

Hambleton District Council's Position Statement on the Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy Preferred Options DPD Draft Final Report – June 2005

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, all of the Development Plan Documents that are produced as part of the Local Development Framework need to be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal. The Sustainability Appraisal must also meet the requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessment in accordance with European Directive 2001/42/EC. A Sustainability Appraisal has therefore been produced independently by Land Use Consultants for the Core Strategy Preferred Options document. The non technical summary of the Sustainability Appraisal is attached; a full version with its 6 appendices is available on the website: www.hambleton.gov.uk, or for purchase.
- 1.2 The Sustainability Appraisal has been produced alongside the Core Strategy Preferred Options and it is being published for consultation at the same time to provide the public and statutory bodies with an opportunity to comment and express their opinions on the Sustainability Appraisal Report and to use it as a reference point when commenting on the document.

2.0 Sustainability Appraisal of Core Strategy Preferred Options

- 2.1 The Sustainability Appraisal identifies any significant positive or negative social, economic or environmental effects that would arise from the Core Strategy Preferred Options. It then makes recommendations for strengthening the document and its policies. The Sustainability Appraisal report has generally been supportive of the Core Strategy Preferred Options and its recommendations do not suggest any significant changes are needed.
- 2.2 The Sustainability Appraisal finds that the Core Strategy Preferred Options provides a comprehensive policy framework which will support improvements to the quality of life for the residents of Hambleton. It is felt that the majority of policies are likely to result in significant positive effects. However a small number of negative effects have also been identified.
- 2.3 The Strategic Objectives within the Core Strategy have been considered by the Sustainability Appraisal. It was found that the elements of the Strategic Objectives were clearly sustainable and should be maintained. It was considered however that there were some minor inconsistencies, and these are highlighted in Table 1.
- 2.4 A series of comments and recommendations on the Core Policies have also been made and these relate to the sustainability objectives that have been defined in the Scoping Report. A series of general comments have also been made. These are highlighted in Tables 2 and 3.

3.0 Hambleton District Council's Response

- 3.1 The Sustainability Appraisal is a continuous process through the preparation of all the documents in the LDF with the requirement that the final Sustainability Appraisal reflects the document submitted to the Secretary of

State. At each stage, the conclusions reached by the Appraisal will influence the development of the LDFs components. The Government guidance on how and when results of the Sustainability Appraisal should be reflected in the documents is not clear, the two approaches are either to make amendments in parallel, as the LDF documents – here the Core Strategy are produced, or by feeding in the conclusions of the Appraisal at the next stage. Our approach is the latter where the Appraisal will effectively be a key element of the response made during the consultation phase on the LDF document.

- 3.2 In the case of the Core Strategy Preferred Options, some changes have been made as the document has been produced (based on interim conclusions from the Appraisals), and the conclusion that the approach is generally very sustainable has provided comfort that the document that has now been produced for consultation is on very much the right lines. Further changes in response to the final Appraisal report will not be made at this stage, but the detailed points raised in the Appraisal will be considered, together with the consultation responses, in producing the next document – the version of the Core Strategy which will be submitted to the Government for examination.
- 3.3 However, two general points can be made in relation to the detailed points raised by the Appraisal, concerning the negative implications comments. Firstly the Core Strategy is a ‘package’ of policies that need to be read together as opposed to assessing each on an individual basis. As the Core Strategy Preferred Options document indicates (para 1.8), cross references have been kept to a minimum, in seeking to achieve a concise document. Secondly, it is also important to recognise that the Core Strategy is only one part of a trio of Development Plan Documents, the other two relating to Development Policies and Allocations. The Core Strategy outlines the Strategic Vision and Objectives, the Spatial Strategy and Strategic Spatial Policies and has this specific role to play. The other Development Plan Documents will address some of the other issues raised in the report.
- 3.4 Relating to both these points, and in response to the Sustainability Appraisal conclusions, following the consultation period for the Core Strategy Preferred Options (and for the Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy Preferred Options) where appropriate some changes can be considered. A response to remedy Sustainability Appraisal concerns could be made by cross referencing – which in spite of the general approach to avoid such cross-references, could be added where links are particularly important, for example in relation to the critical issues raised by the Sustainability Appraisal. Similarly, alterations to the document could be made, to indicate matters of more detail (but of Sustainability Appraisal importance) but will be addressed in other components of the LDF (e.g. in a detailed policy within the Development Policies DPD).

4.0 Consultation on the Sustainability Appraisal

- 4.1 Hambleton District Council is seeking views on the Sustainability Appraisal and possible changes to the Core Strategy. This will be alongside the consultation on Core Strategy Preferred Options and this consultation will last for 6 weeks for the period 20th July to 31st August 2005.

TABLE 1: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE COMMENTS

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE (see para 2.28, page 12 - 14, of Core Strategy Preferred Options)	LUC COMMENTS
2	Potential to encourage excessive intensification in built up areas leading to the loss of open space and disruption of the locally distinct settlement form.
3	As above
4	There is potential conflict between the accommodation of future population and employment growth, and the desire to maintain and enhance biodiversity and geological interests, and to preserve the historic environment Demand for additional housing and employment sites may also lead to an increase in flood risk, particularly in the light of climate change. An additional Strategic Objective should be included to ensure that the issue of flood risk is captured in the development of DPD policies.
6	Objective seeks to ensure that development is consistent with environmental objectives, however there is unavoidable but inherent tensions. DPD policies should therefore encourage creative approaches to economic development and rural regeneration which encompass all aspects of sustainable rural development.
8	DPD policies will need to balance issues of access to services and facilities with Strategic Objective 8 which seeks to protect the distinctive character of the towns and villages.
10	An additional strategic objective should be included to highlight the importance of minimising climate change and its effects on the population or amendments could be made to Strategic Objective 10 to highlight the issue.
11	DPD policies will need to balance issues of access to services and facilities with Strategic Objective 11 which seeks to ensure access to open spaces for leisure and recreation.

TABLE 2: POLICY SPECIFIC COMMENTS

POLICY (see pages 23 - 61 of Core Strategy Preferred Options)	LUC COMMENTS
CP1 (p23)	Remove the term 'where appropriate'
CP2 (p24)	Could make reference to links between transport and the economy and provide greater encouragement for Green Travel Plans. Could be strengthened with a greater likelihood of more sustainable modes and journeys being made, if disincentives to using the car were introduced.

CP4 (p25)	<p>Development proposals coming forward under points i and ii should not conflict with environmental protection policies – this should be stated.</p> <p>Priority should be given to the delivery of affordable housing.</p> <p>Nature conservation interests should be safeguarded or compensated for where exception development comes forward.</p> <p>Could specifically mention support for appropriate scale renewable energy proposals in rural areas.</p>
CP6 (p33)	Nature conservation interests should be safeguarded or compensated for where exception development comes forward.
CP7 (p34)	<p>Should refer to the potential nature conservation value of brownfield sites.</p> <p>No target for brownfield development.</p>
CP9A (p38)	Nature conservation interests should be safeguarded or compensated for where exception development comes forward.
CP15 (p50)	<p>Policy should be pursued in conjunction with policy CP17.</p> <p>Policy should be pursued in conjunction with policy CP16.</p>
CP17 (p56)	Policy could state a preference for developments to incorporate waste management facilities as part of sustainable design.
CP18 (p57)	Policy should refer to the Waste Hierarchy

TABLE 3 GENERAL COMMENTS

LUC COMMENTS
DPD could specifically encourage mixed use sites as part of the strategy for making efficient use of land resource, and reduce the need to travel.
Need for more support for green travel plans and public transport alongside employment generating activities.
Policies dealing with location and design of employment development should have sustainable design features to be incorporated to mitigate against issues such as flood risk.
DPD could set out requirements to meet Breeam and eco-home standards.
DPD could be strengthened by putting forward suggested densities.
DPD should provide a more specific requirement for new development to incorporate sustainable design features e.g. SUDS
Essential that employment policy is pursued alongside policies for affordable housing and measures outside the planning system to support skills and training, in order to ensure sufficient supply of labour.
Measures may need to be introduced to encourage people to live closer to where they work in order to achieve the Spatial Principles.
DPD might provide for stronger links with educational establishments with

institutions in neighbouring urban areas e.g. the provision of community colleges or satellite institutes.

Need to identify ways in which the DPD might be able to provide support for community based housing, employment and provision of services and facilities, together with involvement in bringing forward and influencing development proposals being promoted by 3rd party developers.

Need for the co-ordination of Core Strategy aims with skills and training related initiatives in the District.

Identify measures to encourage people in Hambleton to take up the opportunities set out in the DPD, to use local services and facilities and alternative modes of transport, in order to achieve a greater likelihood of the intentions of the Spatial Principles being delivered in practice.

**HAMBLETON DISTRICT
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT
FRAMEWORK SUSTAINABILITY
APPRAISAL**

**SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL OF
CORE STRATEGY
DEVELOPMENT PLAN
DOCUMENT**

NON- TECHNICAL SUMMARY

**Prepared for
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by
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I. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Hambleton District Council is reviewing the Hambleton Local Plan (HLP), to be replaced by a Local Development Framework (LDF), incorporating Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). The DPDs and SPDs included in the LDF need to be subject to sustainability appraisal (SA), under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The SAs conducted must also meet the requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with European Directive 2001/42/EC (also known as the SEA Directive).
- 1.2. This report constitutes the SA Report for the Hambleton District Council Core Strategy DPD. It has been produced alongside the emerging Core Strategy DPD, and is being published for consultation at the same time as the Preferred Options for the Core Strategy DPD to provide the public and statutory bodies with an opportunity to express their opinions on the SA Report and to use it as a reference point in commenting on the Core Strategy DPD. The Core Strategy DPD will set out the overall strategy for the Hambleton LDF and key policies against which development proposals will be assessed.
- 1.3. This SA, incorporating SEA, was undertaken in line with ODPM Guidance. The objective of the SEA Directive¹ is *'to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans...with a view to promoting sustainable development'*. According to the Government's guidance, SA includes a wider range of considerations, extending to social and economic impacts of plans, whereas SEA is more focussed on environmental impacts. A key output of the SA process is this SA Report which describes the plan being appraised, how the appraisal has been conducted, and the likely significant sustainability effects of implementing the plan.
- 1.4. Throughout this report the term 'SA' refers to Sustainability Appraisal incorporating the requirements of Strategic Environmental Assessment.

METHODOLOGY

- 1.5. The ODPM's draft SA guidance specifies a number of stages of work that have to be undertaken to comply with the SEA Directive. The first three stages have been completed and are documented in this SA Report.

Stage A – Setting the context and scope

- 1.6. This stage was completed in two parts. First, a Stage I Report was conducted in February 2004² and involved conducting a review of other plans, strategies

¹ European Parliament and Council of the European Union (2001). *Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment.*

² Integrated Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment of Hambleton Local Development Framework. Stage I Report: Vision and Spatial Strategy (Land Use Consultants, February 2004)

and studies relevant to the preparation of the Core Strategy DPD, development of an appraisal framework including objectives, characterisation of Hambleton and identification of key sustainability issues, and an assessment of the Vision and Spatial Strategy and strategic alternatives being considered for the DPD. This work was considered at a consultation workshop.

- I.7. Following completion of this work, the new Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act came into effect introducing a statutory requirement for SA, the ODPM produced draft guidance on SA, and the SEA Directive also came into force. The Stage I Report was therefore reviewed with these changes in mind and a SA Scoping Report was prepared.
- I.8. The Scoping Report was sent to the four SEA 'Consultation Bodies' (i.e. the Countryside Agency, English Heritage, English Nature, Environment Agency), those involved in the stakeholder consultation group in Stage I, plus the Government Office, Regional Assembly and neighbouring authorities for a five week consultation. Changes were then made to the objectives of the SA framework to incorporate stakeholder feedback.

Stage B: Developing and Refining Options

- I.9. Strategic options for the Core Strategy DPD were identified and appraised against the SA Framework early in the SA process. The findings of this process were included in the Stage I Report in February 2004. Subsequently, Hambleton District Council identified issues and options for the Core Strategy DPD. The options were appraised in parallel with their preparation and a SA Report prepared setting out the findings of the appraisal of emerging options. This was published for consultation in April 2005 alongside consultation on the Issues and Options Report.

Stage C: Appraising the Effects of the Preferred Options

- I.10. This stage involved identifying the Preferred Options for the Core Strategy by predicting and assessing the likely significant effects of the reasonable alternatives available, including the potential mitigation measures and measures for maximising beneficial effects. This stage also involved developing proposals for monitoring to establish the means by which the sustainability performance of the plan can be assessed over time. The output from Stages A to C is this SA Report.

Stage D: Consultation on preferred options and Final SA

- I.11. Hambleton District Council is seeking views on this SA Report alongside the statutory six-week pre-submission public participation stage of the DPD, during July and August 2005. This consultation is designed to comply with the Statement of Community Involvement and requirements of the SEA Directive. Should any significant changes be made to the DPD as a result of public consultation, additional appraisal work will need to be carried out and a revised SA Report prepared to reflect the results. The Core Strategy DPD and revised SA Report will then be submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination in public.

Stage E: Monitoring Implementation of the DPD

- I.12. This final SA Report sets out recommendations for monitoring the sustainability effects of the Core Strategy DPD. Recommendations for a process for dealing with adverse or unexpected effects is also included in this SA Report.

CHARACTERISATION OF HAMBLETON AND KEY SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

Overview

- I.13. Hambleton is one of the largest Districts in England. It is essentially rural in character and includes part of the North York Moors National Park. Northallerton and Thirsk are the main towns in the District, and are supported by three other market towns of Bedale, Easingwold and Stokesley. The majority of the 84,111 population (58%) live outside these towns. There are over 130 villages in the District, with nearly a third (30%) containing less than 100 people. Outside the settlements land use is almost wholly agricultural, and this is a dominating influence on the landscape. The Vales of Mowbray and York form the lowland landscape which dominates the District, with their fertile and intensively farmed arable land. To the east a steep escarpment gives way to the upland landscape of the North York Moors National Park. To the southeast the more gentle landscape of the Howardian Hills is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- I.14. The District is relatively prosperous, with unemployment levels roughly half the national average. There are low levels of deprivation, with the District ranked in the bottom quartile of districts in terms of indices of deprivation in the UK.
- I.15. To the north are the urban areas of Teesside and Darlington, and to the south are Harrogate and the City of York. These large urban centres have a significant socio-economic influence on the District. The most southern point of the District encompasses a section of the York Green Belt, which surrounds the settlement of Shipton.
- I.16. Key environmental issues for Hambleton include:
- Need to protect existing high quality landscape and enhance lower quality landscape
 - Relatively low nature conservation value due to deteriorating effect of agricultural activities
 - Need to improve the number and diversity of biodiversity sites
 - Need to conserve the historic environment for future generations
 - High quality built environment under pressure from development
 - Re-use of land within settlements to avoid sprawl
 - Noise pollution and its potential to increase with airfield expansions

- Impacts of climate change
- Potential risk of flooding
- Potential to develop appropriate forms of renewable energy in the right locations to offset greenhouse gas emissions

I.17. Key economic issues in Hambleton include:

- Provision of a suitable range of employment land and premises
- Provision of training to improve skills
- Renaissance of market towns
- Diversification of the rural economy
- Reducing out-commuting
- Diversity of employment including more manufacturing and knowledge based employment and higher quality jobs
- Need to address the digital divide (those with/without broadband access)

I.18. Key social issues in Hambleton include:

- Fear of crime
- Needs of young people e.g. affordable housing, local jobs
- Need for affordable housing for local residents
- Ageing population
- Education and skills/training to support local employment
- Rural service provision
- Need to speed up the roll-out of broadband
- Need for community-led social enterprises

I.19. Key transport and access issues for Hambleton include:

- Need to address transport and access barriers faced by elderly and young people, people with disabilities and the socially/economically disadvantaged.
- Heavy dependency on the private car
- Poor provision of public transport particularly in rural areas
- Reverse commuting between Hambleton and surrounding urban areas

REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

- I.20. Production of the Core Strategy DPD Preferred Options has involved the development and appraisal of a number of alternatives at different stages in the process. In accordance with the ODPM's draft SA guidance, a SA Framework, including SA objectives, was devised to provide a framework for describing, analysing and comparing the sustainability effects of alternatives.
- I.21. This commenced with the work undertaken in early 2004, when the main alternative considered was between:
- Concentrating development within the market towns.
 - Dispersing development evenly between the towns and villages.
- I.22. The appraisal of these options, plus associated Strategic Objectives to the spatial strategy, housing, employment, market towns regeneration, and rural regeneration, were submitted in LUC's Stage I 'Vision and Spatial Strategy' report dated February 2004.
- I.23. Broad issues and options for the Core Strategy were appraised in April 2005. This appraisal helped to inform the development of the Core Strategy Preferred Options.
- I.24. Hambleton District Council has been receptive to recommendations made through the options development process and is to be congratulated on a number of positive changes that have been made to the DPD as a result. These include:
- The baseline information for the LDF has been improved through undertaking a number of background studies.
 - The suggestion that the Core Strategy sets out a set of sustainability objectives has been taken on board.
 - The Spatial Principles acknowledge the influences of surrounding urban and rural areas e.g. York, Teeside.
 - There is now a clearer level of priority for affordable housing within and outside market towns which, coupled with policies for higher-value employment development, will work towards helping to retain the younger population.

CHOICE OF PREFERRED OPTION

- I.25. The majority of alternative options presented in the Core Strategy Preferred Options relate to eight alternatives to the three preferred spatial principles. Each policy of the Core Strategy DPD has been appraised alongside alternative options not selected by Hambleton District Council. The results

of this process are presented in **Appendix 6³** which has been produced as a separate report.

- 1.26. The appraisal of alternatives has shown that none of the alternatives proposed offer significant sustainability advantages over the preferred options set out in the Core Strategy DPD.

LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS OF THE PREFERRED OPTIONS FOR THE CORE STRATEGY DPD

- 1.27. Below is a summary of the key likely significant positive and negative effects of the Hambleton Core Strategy DPD identified in the SA and recommendations for strengthening the DPD and its policies.

SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE EFFECTS

Maintaining and enhancing landscape and townscape quality

- 1.28. The Spatial Principles generally direct development away from the most sensitive landscapes and the scale of development directed towards each settlement under the Settlement Hierarchy (SP3) is in general accordance with the existing settlements' size, suggesting that the general form and character will be retained. Retail development will be focused on the hierarchy of five market towns and their catchments and is required to respect the character of the environment. Policy CP4 also places strong restrictions on the type of development that will be allowed outside of settlement Development Limits while Policies CPI and CPI7 promote high quality design that enhances landscape and townscape character.

Protecting and enhancing the diversity and abundance of flora and fauna and geological interests

- 1.29. Focussing employment development on the five market towns, should help ensure designated sites of nature conservation value are protected. Policies CPI and CPI6 encourage development to protect and enhance environmental assets.

Preserving and enhancing the District's historic environment

- 1.30. Provision for regeneration of market towns and development in town centres, which maintains and retains architectural and historical interest, will be beneficial to existing listed buildings, conservation areas, which are highly valued by residents and tourists. Policy CPI and CPI6 also support developments that promote and encourage distinctiveness, character, townscape, setting of settlements, and historic and cultural features of acknowledged importance.

Ensuring new development is located in the most sustainable locations that are appropriate to settlement character

- 1.31. The draft Core Strategy is based on a sound locational strategy for housing, employment and retail uses and is likely to have a number of significant

³ Hambleton District Local Development Framework Sustainability Appraisal. Sustainability Appraisal of Core Strategy Development Plan Document. Appendix 6 Preferred Options Appraisal Matrices. (Land Use Consultants, June 2005).

positive effects as a result. Development is directed to settlements where there is likely to be future demand and capacity for increased employment activity. Policy CPI3 sets out a range of objectives for making the most efficient use of land resources e.g. re-using vacant and underused land and existing employment floor space. Rural regeneration policy supports improvements to public transport which should help to improve links between rural areas and market towns. Excessive intensification of town centres should be avoided through the implementation of Policy CPI9, which aims to maintain and improve open space provision.

Encouraging prudent use of natural resources

- I.32. Policy CPI specifically includes protection and enhancement of the natural environment, minimisation of energy consumption, and promotion and encouragement of the conservation of scarce resources and quality of natural resources, including water, air, soil and biodiversity. Policies CP4 and CP7 aim to encourage the use of brownfield land and re-use of existing buildings. Policy CPI8 aims to minimise the use of natural resources and maximise the potential for renewable resource use. There is also support for small-scale renewable energy schemes in rural areas.

Minimising climate change and its effects on the population

- I.33. Additional development will inevitably generate some additional greenhouse gas emissions. The key to success is whether the aims of Spatial Principles and other policies in the DPD (e.g. Policy CP2), such as reducing the amount of out-commuting, will off-set any increases arising. More importantly, the District has to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions in order to contribute to international agreements on climate change. Policy CPI8 aims to maximise the use of renewable resources in new development and CP21 aims to protect the population from flooding.

Encouraging conditions which facilitate business success

- I.34. Additional employment land in key locations such as Northallerton should help to meet predicted demand and provide opportunity for business creation, re-location and expansion. The provision of incubator facilities to encourage and support new business is a useful objective for supporting business success.

Making the most of Hambleton's economic strengths

- I.35. The Spatial Principles and Policy CP4 give strong support to the Service Centres, and will help in achieving urban renaissance of the market towns, backed up by housing distributions. Policy CPI2 supports a range of economic activity which is either inherent to the district, aims to make the most of economic strengths of surrounding areas, or pursues higher-skilled new business sectors.

Providing closer links between where people live and where they work

- I.36. The Spatial Policies aim to guide development to settlements that are best placed to accommodate it, and which will encourage greater self-sufficiency in

the District by allowing for employment creation that could reduce out-commuting in Areas of Restraint, and more housing and employment in the Area of Opportunity in the central part of the District. The main concern is whether this will be enough to deliver behavioural and travel change.

- I.37. The employment policies pursue employment generation based on market towns but also through regeneration of rural areas where the majority of the population live. Rural regeneration policy also encourages public transport improvements to market towns. Scale of employment land provision should be consistent with local needs, as it is based on predicted demand within each Service Centre.

Providing a range of premises suitable to support the economy

- I.38. The Spatial Principles direct development towards the Service Centres, primarily Northallerton and Thirsk, within the identified Area of Opportunity. Policy CP4 encourages re-use of existing premises in rural locations, which could be attractive to small rural businesses. Policy CPI3 encourages provision of space for new employment uses through a variety of means e.g. re-use of vacant sites and floor space.

Encouraging sustainable distribution and communication systems

- I.39. The Spatial Principles have been formulated to encourage development in the central Area of Opportunity, which should help to support local businesses, rather than those linked to neighbouring metropolitan areas.

Encouraging the provision of support services

- I.40. Policy CPI includes a criterion that promotes and encourages, where appropriate, provision of essential services to the public. Policy CP3 aims to support community assets/services. The affordable housing policies (CP8 to 9A) should help to provide key workers in essential services with access to affordable homes.

Improving the skills-base of Hambleton

- I.41. Policy CPI2 supports skills development alongside support for priority business sectors.

Providing support to deprived areas and disadvantaged groups

- I.42. Policy CPI aims to promote and encourage reduction in social inequalities and disadvantages in the community. The Spatial Principles also aim to achieve this through guiding development to where it is most needed. Policy CP2 aims to improve access for those without a car. Employment policies focus on the provision of opportunities in market towns with clear support for regeneration in rural areas also.

Improving the health of the population

- I.43. Policy CPI, which seeks to improve the environmental quality, amongst other things, should provide for healthier environments. Some health benefits should also arise from Policy CP2, which aims to support walking and cycling.

Improved community assets (CP3) and affordable housing (CP9 and CP9A) should also help to strengthen community identity and networks, and reduce stress with respect to housing availability/conditions.

Reducing levels of crime

- I.44. Policy CPI includes the criterion to promote and encourage, where appropriate, social well-being, amenity and safety of the population. Policy CP20 encourages crime-sensitive design as part of new development and may also have associated benefits in relation to reducing anti-social behaviour.

Providing housing to meet local needs

- I.45. The Spatial Principles and Policy CP4 aim to direct development to those settlements where housing need has been identified, and where a better balance with jobs, taking into account the strength of the pull of neighbouring urban areas (Teeside, York, Harrogate), which generates much out-commuting from the District. CP4 also provides for exceptions for affordable housing. CP5 to CP9A all support the Spatial Principles in delivering housing, including a high proportion (42%) of affordable housing, where need and the ability to accommodate development has been identified. Policies CPI7 and CP20 aim to encourage new development which provides a safe and secure living environment.

Improving education and skills of the population overall

- I.46. CP3 could help to retain and enhance community assets such as colleges and schools, which could have an indirect positive effect on the level of education and skills of Hambleton's population. Policy CPI2 supports skills development alongside encouragement for priority business sectors.

Improving access to a range of services and facilities

- I.47. The Spatial Principles should help to improve access to a range of services and facilities, since the Settlement Hierarchy (as expressed in Policy CP4) directs development according to their existing and potential service provision. CP2 aims to encourage greater walking, cycling and the use of public transport rather than the car. Policy CP3 should help to support local retailing, and access to community facilities. Policy CP4 aims to improve access to recreation in rural locations.

SIGNIFICANT NEGATIVE EFFECTS

Effects on landscape and townscape quality

- I.48. Policy CP4 and CP6 could affect settlement character if they lead to over-intensification within settlement Development Limits. Conversely, policies CP4, CP6 and CP9A could lead to development on greenfield sites under the exception policies for affordable housing, even if sites within Development Limits are available.

Effects on diversity and abundance of flora and fauna and geological interests

- I.49. Although not likely to be significant, protection of geological interests and nature conservation outside designated areas is less certain and will depend on the locations of additional employment sites. Brownfield land (Policy CP7) may sometimes have developed nature conservation interest, which should be taken into account when considering development proposals. Whilst generally positive, Policies CP4, CP6 and CP9A allow for greenfield development outside of Development Limits. Any nature conservation interest on such sites should be safeguarded or off-set through development packages.

Effects on settlement character

- I.50. There is no specific policy requirement for sustainable design features to be incorporated into new employment development, which may result in increased environmental problems such as flood risk in certain locations e.g. Thirsk.

Effects on natural resources

- I.51. Policy CPI8 encourages the re-use of waste as a resource but does not require reduced waste arisings in the first instance. Increased economic activity is likely to lead to increased commercial, industrial, construction and demolition waste to be managed.

Effects on climate change

- I.52. The Core Strategy DPD only requires new employment development to incorporate a limited range of sustainable design features. For example, water and energy efficiency is not specifically required, although minimising the use of natural resources is an objective of Policy CPI8.

Effects on the economy

- I.53. Policy CP2 could preclude some more easily accessible (by car) out-of-town employment sites coming forward.

Effects on deprived areas and disadvantaged groups

- I.54. Some more rural communities could lose out from the benefits of development that are focused in particular on the Service Centres.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Maintaining and enhancing landscape and townscape quality

- I.55. Policy CPI could be clarified by removal of the term “where appropriate” and by stating that development proposals that are indirect conflict with the criteria will not be permitted. Policy CP4 should specifically state that development proposals coming forward under criteria (a) and (b) should not conflict with environmental protection policies. Priority should be given to the delivery of development, including affordable housing, within Development Limits where appropriate sites exist that will help to support the use of local services and facilities, reduce the need to travel by car, and

can be developed in accordance with settlement character. It will be important for development-based policies such as CPI5 Rural Regeneration to be pursued in conjunction with Policy CPI7 High Quality Design to ensure there are no detrimental effects on the landscape and that opportunities are taken to enhance the landscape through development in rural areas.

Protecting and enhancing the diversity and abundance of flora and fauna and geological interests

- I.56. Policies should ensure that nature conservation interests are safeguarded or compensated for by off-setting actions where 'exception' development comes forward under Policies CP4, CP6 and CP9A. Policies should refer to the potential nature conservation value of brownfield sites under Policy CP7. It will be important for development-based policies such as CPI5 Rural Regeneration to be pursued in conjunction with Policy CPI6 Environmental Assets. A key issue to be pursued is how and where additional land for employment outside the existing provision (estimated to be 37ha) will be identified within the Allocations DPD, so as to avoid damage to nature conservation and geological interests. Comprehensive protection and enhancement of flora, fauna and geological interests will also require appropriate criteria-based policies in the Development Policies DPD, taking into account national planning policy (e.g. PPS9).

Ensuring new development is located in the most sustainable locations that are appropriate to settlement character

- I.57. The DPD could specifically encourage mixed use sites as part of the strategy for making efficient use of land resources, and reduce the need to travel.
- I.58. Whilst transport improvements are supported alongside new retail and employment generation, they do not give any preference to more sustainable forms of public transport to help relieve congestion within town centres (although some support is given in Policy CP2). This is a key issue and could be addressed through more explicit support for green travel plan and public transport initiatives alongside employment generating activities.
- I.59. There is potential for policies dealing with location and design of employment development to require sustainable design features to be incorporated to help mitigate against issues such as flood risk and to ensure the objectives of Policy CPI8 can be pursued.

Encouraging prudent use of natural resources

- I.60. The criterion in Policy CPI8 for re-using waste materials could be strengthened by referring to the waste hierarchy and the need to slow trends of increased waste production resulting from economic activity. Policy CPI7 could state a preference for developments to incorporate waste management facilities as part of sustainable design.
- I.61. With respect to wider use of resources, the DPD could set out the requirement to meet BREEAM and eco-home standards.

- I.62. The DPD could be strengthened by putting forward suggested densities. These would vary depending upon types of dwelling, and proximity to town and settlement centres and public transport services. Government guidance suggests that higher density developments offer significant sustainability advantages. Similarly, there is no target for brownfield development, for example for housing development, which would strengthen Policy CP7.

Minimising climate change and its effects on the population

- I.63. The Core Strategy should provide a more specific requirement for new development to incorporate sustainable design features e.g. sustainable urban drainage systems, energy efficient design.
- I.64. CP4 could specifically mention support for appropriate scale renewable energy proposals in rural areas.

Encouraging conditions which facilitate business success

- I.65. Business success will depend on a range of factors and it is essential that employment policy is pursued alongside policies for affordable housing and measures outside the planning system to support skills and training, in order to ensure sufficient supply of labour.

Providing closer links between where people live and where they work

- I.66. Measures may need to be introduced to encourage people in Hambleton to take up the opportunities set out in the DPD to live closer to where they work in order to achieve a greater likelihood of the intentions of the Spatial Principles being delivered in practice.

Encouraging sustainable distribution and communication systems

- I.67. Policy CP2 could specifically make reference to the links between transport and the economy, and provide greater encouragement for Green Travel Plans, use of public transport, local sourcing/supply chains, etc.

Improving the skills-base of Hambleton

- I.68. The DPD might provide for stronger links with educational establishments with institutions in neighbouring urban areas, for example the provision of community colleges or satellite institutions.

Enabling improved community participation

- I.69. Identify ways in which the Core Strategy DPD might be able to provide support for community-based housing, employment and provision of services and facilities, together with involvement in bringing forward and influencing development proposals being promoted by third party developers (both public and private sector).

Improving education and skills of the population overall

- I.70. Skills development is an area that cannot be supported by planning alone, and implementation will require co-ordination of Core Strategy aims with skills and training related initiatives in the District.

Improving access to a range of services and facilities

- I.71. Identify measures to encourage people in Hambleton to take up the opportunities, set out in the DPD, to use local services and facilities and alternative modes of transport, in order to achieve a greater likelihood of the intentions of the Spatial Principles being delivered in practice. Travel behaviour is very difficult to change by ‘incentives’ alone. Policy CP2 could be strengthened, with a greater likelihood of more sustainable modes and journeys being made, if ‘disincentives’ to using the car were also introduced, for example through road charging, the use of car parking charges, and the prioritisation of road space by more sustainable modes.

IMPLEMENTATION, MITIGATION AND MAXIMISING BENEFITS

- I.72. The Core Strategy DPD provides a comprehensive policy framework based on sound spatial development principles, which support improvements to the quality of life for residents of Hambleton. The majority of policies are likely to result in significant positive effects although, a small number of significant negative effects have also been identified.
- I.73. Inevitably assumptions have had to be made in coming to judgements of the effects of the DPD. Our assumption with respect to effects is on the basis of what the policy is trying to achieve i.e. the intention of the policy. However, it may not always be possible to deliver development that meets all policy criteria, and frequently choices will have to be made. The major challenge, therefore, will be in putting into practice what appears to be a very positive planning strategy. Implementation will be the key to success of the DPD and raises some key issues:
- A strong commitment is required to deliver high quality design in order to ensure that development delivers the positive benefits identified.
 - There is a need to co-ordinate the delivery of the Core Strategy as a package of policies to ensure that synergies between economic, social and environmental objectives are maximised.
 - Inevitably some conflicts will arise. In such instances, trade-offs may be necessary in order for progress to be made.
 - Policies and objectives of the Core Strategy need to be delivered in the context of the Local Development Framework as a whole and the wider policy framework which sits alongside the planning system.
- I.74. The DPD includes positive policies that “support” development proposals in order to deliver quality of life benefits, rather than the more traditional negative approach of “not permitting” development that will have an adverse

impact. However, not all development proposals that come forward will actively deliver positive gains over the existing situation. The DPD should be clear that the criteria will also be used to prevent development coming forward that is inconsistent with the objectives that it is seeking to achieve. Off-setting actions should be incorporated as part of mitigation any development package to ensure that negative impacts on the public interest are properly compensated for. This would be strengthened by a greater commitment in the DPD to community involvement in development proposals, which was one of the sustainability objectives that does not appear to have been well addressed by the DPD.

- I.75. The DPD includes some ambitious policies, for example with respect to reducing the need to travel (by car). We suspect that a tougher stance will be required than is currently in the DPD to make a real difference to travel patterns and choice of transport mode. In this respect, developments that significantly increase travel demand should not be permitted, especially if greenhouse gas emissions generated from within the District are to be reduced in line with international commitments, and health objectives are to be achieved. Ultimately, the DPD should be aiming to reduce the number and length of trips made by car.
- I.76. Similarly, whilst the aim to deliver 42% of the additional housing as 'affordable' is to be applauded, and is underpinned by sound evidence, the delivery of this target will be a challenge. The District will need to be strong in the face of market pressure if this to have any chance of success, particularly if development on brownfield land and within Development Limits is to be prioritised, and if regional housing allocations are to be met.
- I.77. The SA process has helped to inform the preparation of the Core Strategy DPD, and many of the recommendations put forward in earlier stages have now been incorporated into the Preferred Options version. There are policies in the Core Strategy DPD that aim to protect and enhance the environment which, when combined with national and regional policies, should help to mitigate for any adverse impact arising. Success will depend on their application.

MONITORING

- I.78. The final section of the SA Report sets out the framework for monitoring implementation of the LDF. The key effects to be monitored are the impact of development on landscape and townscape quality, protection of environmental assets such as biodiversity, heritage, and natural resources, the sustainability of development locations, contributions to climate change, and effects on the economy, deprived areas, housing needs, and the accessibility of services. A range of indicators and sources of information are identified. An on-going dialogue with the statutory environmental consultees and other stakeholders is also recommended to agree the significant effects to be monitored and the information to be collected, including who will collect the information and when.

