



Northumberland

County Council

Tony Burton
Independent Examiner

Enquiries to: Sarah Brannigan
Direct Line: [REDACTED]
E-mail: [REDACTED]

By email only

Date: 23 February 2022

Dear Mr Burton

Comments from Northumberland County Council to the Independent Examiner's questions raised on 11 February 2022

This letter provides responses from Northumberland County Council, to questions raised by you during the examination of the Submission Draft Haydon Neighbourhood Plan.

Q. Haydon Bridge's settlement boundary is as defined in the emerging Northumberland Local Plan. The Local Plan is not yet adopted and the neighbourhood plan depends on the Local Plan as justification for the location of the boundary. It would be helpful to know if the principle of settlement boundaries or the detailed location of that proposed for Haydon Bridge has been an issue raised during examination of the Local Plan.

A. The Inspector's Report has now been published. Accordingly, there are no outstanding unresolved matters in regard to settlement boundaries. A representation made by Langley Castle Estate Trustees at Regulation 19 Consultation, objected to the proposed settlement boundary for Haydon Bridge saying the County Council's approach to calculating its housing requirement was flawed and depended on the assumption that approved schemes would come forward. The representation went on to request an uplifted housing requirement and additional housing allocations in Haydon Bridge with its land in Haydon Bridge being a sustainable location to deliver this. No action was taken in relation to this representation with the County Council being confident in the approach taken and evidence behind it. The matter was not included in the matters for consideration by the Inspector and was not discussed during the Local Plan hearings.

Q. Policy H4 introduces criteria for considering applications for individual and community-scale renewable energy development outside Northumberland National Park. Policy DM13 of the Northumberland National Park Local Plan permits "small-scale" renewable development within the National Park subject to similar criteria. What is the rationale for Policy H4 applying only to development located outside the National Park? I note the National Park Authority's



David English, Planning Manager (Neighbourhood Planning)
Northumberland county Council, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE612EF

T: [REDACTED] E: [REDACTED].uk

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representations that the approach is appropriate as Policy DM13 restricts renewable development to "domestic scale" although the wording of DM13 is "small-scale". Is it considered that "small-scale" is different to "individual and community scale" as used in Policy H4

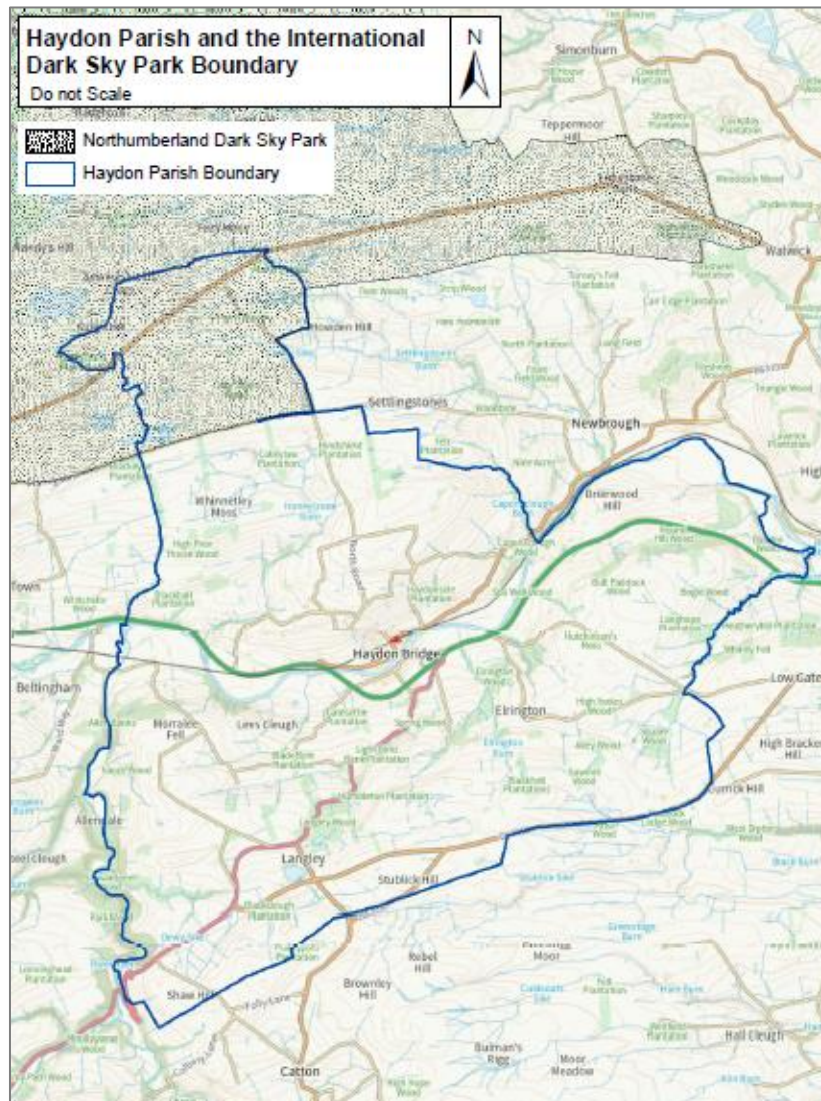
A. In regard to Policy H4, this matter will require a response from the Qualifying Body and the NNPA.

Q. Policy H5 includes wording relating to development of flood prevention and alleviation schemes that mirrors Policy WAT3 in the emerging Northumberland Local Plan. The supporting text in 5.21 states the Policy is not seeking to repeat local policy. What is the purpose of including this wording?

A. Policy H5 provides no locally-specific guidance on flooding. All matters covered in Policy H5 are addressed in Northumberland Local Plan Policy WAT3.

Q. Policy H6 references the International Dark Sky Park. How does the boundary of the International Dark Sky Park relate to that of Haydon Parish?

A. The designation extends into the north of Haydon Parish, as shown on this map.



Q. Policy H14 -The Housing Needs Assessment concludes that “The relationship between the estimated need for affordable rented properties and the potential demand for affordable home ownership properties suggests that the latter should be prioritised in future development” (page 58) while the supporting text to Policy H14 states that “In accordance with the findings of the housing needs assessment the priority will be affordable housing for rent rather than affordable housing for sale” (paragraph 5.94). What is the explanation for this difference and why does Policy H14 prioritise affordable housing for rent not ownership?

A. It is for the Qualifying Body to provide an explanation for the difference, however, Policy HOU6 of the NLP will require a tenure split in medium value areas of 33% affordable homes to rent and 67% affordable home ownership. As indicated in the County Council’s earlier representations, Policy HOU6 has been through rigorous testing through the Local Plan Examination in terms of impact on development viability. Accordingly, notwithstanding evidence of local need, the Neighbourhood Plan should not increase policy costs without evidence that this would not undermine the deliverability of the Plan.

Q. Policy H14 - Is it the intention that the illustrative approach to the development of this site shown in Figure 3 should inform planning decisions made under Policy H14?

A. In regard to Policy H14, this matter will require a response from the Qualifying Body.

Q. Policy H15 - Further to my original request please may I be provided with details of the newsagents/convenience store, pharmacy, post office/supermarket, pub/restaurant, butchers and garage such that they might be individually identified in a planning policy

A. The identification and naming of services / facilities in the Parish is a matter for the Qualifying Body to confirm. We would be happy to support them in mapping these if this is an outcome of the examination.

Q. Policy H16 - What evidence supports the new boundary for the Village Centre?

A. The evidence is provided in the [Local Economy Background Paper](#) submitted by the Qualifying Body.

Q. Policy H20 - What evidence is there that the new Hexham-Haydon Bridge link is deliverable within the time frame of the Plan and that it follows the most appropriate route?

A. In regard to Policy H20, this matter will require a response from the Qualifying Body. Our views have been set out in earlier representations.

Q. What is the expected timescale for the emerging Northumberland Local Plan to be adopted and, assuming a successful referendum, when is the earliest likely date for making the Haydon Parish Neighbourhood Plan?

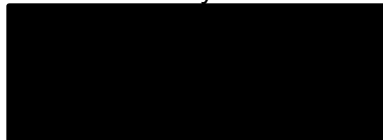
A. The [Inspectors' Report](#) on the Examination of the Northumberland Local Plan has now been published alongside an [appendix of main modifications](#). It is anticipated that the Plan will be adopted at a full council meeting on Wed 30 March 2022.

In anticipation of the examination of the neighbourhood plan being completed this month, and having regard to the statutory time periods that follow receipt of the examiner's final report, assuming a successful referendum, we would hope to make the plan in July / August this year.

We note the Basic Conditions Statement provides the Qualifying Body's opinion on whether the Plan is in general conformity with the existing strategic policies of the development plan. It also includes an assessment of general conformity with the strategic policies in the emerging Northumberland Local Plan. It would be helpful if the examination report could provide a considered opinion on general conformity with the emerging strategic policies given the current status of the Northumberland Local Plan.

In order to help the examiner, we will send a copy of the Local Plan (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft Plan) which is available on the County Council's website. It should be noted that this must now be read alongside the Inspector's Report and appendix of main modifications.

Yours sincerely



**David English
Planning Manager (Neighbourhood Planning)**