation to the inevitable impacts of climate change	<p>Positive cumulative impacts are predicted against this SA objective.</p> <p>Significant positive effects relate to the following factors:</p> <p>The emerging 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 emerging Plan will also help to protect trees and vegetation which help to provide shading and cooling in urban environments.</p>
10. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity	<p>Negative cumulative effects are predicted against this SA objective.</p> <p>Significantly negative effects relate to the following factors:</p> <p>The loss of ancient woodland associated with the Northern Relief Road. This is an irreplaceable habitat.</p> <p>Significantly positive effects relate to the following factors:</p> <p>These predominantly relate to those demand management policies which are directly connected with the protection and enhancement of biodiversity.</p>
11. To protect and enhance the quality and character of landscape and townscape	<p>Negative cumulative effects are predicted against this SA objective</p> <p>Significantly negative effects relate to the following factors:</p> <p>Impacts on landscape character and visual amenity to the east and west of Durham City following the introduction of a Northern and Western Relief Road. There is also the potential for additional significant adverse effects if a taller cable stay bridge option is selected for the river crossings.</p> <p>Significantly positive effects relate to the following factors:</p> <p>These predominantly relate to those demand management policies which are directly connected with the protection and enhancement of landscape character and quality such as the North Pennines AONB and Durham Coast and Heritage Coast.</p>

SA Objective	Commentary
12. To protect and enhance cultural heritage and the historic environment	<p>Positive cumulative effects are predicted against this SA objective. Whilst it is recognised that the relief roads could have significant adverse effects on the World Heritage Site and Durham City Conservation Area, these can be avoided through a lower bridge structure. Many of the effects relating to other allocations will depend on the specific design and layout of the sites.</p> <p>Significantly positive effects relate to the following factors:</p> <p>The emerging 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 emerging 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 emerging 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>
13. To protect and improve air, water and soil resources	<p>Negative cumulative effects are predicted against this SA objective at this stage. However, these have the potential to be positive depending on the outcomes of further air quality assessment in respect of Durham City's Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). 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. In relation to soil resources, a greater quantity of brownfield land as opposed to greenfield land is allocated for housing. However, with the addition of employment land and relief roads a greater overall quantity of greenfield land is likely to be lost development, which may constitute best and most versatile agricultural land.</p> <p>Significantly positive effects relate to the following factors:</p> <p>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. Please note that depending on the outcomes of further air quality assessment, the allocation of the Northern Relief Road in particular may be found to significantly benefit air quality by reducing the levels of through traffic within Durham City's AQMA.</p>
14. To reduce waste and encourage the sustainable and efficient use of materials	<p>Positive cumulative impacts are predicted against this SA objective at this stage. However, whilst many policies have waste management implications, there is a mixture of outcomes with both positive and negative impacts being predicted. Most negative impacts relate to policies identifying an increase in the quantity of development proposed over the plan period (it is considered likely that waste arising (e.g. household and commercial) will increase). Conversely impacts are not 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.</p> <p>Significant positive effects relate to the following factors:</p>

SA Objective	Commentary
	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.
15. To improve the sustainability of minerals extraction and use and reduce adverse impacts on communities and the environment	<p>Significantly positive cumulative effects are predicted against this SA objective.</p> <p>Significantly positive effects relate to the following factors:</p> <p>In relation 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>

## 7 Monitoring Proposals

**7.1** The SEA Directive 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. The SEA Directive requires that monitoring needs to be focused on significant sustainability 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
- 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
- Assist in taking action to reduce adverse impacts

**7.4** To date, the SA has identified significant environmental effects in relation to local landscape character and visual impacts to the east and west of Durham City and loss of ancient woodland where a river crossing of the Wear is required for a Northern Relief Road. Whilst significant air quality impacts in respect of Durham City's Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) have not been identified there is some uncertainty surrounding to what extent the removal of through traffic from the AQMA will improve upon existing conditions when there will be an increase in traffic brought about by housing and employment growth in line with national forecasts. Further assessment of this issue is required and additional air quality monitoring within the City may also be beneficial. The following monitoring measures are proposed:

#### **Landscape and Visual Impacts - Durham City**

**7.5** A comprehensive landscape mitigation strategy is required for the northern and western relief roads. This should include timescales for the implementation of the mitigation to ensure that landscape and visual impacts can be reduced throughout construction of the roads and on their completion. For example, earthworks such as the creation of embankments and robust tree planting may need to take place in advance of construction to minimise visual impacts in longer distant views. Ensuring that the measures are implemented on time in advance of each construction phase where required and that these are monitored and reported back upon should be part of any planning condition.

#### **Ancient Woodland - River Wear Gorge**

**7.6** A detailed mitigation and compensation strategy is required for the loss of ancient woodland that will occur as a result of the River Wear crossing associated with the Northern Relief road. The impacts will need to be fully understood once further detail is available regarding the type and design of bridge that will be used. Whilst it is recognised that ancient woodland is an irreplaceable habitat and compensation measures will only ever partially compensate for damage, a package could include:

- planting new native woodland or wood pasture;
- restoring or managing other ancient woodland
- connecting woodland and veteran trees separated by development with green bridges, tunnels or hedgerows;
- managing veteran trees;
- replacing lost veteran trees

**7.7** Compensation measures will need to be appropriate for the site and the scale and nature of impacts upon it. The implementation of the mitigation and compensation strategy should be subject to individual monitoring to ensure that it is delivered in a timely manner to avoid impacts where possible and minimise levels of harm throughout the construction phases.

### **Air Quality Management Area - Durham City**

**7.8** Air quality monitoring is already carried out at a number of locations in the City, including main transport routes. However, depending upon the outcomes of further air quality assessment, additional monitoring areas within the City may be required. Depending on the outcomes of further air quality assessment, additional monitoring activity to that undertaken as part of annual screening assessments may be required to determine whether nitrogen dioxide emissions fall within predicted ranges. In the event of a breach, the County Durham Plan and Air Quality Action Plan for Durham City should be reviewed. The trigger points for this will need to be determined following further air quality assessment.

## **8 Conclusion and Outstanding Issues**

**8.1** The Sustainability Appraisal has been integrated with the plan-making process to date and has performed a key role in developing and recommending the most sustainable approaches to addressing County Durham's social, economic and environmental issues. The SA has also ensured that the proposed policies which reflect the selected approach contribute towards the principles of sustainability. The following overview in relation to the key contribution of the emerging Plan to County Durham's future sustainability is provided.

**8.2** The approach taken by the emerging Plan best ensures that the quantity of housing required to meet future needs will be delivered and that employment land will be used more appropriate and productively to the benefit of communities and the economy. The approach taken is also more likely to focus employment growth to areas that are attractive to the market, which should contribute to their longer term stability and success.

**8.3** It is considered the proposed housing and employment allocations will not only contribute to meeting relevant identified needs, including those for affordable housing and office floorspace, but also help to deliver sustainable patterns of growth. Importantly the distributions of housing and employment land broadly reflect one another, which will help to ensure good access to a wide range of employment and training opportunities as well as attract skilled professionals to live and work in the County. By delivering growth in the County's larger towns and villages in addition to protecting and enhancing its hierarchy of retail centres the emerging Plan will support their long-term vitality and regeneration priorities. It has also been determined that the spatial strategy is likely to provide better access to services and facilities as well as help reduce the need to travel and encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport. The approach to employment land presented in the emerging Plan will help the County's economic strengths to be maximised by not only encouraging strategic investment in key economic markets and sectors, but also by protecting and supporting the growth of existing businesses in more local markets. This is likely to increase employment rates, alleviate deprivation and help to re-balance the County's economy making it more diverse and resilient. These economic benefits will be supported by emerging Plan proposals to raise the quality of the visitor experience in terms of attractions and accommodation.

**8.4** Through various iterative stages of assessment of the sites, in which SA plays a key role, in order to meet the quantity of development proposed the relevant emerging Plan policies include specific requirements to avoid and mitigate potential adverse social and environmental impacts as well as secure enhancements. This is particularly important in relation to Durham City given the scale of new development proposed here alongside its unique and high-quality built, natural and historic environment; which includes Durham Cathedral and Castle World Heritage Site and a green belt encircling the city. In order to facilitate sustainable patterns of growth and enable identified housing need to be met it is nonetheless recognised that release of land from the Durham City Green Belt is required. Even though harm to this green belt is recognised as unavoidable, it is considered that the severity of such harm will be reduced by the sites selected, their site-specific requirements, supporting masterplans and the proposed compensatory measures to improve environmental quality and access. It is nonetheless noted that the Northern and Western Relief Roads will impact on the openness of the Durham City green belt. Across the rest of the County's designated green belt a proactive approach to protection against inappropriate development has been taken.

**8.5** The Infrastructure Delivery Plan ensures that the infrastructure requirements to support the planned development is known and that adequate and timely investment is achieved. However, in respect of the proposed highways infrastructure identified to relieve existing and future highways network performance issues and provide greater space for sustainable modes in Durham City, the SA has identified the need for further design detail and environmental assessment to more fully understand the impacts.

**8.6** Development in the Countryside is supported which underpins agriculture, other rural land based business, hobby farming, essential infrastructure, community facilities, equestrian development, affordable housing and the needs of rural workers, thereby sustaining rural communities whilst protecting the countryside from inappropriate forms of widespread development including the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

**8.7** In relation to affordable housing, it is recognised that issues of viability prevents requesting the proportions of affordable housing required to meet full need evidenced in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. However, there are a number of other mechanisms for the delivery of affordable homes outside of the Plan including The Homes England providers and direct provision by Registered Provider. The emerging Plan will also be reviewed regularly to reflect changing economic conditions. In addition, the emerging Plan also maximises opportunities for the delivery of affordable housing through site allocations and making exceptions for provision in rural areas.

**8.8** The emerging plan confirms that six sites have been allocated for Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA). These allocations are likely to have positive social and economic impacts as they are all central Durham City sites with some being redevelopments. Policy also confirms significant safeguards that will protect important heritage and landscape features. The emerging plan will also restrict houses in multiple occupation (HMO) in order to retain/ promote inclusive and mixed communities.

**8.9** The emerging plan confirms that traveller site need would be met through the development management process, given historic approval rates, whilst proposals for new children's care homes, would result in development being in safer secure environments away from crime risk and with appropriate management structures.

**8.10** In relation to transport, the allocation of Horden Rail Station and the Northern Relief Road in combination with the delivery of sustainable travel measures identified in the Durham City Sustainable Transport Delivery Plan, which includes the reallocation of space to sustainable modes across Milburngate Bridge, will increase levels of sustainable mode shift and increase space for sustainable travel. The allocation of the 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, the 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.

**8.11** The design of developments needs to be carefully planned to ensure key characteristics of an area are enhanced. The incorporation of the Building for Life review process will support this process. Further work will be completed for the next stage of plan development which will investigate if a policy on internal space standards is required. This would improve social and economic objectives.

**8.12** Whilst the emerging plan does not have a specific climate change policy, this has been suggested as an SA recommendation in order to provide more focus on this particular issue. However the emerging Plan still 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. More certainty is required about such requirements, which will be further investigated at the next stage of the plan. Support for renewable energy developments is included alongside wind turbine development (in appropriate areas). With County Durham having over 200MW of installed renewable energy capacity, this is an important area for social, environmental and economic reasons.

**8.13** The emerging plan and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has ensured that there will be no development located in areas most vulnerable to flood risk. 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 supports applications for additional flood defence infrastructure.

**8.14** Following SA, the environmental policies in the emerging Plan will 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 emerging Plan to provide specific protection for coastal internationally designated sites, including protection from any impacts arising as a result of development in neighbouring authorities.

**8.15** In relation 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. The locational approach to future minerals working within County Durham will also contribute towards protecting the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Internationally designated Wildlife Sites.

**8.16** Waste will be managed in line with the waste hierarchy helping to minimise any adverse impacts, such as waste going to landfill and will assist in regional net self sufficiency by managing waste streams as near as possible to their production

**Key Outstanding Issues**

- Specific air quality assessment will be required to refine further the effects on Durham City's Air Quality Management Area;
- Detailed masterplans are required for the urban extension sites and major employment allocations. These need to demonstrate how net gains in biodiversity will be achieved;
- Further bridge design detail in respect of the Northern and Western Relief road river crossings are required along with an assessment of their impact to biodiversity, landscape and heritage; and
- Detailed mitigation strategies are required for the Northern and Western Relief roads. As part of this, a detailed ancient woodland mitigation and compensation strategy is required



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