



Northumberland Local Plan

Local Development Scheme 2018 - 2021

(Incorporating the timetable for the Local Plan)

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) requires Local Planning Authorities to prepare and maintain a Local Development Scheme (LDS). The LDS should set out what Development Plan Documents, which will comprise the Local Plan for an area, are to be produced by the Council, their content and broad timetable for preparation. The purpose of this LDS is to explain how and when the Council will prepare the Local Plan for Northumberland.
- 1.2. This Northumberland LDS covers the period 2018-2021. It replaces the Northumberland LDS which came into effect in November 2017.

What is a Local Plan?

- 1.3. All local planning authorities are required to have an up to date Local Plan. The Local Plan sets out the strategic priorities for development of an area and covers housing, commercial, transport development and environmental protection. They must plan positively for the development and infrastructure required in the area to meet the strategic priorities. The Local Plan will also include a Policies Map which illustrates the geographic extent of policies and proposals on a map base.
- 1.4. In addition, there are a number of documents which support a Local Plan, including:

Local Development Scheme (LDS)	The timetable for the preparation of local development documents (this document).
Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)	Sets out the Council's approach to engaging with local communities during plan preparation and when consulting on planning applications.
Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)	Provide additional advice and information relating to specific policies or proposals in a Development Plan Document (DPD).
Authority Monitoring Report (AMR)	Sets out the progress in terms of producing DPD and implementing policies.

- 1.5. Through the Localism Act the Government introduced a new tier of plans called 'Neighbourhood Plans'. These are prepared by Town and Parish Councils or by specially designated neighbourhood forums in areas without a Parish. There is not a statutory requirement for the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans. The scope of the plan is determined by the Town and Parish Council in consultation with their communities. Neighbourhood Plans must take account of national planning policy and be in general conformity with the Local Plan. Neighbourhood Plans are not Development Plan Documents and therefore cannot be included in this LDS. However, once made, or approved by referendum, they will form part of the Development Plan for the area. Further information on Neighbourhood Plans

currently being prepared within Northumberland can be found on the Council's website¹.

What is a Local Development Scheme?

- 1.6. The LDS provides the starting point for local communities and stakeholders to find out about the Council's timetable for preparing the various documents which the Council intends to produce as part of the Northumberland Local Plan over a three year period. The LDS describes:
- The content and geographic area to which each of the DPD relates;
 - The timetable and key milestones in their preparation;
 - The interrelationships between each document; and
 - The arrangements during the transitional period for saved policies.

What is the existing Northumberland Development Plan?

- 1.7. Northumberland County Council was established as a unitary authority on 1 April 2009 following Local Government Reorganisation. It replaced the former County Council and six District/ Borough Councils of Alnwick, Berwick, Blyth Valley, Castle Morpeth, Tynedale and Wansbeck².
- 1.8. The former Northumberland local planning authorities had produced their own Development Plans to guide development in their area, which include:
- The saved Policy S5 of the Northumberland County and National Park Joint Structure Plan Alteration (February 2005);
 - The Core Strategies of the former Local Authorities of Alnwick (2007), Blyth Valley (2007), and Tynedale (2007) and the Blyth Valley Development Control Policies DPD (2007); and
 - The saved Local Plan policies (under the Secretary of State's Direction) of the Northumberland Minerals Local Plan (2000), Northumberland Waste Local Plan (2001), Alnwick District Wide Local Plan (1997), Berwick upon Tweed Local Plan (1999), Blyth Valley District Local Plan (1999), Castle Morpeth District Local Plan (2003), Tynedale District Local Plan (2000), and Wansbeck District Local Plan (2007).
- 1.9. Policies contained within these documents that have been saved under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 will remain in force and will continue to provide the basis for planning decisions until replaced by subsequent Development Plan Documents.
- 1.10. These documents, together with any made Neighbourhood Plans, have been brought together to form the 'Northumberland Consolidated Planning Policy Framework'. This document sets out the relevant planning policy documents, both statutory and non-statutory, for Northumberland. A full list of the documents contained within the Northumberland Consolidated Planning Policy Framework can be accessed from the Council's website³.

1.11. Planning law states that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications. The closer the policies in the Development Plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that can be given to the development plan policies⁴.

1 <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Planning-policy/Neighbourhood.aspx>

2 While wholly within the County, the Northumberland National Park Authority remains a separate local planning authority

3 <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Planning-policy/Policies.aspx#planningpolicyframework>

4 National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012, Annex 1

2. The Northumberland Local Plan

What DPDs will be produced and what will they contain?

- 2.1. Northumberland County Council is focussing on the preparation of one Development Plan Document – a single Local Plan for Northumberland. The profile for the proposed Local Development Document, including a brief description of the role and content of the Development Plan Document and the key milestones in its preparation are set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.2. The Northumberland Local Plan will:
- Set the strategic planning policies of the Council;
 - Provide the planning principles, including detailed development management policies to guide future development and planning decisions in Northumberland⁵ from 2016-2036;
 - Set the general scale and distribution of new development which is required to meet Northumberland's needs to 2036;
 - Include strategic allocations as well as detailed land allocations and designations; and
 - Include site specific proposals for the development, protection and conservation of land.
- 2.3. Once adopted the Local Plan will supersede:
- The saved Policy S5 of the Northumberland County and National Park Joint Structure Plan Alteration (February 2005);
 - The Core Strategies of the former Local Authorities of Alnwick (2007), Blyth Valley (2007), and Tynedale (2007) and the Blyth Valley Development Control Policies DPD (2007);and
 - The saved Local Plan policies (under the Secretary of State's Direction) of the Northumberland Minerals Local Plan (2000), Northumberland Waste Local Plan (2001), Alnwick District Wide Local Plan (1997), Berwick upon Tweed Local Plan (1999), Blyth Valley District Local Plan (1999), Castle Morpeth District Local Plan (2003), Tynedale District Local Plan (2000), and Wansbeck District Local Plan (2007).
- 2.4. As explained in section 1, the Council can produce Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), which provide additional advice and information relating to specific policies or proposals in a Development Plan Document. To date the Council has identified the following SPDs, it should be noted that other SPDs may be identified in future:



- 2.5. There are no requirements to set out the details on the production of SPDs within the LDS. However, the Council will include details once timetables have been identified.

How will the DPDs be prepared?

- 2.6. The Government does not set out precise details of how the Council should prepare Development Plan Documents. Regulations⁶ do however prescribe certain stages where the public are to be consulted. The Government stresses the importance of early and meaningful engagement and collaboration with neighbourhoods, local organisations and businesses is essential. The Regulations include a requirement for public participation at an early stage in plan preparation before the Development Plan Document is finalised with the detail left for local authorities to determine. They also specify that the final document should be published for formal consultation prior to it being submitted for independent examination. The various stages of the preparation of a Development Plan Document are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Stages in the Preparation of a Development Plan Document

Development Stage Development Plan	Community Involvement
Plan Preparation (Regulation 18)	<p>This stage involves the Council gathering evidence including concerns and proposals the community may wish to make regarding planning issues.</p> <p>The Council will normally consult on issues and options, where appropriate in the early stages of this process and will continue to engage with stakeholders and the community on preferred options throughout this stage.</p> <p>This stage also involves consultation on the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.</p>
Publication Stage (Regulation 19)	This stage involves a formal consultation on the final draft version of the document, when the Council will invite all interested parties to submit representations.
Submission (Regulation 22)	The Council will formally submit the document to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination.
Examination (Regulation 24 & 25)	Interested parties can seek to make representations to the independent Planning Inspector. Following the examination, the Planning Inspector will produce a report and may recommend changes.
Adoption (Regulation 26)	This is a formal process for Northumberland County Council to adopt the documents as part of the Northumberland Local Plan.

5 Excluding Northumberland National Park which is a separate Local Planning Authority and has separate adopted planning policies
 6 Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 SI 2012 No. 767

3. Supporting Information

3.1. The Government expects local authorities to use effective programme management techniques to progress the delivery of Local Plans. This section of the LDS explains the arrangements that are in place to ensure the efficient and effective delivery of the Local Plan. Key areas are:

- The development of a sound and robust evidence base;
- The approach to community and stakeholder engagement;
- Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulations Assessment and Equality Impact Assessment;
- Resources;
- Programme management;
- Risk assessment; and
- Monitoring and review.

Evidence Base

3.2. The Northumberland Local Plan must be based on a sound and robust evidence base. A number of specialist studies and research projects have been or are being undertaken/ updated, or will be commissioned to inform the Local Plan. Consultants will be used for this work, if the Council does not have the specialist skills required, or the capacity needed to undertake the work. This evidence base will also provide baseline data to help inform the monitoring and review process of the Local Plan.

3.3. The Council is required to work with neighbouring local planning authorities and stakeholders when preparing Local Plans. The Government expects Councils to plan strategically across administrative boundaries under the Duty to Co-operate⁷. The Council will seek to undertake joint evidence base work with adjoining authorities where appropriate.

3.4. The key evidence base studies to support the Local Plan will be presented on the Council's website.

Community Engagement

3.5. Greater and more effective community involvement is a key feature of the planning system. The Government stresses the importance of early and meaningful engagement and collaboration in plan preparation. Northumberland County Council adopted a revised Statement of Community Involvement in February 2015. This sets out the arrangements for public consultation on both plan preparation and all planning applications made to the Council.

Sustainability Appraisal

- 3.6. The preparation of Development Plan Documents will continue to be informed by a Sustainability Appraisal. This is an iterative process that develops alongside the preparation of a Development Plan Document through which the economic, social and environmental effects of the plan being prepared are assessed. It incorporates the requirements of the Strategic Environment Assessment as required by EU SEA Directive 2001/42.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 3.7. Under Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is undertaken on all emerging Development Plan Documents in order to ensure that policies and proposals will not, either individually or cumulatively, have a significant effect on the integrity of European designated sites.

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.8. Councils are also required by legislation to prepare an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) to ensure that policies in Development Plan Documents do not discriminate against protected groups and that opportunities are taken to promote quality. The EqIA will also run parallel with each of the stages of the Development Plan Document preparation.

Resources

- 3.9. The Planning Service is responsible for the preparation of the Local Plan and all related guidance. Planning Policy Officers provide the resources to support the delivery of the Development Plan Documents identified within the LDS. External consultants will be commissioned where the need for specialist services, additional capacity or the need to provide a critical friend are identified.
- 3.10. Partnership working across the Council will be essential to the success of the Local Plan due to the cross-cutting nature and relationship with other plans and strategies. Specialist staff from other functions of the authority will also contribute to the Local Plan such as strategic transport, education and adult services.
- 3.11. The cost of producing the Development Plan Documents identified within the LDS will need to be met from existing and future service budgets. This budget however is not unlimited and any opportunities to secure additional funding and support will be exploited. The Council will use shared financial resources wherever possible to produce evidence base studies that will be required both across Council Services and with adjoining Local Authorities.

Programme Management

- 3.12. The Council's Cabinet is responsible for authorising the preparatory stages of the Local Plan process, for example approval of Development Plan Documents for consultation and Full Council is responsible for the decision making stages of Local Plan such as submission and adoption of Development Plan Documents.
- 3.13. The Local Development Framework Member Working Group makes recommendations to and offers advice to the Cabinet on the preparation of the Local Plan.

Risk Assessment

- 3.14. A risk assessment has been prepared that is monitored and reviewed during the period of the LDS by senior managers. The risk assessment includes proposed mitigation and contingency measures that may need to be implemented in order to ensure that sound Development Plan Documents are prepared and developed in a timely manner.

Table 2: Local Plan Risk Assessment Impacts and Proposed Actions

Impact	Proposed Action(s)
Staffing Issues: Staff recruitment, retention and vacant posts; Lack of suitably trained staff; Reduced capacity (long term absence) (un-programmed work).	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in quality and quantity of evidence base • Increased risk to soundness of documents, or High Court Challenge • Increased workload for existing staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply council HR policies including appraisal, recruitment and sickness management • Provide staff training and development • Second appropriately experienced staff • Use consultants and temporary staff as appropriate • Commission specialised studies • Local Plan recognised and prioritised as a Corporate Policy
Financial Resources: Budget insufficient for planned expenditure.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in quality and quantity of evidence base • Reduced ability to commission specialist studies • Increased risk to soundness of documents, or High Court Challenge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Plan recognised and prioritised as a Corporate Policy • Expand partnership working to draw upon skills and resources within other organisations • Monitor closely expenditure on commissioned studies and other work

Corporate Issues: Change in Council priorities; amendments to decision making process	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional work to evidence base and redrafting of documents Increased workload and costs for un-programmed work Increased number of representations to consultation documents Increased risk to soundness of documents, or High Court Challenge Credibility of plan making process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Plan recognised and prioritised as a Corporate Policy Cross party member Local Plan Working Group established Commission specialised studies Ensure that Council plans and strategies, including the Corporate Plan and Local Plan are aligned
External Influences: Failure of partners to deliver to agreed programme; changes in national or regional policy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional work to evidence base and redrafting of documents Increased time without policy coverage Increased risk to soundness of documents, or High Court Challenge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close liaison with partners in preparation of LDS and work programme Engage partners commitment to deliver through joint working and linkages with other strategies, programmes and projects Maintain liaison with Planning Inspectorate Review LDS if necessary Utilise critical friend process throughout Local Plan preparation

Monitoring and Review

3.15. Since April 2009, the Annual Monitoring Report for Northumberland (excluding the National Park) has been published by the Council in accordance with national requirements. The introduction of the Localism Act in November 2011 removed this requirement however the Authority retains a duty to monitor its activities and to report on those activities to its residents and other interested parties.

3.16. The ending of the statutory requirement to report directly to central government has given the Council the opportunity to reassess how the information contained within the report is presented. Rather than presenting a single annual report containing a wide range of complex information, a new style has been adopted which will consist of a number of smaller topic based releases published on a continual basis at the earliest opportunity.

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7 National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012, Paragraphs 178 - 181

Glossary

Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) - Reports on how the Council is performing in terms of the Local Plan. It includes a review of the Local Development Scheme's timetable and monitors the success of Local Plan policies.

Core Strategy - A Development Plan Document setting out the spatial vision, objectives and key strategic policies for an area, having regard to the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Development Plan - This includes adopted council development plan documents such as core strategies and any future adopted neighbourhood plans setting out the authority's policies for the development and use of land.

Development Plan Documents (DPDs) - DPDs are adopted plans and documents that form part of the development plan. Once adopted, planning decisions must be made in accordance with them unless material considerations indicate otherwise. DPDs can include a core strategy, land allocation and delivery plans and area action plans.

Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) - Undertaken to ensure that equality issues are taken into account throughout the Core Strategy process, and that it promotes equality and diversity and does not adversely affect or discriminate against any of the protected Equality groups.

Evidence Base - The information and data gathered by local authorities and used to inform policy development. It includes a wide range of numerical data and other information, including, surveys, studies, discussions and consultations.

Habitats Regulations - A set of government regulations (currently the Habitats and Species Regulations 2010), which sets out requirements within England regarding the protection and enhancement of important natural assets, giving expression to various European Directives, international Conventions and national statutes.

Independent Examination - The process by which an Independent Planning Inspector publicly examines a Development Plan Document to ensure that it is 'sound' in terms of factors such as the evidence on which it is based, national policy, consultations undertaken etc.

Inspector's Report - A report issued by an Independent Planning Inspector regarding the planning issues debated at the independent examination of a development plan or a planning inquiry. For DPDs it will contain recommendations to the authority on changes to the plan and an opinion as to whether it is a sound plan.

Local Development Framework (LDF) – This is the term given to the portfolio of documents that together provide a local planning authorities land use and spatial policies for the area. The term Local Plan is now used to describe these documents.

Local Development Scheme (LDS) - A three year programme identifying the development plan documents to be produced and the timetable for their production.

Local Plan - The documents and maps that make up the plan for the future development of a local area such as Northumberland. The term also describes older planning documents prepared by the former Northumberland authorities. Many policies in these plans continue to be "saved" and form part of the Development Plan for decision-making purposes.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - A Government document that sets out nationally important planning issues. It replaces Planning / Mineral Policy Statements and Guidance Notes.

Neighbourhood Plan - A plan prepared for a defined area by a "qualifying body", a parish/town council or neighbourhood forum. When made a neighbourhood plan will form part of the Development Plan.

Northumberland National Park - Designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, the designation seeks to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park, and to promote opportunities for public understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities. The Park sits entirely within the boundary of Northumberland but is a separate local planning authority area.

Saved Policies and Plans - Existing development plans prepared prior to the commencement of the Local Development Framework system in 2004 were saved for a period of 3 years. Certain policies have been saved beyond this period and will remain saved until replaced by the new Local Plan

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) - The Council's approach to involving the community in the planning process and development management decisions.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) - Non-statutory documents which add further detail to the policies in statutory documents such as the core strategy – e.g. providing guidance on design in general or on the development of specific sites. SPDs are capable of being a material consideration but do not form part of the development plan.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) - The process of weighing and assessing policies for their global, national and local sustainability implications in relation to the environment, the economy and society, incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to comply with EU Directive 2001/42/EC.

Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) - A long-term programme of action, published on behalf of the community which reflects the needs and aspirations of the area.

Appendices

1. Northumberland Local Plan Profile and Timetable

Profile of the Northumberland Local Plan	
Title	Northumberland Local Plan
Role and Content	<p>The Northumberland Local Plan will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set the strategic planning policies of the Council; • Provide the planning principles, including detailed development management policies to guide future development and planning decisions in Northumberland⁸ from 2016-2036; • Set the general scale and distribution of new development which is required to meet Northumberland's needs to 2036; • Include strategic allocations as well as detailed land allocations and designations; and • Include site specific proposals for the development, protection and conservation of land. • The Local Plan will include a policies map identifying the detailed land allocations and designations.
Status	Development Plan Document (DPD)
Chain of Conformity	Consistent with national planning policy as well as Northumberland County Council policy documents.
Geographic Coverage	Northumberland County, excluding the Northumberland National Park area. Consideration will also have to be given to the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans.

Local Plan Timetable and Milestones	
STAGE	DATES
<p><i>Plan Preparation (Regulation 18)</i> Evidence base work and informal consultation Initial consultation Consultation on draft Local Plan</p>	<p><i>July 2017 to August 2018</i> July 2017 to July 2018 March 2018 to May 2018 July 2018 to August 2018</p>
<p><i>Publication of Draft Local Plan (Regulation 19)</i></p>	<p><i>January 2019</i></p>
<p><i>Submission of Local Plan (Regulation 22)</i></p>	<p><i>May 2019</i></p>
<p><i>Examination Hearings</i></p>	<p><i>September 2019</i></p>
<p><i>Adoption (Regulation 26)</i></p>	<p><i>March 2020</i></p>

Note: Key Milestones are in ***Bold Italics***

Arrangements for Production	
Organisation Lead	Head of Planning Services
Political Management	Cabinet and Full Council with input from LDF Member Working Group throughout production
Resources	Planning Policy Team, with technical, legal and administrative support from other teams as required
Community and Stakeholder Involvement	To be undertaken in accordance with Statement of Community Involvement.

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8 Excluding Northumberland National Park which is a separate Local Planning Authority and has separate adopted planning policies



Planning Policy

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