

HAMBLETON
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Making life better

**HAMBLETON DISTRICT
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT
FRAMEWORK**

**SUTAINABILITY APPRAISAL OF
DEVELOPMENT POLICIES PREFERRED OPTIONS
DEVELOPMENT PLAN
DOCUMENT
NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY**



Prepared for
Hambleton District Council
by
Land Use Consultants

December 2005

1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Hambleton District Council is reviewing the Hambleton Local Plan. The Hambleton Local Plan will be replaced by a Local Development Framework, incorporating Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents, in line with the Government's new format for development plans. The DPDs and Supplementary Planning Documents included in the Local Development Framework 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 Development Policies DPD. It has been produced alongside the emerging Development Policies DPD, and is being published for consultation at the same time as the Preferred Options for the Development Policies 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 Development Policies DPD.
- 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 focused 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.

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.*

METHODOLOGY

1.5. The SA guidance introduces the SA process and explains how to carry out SA as an integral part of the plan-making process.

Table 3.1 sets out the main stages of the plan making process and shows how these link to the SA process.

Table 3.1 Corresponding stages in plan-making and SA (from SA Guidance, ODPM 2005)

Figure 5 – Incorporating SA within the DPD process	
DPD Stage 1: Pre-production – Evidence Gathering	
SA stages and tasks	
Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A1: Identifying other relevant policies, plans and programmes, and sustainability objectives. • A2: Collecting baseline information. • A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems. • A4: Developing the SA framework. • A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA. 	
DPD Stage 2: Production	
SA stages and tasks	
Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B1: Testing the DPD objectives against the SA framework. • B2: Developing the DPD options. • B3: Predicting the effects the DPD. • B4: Evaluating the effects of the DPD. • B5: Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects. • B6: Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the DPDs. 	
Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C1: Preparing the SA Report. 	
Stage D: Consulting on the preferred options of the DPD and SA Report	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D1: Public participation on the preferred options of the DPD and the SA Report. • D2(i): Appraising significant changes. 	
DPD Stage 3: Examination	
SA stages and tasks	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D2(ii): Appraising significant changes resulting from representations. 	
DPD Stage 4: Adoption and monitoring	
SA stages and tasks	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D3: Making decisions and providing information. 	
Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the DPD	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E1: Finalising aims and methods for monitoring. • E2: Responding to adverse effects. 	

Stage A: Setting the Context and Scope

- 1.6. This stage was completed by consultants in two parts. The Stage 1 Report was conducted in February 2004² and involved the following main stages:
 1. Inception meeting
 2. Review of Plans, strategies and studies
 3. Development of SA objectives and framework
 4. Characterisation
 5. Consultation workshop
 6. Assessment of Vision and Spatial Strategy and alternatives considered
- 1.7. Following completion of this work, the new Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, which came into effect in September 2004, introduced a statutory requirement for undertaking SA. At the same time the ODPM produced draft guidance on SA. The SEA Directive also came into force in July 2004, introducing new requirements for environmental assessment of spatial plans. The Stage 1 Report was therefore reviewed with these changes in mind and a SA Scoping Report was prepared.
- 1.8. The additional work, completed in March 2005, involved updating the list of relevant plans, programmes and sources of baseline information and undertaking further reviews of new and updated plans where necessary. This information was used to update and further develop the characterisation/key sustainability issues and framework of sustainability objectives.
- 1.9. 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 1, 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

- 1.10. Appraisals completed for the Core Strategy DPD have already helped to refine the scope of objectives and policy options for the Development Policies DPD. Strategic Objectives for the Core

² Integrated Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment of Hambleton Local Development Framework. Stage 1 Report: Vision and Spatial Strategy (Land Use Consultants, February 2004)

Strategy DPD were identified and appraised against the SA Framework early in the SA process which helped to highlight and potential inconsistencies or synergies between objectives in aiming to make the District more sustainable. Core Strategy issues and options were appraised in a separate report produced in April 2005³.

- 1.11. Alternative options for each Preferred Development Policy, including the option of not having a policy (the 'do nothing' option), have been appraised and the results included in this report.

Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report

- 1.12. Preferred Options for the Development Policies DPD have been prepared by Hambleton District Council and have been appraised by Land Use Consultants. This Report provides the results of the appraisal of the preferred options and main alternatives using the framework of objectives and scoring system set out in Chapter 4 of this report. This has involved predicting and assessing the effects of the Preferred Options, using baseline data to qualify and quantify effects wherever possible. Consideration has been given to measures that could be introduced to mitigate any adverse effects on sustainability and maximise benefits. This SA Report details the process undertaken and results of the appraisal.
- 1.13. The detailed results of these appraisals are provided in **Appendix 6**, with key sustainability effects summarised in Chapter 5.

Stage D: Consultation on preferred options and SA

- 1.14. Hambleton District Council is seeking views on this SA Report alongside the statutory six-week pre-submission public participation stage of the DPD. 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 Development Policies 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

- 1.15. This SA Report sets out recommendations for monitoring the sustainability effects of the Development Policies DPD.

³ Sustainability Appraisal of Core Strategy Development Plan Document Issues and Options (Land Use Consultants, April 2005)

Recommendations for a process for dealing with adverse or unexpected effects is also included in this SA Report.

CONSULTATION

WHAT THE DIRECTIVE SAYS

“ Authorities which, by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programmes ... shall be consulted when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information which must be included in the environmental report” (Article 5(4)).

“The authorities [with relevant environmental responsibilities] and the public... shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme... and the accompanying Environmental Report before the adoption of the plan or programme” (Article 6(2)).

‘...the public... [includes] the public affected or likely to be affected by, or having an interest in, the decision-making subject to this Directive, including relevant non-governmental organisations, such as those promoting environmental protection and other organisations concerned.

“The environmental report, ... the opinions expressed [by consultees] and the results of any transboundary consultations ... shall be taken into account during the preparation of the plan or programme... and before its adoption...” (Article 8).

- 1.16. In February 2004 LUC facilitated on behalf of Hambleton District Council a stakeholder workshop to discuss sustainability issues in the District to help develop the characterisation and develop the sustainability objectives, which will be used for the SEA/SA of the Local Development Framework. Stakeholders were invited from the organisations set out in **Table 3.2**.

Table 3.2 Organisations invited to attend stakeholder workshop on SEA/SA objectives

Statutory:	
Countryside Agency	English Heritage
Environment Agency	English Nature
Hambleton District Council:	
Economic Development Manager	Head of Leisure and Tourism Services
Sustainable Development & Community Planning Manager	Housing Manager
North Yorkshire County Council:	
Passenger Transport	Heritage Unit
Highways	Education
Economic Development	Youth & Community
Social / Partnerships:	
Rural Transport Partnerships	Primary Care Trust
Local Strategic Partnerships	Voluntary Services Association
Community Safety Partnerships	Over 50s Forum
Natural Environment:	
Yorkshire Wildlife Trust – York	County Land and Business Association
CPRE	DEFRA
AONB Partnership (Nidderdale and Howardian Hills)	North Yorkshire Moors National Park
BAP Steering Group	
Economic:	
Yorkshire Forward	Bedale Chamber of Trade
Northallerton Chamber of Trade	Thirsk & District Chamber of Trade
Easingwold Chamber of Trade	

1.17. Stakeholders representing the following organisations attended the workshop:

- Hambleton District Council:
 - Senior Planner
 - Rural Housing Enabler
 - Sustainability and Community Planning Manager
 - Economic Development Officer
- Environment Agency
- English Nature

- Countryside Agency
- North Yorkshire County Council:
 - Economic Development Officer
 - Heritage Unit
 - Youth & Community Education
 - Passenger Transport Manager
 - Highways Department
- Swale and Ure Washlands Project / Lower Ure Conservation Trust
- Yorkshire Rural Community Council
- North York Moors National Park
- Deputy Leader of the Council
- Age Concern Hambleton and Richmondshire

1.18. Although not all of the invitees attended, most interest groups were represented in some way. For example, English Heritage did not attend, but a representative of the North Yorkshire Heritage Unit did. Education was the only area not represented. However, this topic is included in the objectives and criteria.

1.19. During March and April 2005 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 1, plus the Government Office, Regional Assembly and neighbouring authorities for a five week consultation. Responses to this consultation were received from:

- The Countryside Agency
- English Nature
- English Heritage
- Environment Agency
- Yorkshire Forward
- Government Office Yorkshire and Humber
- Darlington Borough Council

1.20. As stated, Hambleton District Council is now seeking views on this SA Report alongside the statutory six-week pre-submission public participation stage of the DPD, during July and August 2005.

CHARACTERISATION OF HAMBLETON AND KEY SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

Overview

- 1.21. 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).
- 1.22. 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.
- 1.23. To the north are the urban areas of Teeside 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.
- 1.24. 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

1.25. 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)

1.26. 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

1.27. 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

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 1.28. 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 SA guidance, a SA Framework, including SA objectives, was devised to provide a framework for describing, analysing and comparing the sustainability effects of alternatives.
- 1.29. 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.
- 1.30. 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 1 'Vision and Spatial Strategy' report dated February 2004.
- 1.31. Policies of the Core Strategy DPD have been tested against a range of alternative approaches, including 13 alternative spatial principles⁴. A 'do nothing' alternative to producing a Local Development Framework for Hambleton was appraised, which considered a scenario which relies on the policy framework of the current Hambleton Local Plan. The results of this appraisal are provided in **Appendix 6**.
- 1.32. Appraisal of alternatives during the preparation of the Core Strategy showed that none of the alternatives offered significant sustainability advantages over the preferred spatial principles and core policies. As the Development Policies DPD is required to be in conformity with the Core Strategy, this has helped to define the range of 'reasonable' policy options that might exist.
- 1.33. Each development policy was considered alongside one or more alternatives, including a 'do nothing' option to measure the likely effects of the preferred policy. The range of alternative policy options was informed by the relevant Core Policy and the

⁴ See Sustainability Appraisal of Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Land Use Consultants, December 2005)

scores applied informed by the SA of the Core Strategy DPD. The detailed results of these appraisals are provided in **Appendix 6**.

- 1.34. Each option was appraised against the SA sustainability criteria, in order to identify whether the selected policies met the aims of the criteria, and where there was any potential conflict. It was not always possible to appraise all alternatives to the policies, due mainly to the need for more detail to characterise the alternative policy option and allow for a meaningful appraisal.
- 1.35. Appraisal of the Development Policy Preferred Options highlighted elements of these that were clearly sustainable and should be maintained (e.g. in promoting the prudent use of natural resources and maintaining or enhancing landscape and townscape quality). It also highlighted tensions between some elements of the Development Policy Preferred Options and the SA objectives (e.g. potential effects on biodiversity of brownfield sites and potential effects on efforts to minimise the effects of climate change). The appraisal demonstrated that few tensions existed between the Development Policies and sustainability objectives, and that where such tensions did exist, they could be largely overcome through rewording or additional clarification of the policy.

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

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

SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE EFFECTS

Maintaining and enhancing landscape and townscape quality

- 1.37. Policies which provide support for landscape and townscape quality include the three policies under CP4 Locational Principles (DP8, DP9 and DP10), which provide detailed boundaries of Development Limits and a strengthened policy framework for judging proposals in the open countryside in terms of visual impact and the form of development. Sustaining and enhancing the character and attractiveness of the landscape is a key element of DP23 (Approach to town centre development) as it is for DP31, DP33 and DP34, which provide specific guidance on the protection of heritage, landscape character and nature conservation value of the District.

- 1.38. The design policies in DP35 and DP36 should ensure that future developments and associated landscaping are designed to complement existing landscape and townscape quality.

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

- 1.39. The Development Policies provide support for the protection and enhancement of flora, fauna and geology, by identifying the strict criteria for developments proposed outside the identified Development Limits. DP10 requires the maintenance of the form of settlements, which should have corresponding benefits for the maintenance of natural areas and established sites of geological and wildlife value. DP34 specifically covers the protection and enhancement of biodiversity within the District, whilst DP36 incorporates biodiversity as a key consideration of landscaping work.

Preserving and enhancing the District's historic environment

- 1.40. Guidelines for development which is in keeping with the character and qualities of the surroundings are provided by the Development Policies, particularly DP9 and DP10, and should support protection of the historic environment. The socio-economic policies also support the maintenance of the architectural and historical interests of market towns, and regeneration programmes which are likely to safeguard the historic environment of the town. Policy DP23 aims to sustain and enhance the character of town centres which are subject to development, whilst policies DP31, DP32 and DP33 cover heritage conservation, archaeology and maintenance of countryside character, and specifically require the consideration of these elements of the historic environment in all proposals.

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

- 1.41. The requirement for new development to be located in sustainable locations is supported by a number of development policies. By ensuring that developments do not threaten elements of public amenity such as privacy, daylight and noise/pollution restriction and outlining the instances where developer contributions will be required, the policies should support the principle of sustainable development. The policies also identify strict requirements of developments inside and outside Development Limits, which in both instances incorporate sustainability considerations.
- 1.42. Rural regeneration focuses on sustaining rural communities by means such as farm diversification, which is afforded good

support in the policies. The policies also incorporate sustainable location consideration in regard to hazardous operations, flooding and noise respectively.

Encouraging prudent use of natural resources

- 1.43. By outlining strict controls regarding where development will be permitted, Policies DP9 and DP10 help ensure protection of natural resources such as greenfield land. DP38 provides good quality guidance in relation to the quality and quantity of water resources. Policies DP45 and DP46 both provide support for the prudent use of natural resources, with DP45 outlining controls on hazardous operations, and DP46 outlining the need to consider flood risk and develop in areas which will not increase such risk.

Minimising climate change and its effects on the population

- 1.44. The Development Policies represent a good summary of climate change considerations. Policy DP2 lists flood protection measures as one type of infrastructure where developer contributions would be applicable, thereby contributing to minimisation of the effects of climate change. Policy DP37 encourages renewable energy, and is therefore beneficial to efforts to minimise the effects of climate change. Similarly, Policies DP38 and DP 39 cover water resources and waste respectively, and should support the minimisation of the effects of climate change through measures such as methane production. Policy DP46 provides a robust policy for managing the effects of flood risk by ensuring development is prioritised to locations with low risk of flooding and requiring mitigation and relief measures where appropriate.

Encouraging conditions which facilitate business success

- 1.45. The Development Policies are likely to result in a range of beneficial effects related to businesses in the District. Policy DP19 aims to provide business support services, and should help retain existing businesses, as well as improving the number of new businesses in the district. Rural regeneration policies focus on sustaining rural communities by allowing appropriate form and scale of employment development, an essential component of which will be farm diversification which is afforded good support in Policy DP29.

Making the most of Hambleton's economic strengths

- 1.46. Policy DP16 originally appeared in the Core Strategy and so has already been appraised. The policy scored well against economic-based criteria, as it is tailored to meet the specific needs of the District e.g. skills development, strategic links with the Tees Valley and North East. As mentioned in the SA, the

policy could include support for e-business and support services. Other policies within the Development Policies DPD are likely to support the renaissance of market towns and improve access to the district for tourism.

Providing closer links between where people live and where they work

- 1.47. A range of measures combine within the Development Policies to provide a good approach to allow provision of close links. Policy DP3 provides a list of suitable measures to help 'design-in' sustainable transport modes to new development and DP4 helps to highlight the importance of ensuring safe and easy access for all. Policy DP9 should focus development within certain areas, often at the centres of settlements, which should complement efforts to provide closer links between where people live and work. Policy DP10 supports this, by promoting the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of areas where people live and work, and links for people can be provided within this context. Policy DP19 provides specific support for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises which are important to the District's local economy. It also supports live-work units which would help to minimise travel.

Providing a range of premises suitable to support the economy

- 1.48. Policy DP18 will help to guard against the loss of employment land which could be damaging to the needs of the local economy. Policy DP20 intends to encourage regeneration in market towns and has an emphasis on re-development and re-use of sites, rather than urban extensions, as well as sustainable transport. Policy DP21 aims to ensure land uses in market towns are led by local regeneration programmes and could be combined with Policy DP20. In addition, Policy DP21 will encourage more efficient and higher value added on existing premises, and should encourage provision of employment land in areas of short supply.

Encouraging sustainable distribution and communication systems

- 1.49. The Development Policies encourage, but cannot ensure that businesses will employ sustainable transport. DP16 provides support to food industries in close proximity to A1/A19. Policy DP17 should ensure distribution is consistent with transport networks, and could also encourage local supply chains. Policy DP29 may support local supply chains through promoting processing and packing on farms which serve clusters or co-operatives of producers.

Encouraging the provision of support services

- 1.50. Through securing developer contributions, Policy DP2 could provide increased funding for support services. In addition, Policy DP6 should promote jobs in the support services, by encouraging the ongoing development of service utilities to meet local needs.

Improving the skills-base of Hambleton

- 1.51. Policy DP2 on developer contributions could potentially encourage projects that would improve the skills base of Hambleton. Policy DP16 supports links with Teeside, the North East and York, and new business such as IT and creative media which may help to retain the younger population

To enable improved community participation

- 1.52. Policy DP5 on community facilities aims to ensure the retention of community facilities and seek the involvement of the local community. Through this approach the policy may improve the sense of community and ability of residents to participate.

Providing support to deprived areas and disadvantaged groups

- 1.53. Policy DP5 on community facilities aims to ensure the retention of community facilities and seek the involvement of the local community. Through this approach the policy may improve the sense of community and ability of residents to participate.

Improving the health of the population

- 1.54. Through protecting public amenity, such as access to fresh air and limiting noise pollution, benefits to public health should be achieved by Policy DP1. Securing developer contributions through Policy DP2 should enable further investment in projects aimed at improving the health of Hambleton's population e.g. public open space. Other policies should conserve green areas, woodland and trees, thereby providing a 'green lung' for the area in terms of air quality, and also protecting areas for public amenity and related health benefits.

Reducing levels of crime

- 1.55. Securing developer contributions through Policy DP2 may have a positive impact on crime levels, by ensuring additional funding for community facilities, including those aimed at young people and disadvantaged groups. The effective design of developments and public spaces with crime minimisation as a key consideration as promoted in Policy DP43, should help reduce levels of crime.

Providing housing to meet local needs

- 1.56. Affordable housing is rightly recognised as one of the most important local issues in Hambleton. Ambitious targets in CP9 will help to meet local needs, including retaining the younger population and ensuring adequate labour supply. DP policies help to clarify definitions of affordable housing which is useful and will help to remove uncertainties about the type of housing that is required. Policy DP11 includes affordable housing as a consideration affecting the timing of the release of housing sites in order to meet local needs. Policy DP2 lists affordable housing as a valid investment of part of developer contributions.

Improving education and skills of the population overall

- 1.57. Policy DP16 originally appeared in the Core Strategy and so has already been appraised. The policy scored well against economic-based criteria, as it is tailored to meet the specific needs of the District e.g. skills development, strategic links with the Tees Valley and North East. Policy DP19 aims to encourage provision of advice, including on business planning, marketing and information technology.

Improving access to a range of services and facilities

- 1.58. The DPD provides a good range of policies to improve access to services and facilities in urban and rural areas. Policy DP27 strikes a good balance between meeting the needs of service and secondary villages and ensuring the vitality and viability of town centres. Other policies encourage regeneration of market towns, including employment generating uses and retaining existing services and facilities, and place further emphasis on town centre development and the vitality of urban centres.
- 1.59. The policies address the trend of declining rural services in Hambleton as well as identifying developer as an important mechanism for the delivery of community facilities.

SIGNIFICANT NEGATIVE EFFECTS

- 1.60. No significant negative effects were identified in relation to any of the proposed development policies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Maintaining and enhancing landscape and townscape quality

- 1.61. It is unclear from Policies DP11 and DP12 what the effect of the proposed housing programme would be on landscape and townscape quality in the area. Whilst the design of these developments should be guided by Policies DP35 and DP36, it may be useful to cross-reference to this policy for clarity. Policy

DP39 needs clarification as it is currently unclear in regard to landscape and does not identify any criteria for the appropriate location of waste facilities.

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

- 1.62. Whilst DP12 will provide protection for geological features, the brownfield sites which are prioritised for housing development can often support species of considerable biodiversity value. This issue should be incorporated into the policy, and sites may need to be conserved or habitats recreated where valued or protected species are identified. Policy DP39 may provide some support for biodiversity and geology by promoting more sustainable forms of waste management, but it does not cover the issue of sustainable locations for waste management facilities.

To preserve and enhance the District's historic environment

- 1.63. Some clarification of criteria that proposals for waste, water and sustainable energy facilities would need to adhere to regarding the historic environment would benefit Policies DP37, DP38 and DP39. Policy DP37 helps to strengthen Policy CP18, and provides criteria to judge the appropriateness of renewable energy schemes. The criteria could be expanded to take account of the need to preserve and enhance the historic environment and nature conservation assets and cumulative impacts.

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

- 1.64. It is recommended that the policies on brownfield development also consider the other sustainability issues related to such sites. DP22 on transport in market towns conflicts to some extent with CP2, and should favour sustainable transport over the private car. DP37 does not differentiate between different types of renewable technology, or identify which types will be supported, making it difficult to measure against these criteria. Additional criteria would also be beneficial to ensure the sustainable location of waste facilities and other development to guard against unsustainable development outside town centres and inappropriately placed waste facilities.

Encouraging prudent use of natural resources

- 1.65. Natural resources are not specifically listed in DP2 as an area where developer contributions could be applied, and inclusion of such a point would strengthen the policy. Policy DP38 could state a preference for developments which do not significantly increase water demand and make efficient use of water

resources. The aim of Policy DP16 is increased economic activity, which could conflict with the need to ensure prudent use of natural resources. The criteria for locating and designing waste management facilities in the district could be expanded upon e.g. proximity to sensitive or compatible land uses, designing recycling facilities into new developments, making use of sustainable transport modes.

Minimising climate change and its effects on the population

- 1.66. Policies DP11 and DP12 on prioritising brownfield and more sustainable locations should help minimise the effects of climate change, such as flooding, but the development of additional housing in itself may increase risks of climate change impacts. Policy DP22 lists a number of measures to support transport market town activity, the first two of which focus on provision of road vehicle car parking facilities. Provision of additional parking is likely to increase reliance on the car which conflicts with Core Policy CP2 which aims to minimise travel, and reduce green house gas emissions and further road infrastructure development. Whilst it is recognised that car use will remain important in such a rural district, preference should be given to sustainable forms of transport in market towns, in particular walking and cycling, as well as public transport improvements, rather than developments likely to encourage car use.
- 1.67. Policy DP37 could be expanded and to include sub-regional renewable energy targets and how Hambleton District will contribute to these. The policy could also provide more detailed guidance on the types of standalone renewable energy technologies that are likely to be acceptable e.g. wind energy, biomass (in addition to integrating CHP into developments).

Encouraging conditions which facilitate business success

- 1.68. It is unclear whether Policy DP2 will restrain business success, as some developers may be put off by the request for contributions. It is unclear whether Policy DP5 will facilitate business success, as whilst it will maintain local businesses, it may limit competitiveness by keeping prospective investors out. Part of the rationale for sustaining the rural economy should also be to encourage sustainable land management and nature conservation, and this link could be strengthened in policies DP28 and DP29.

Making the most of Hambleton's economic strengths

- 1.69. It is unclear whether Hambleton's economic strengths would benefit through securing developer contributions as set out in DP2. Part of the rationale for sustaining the rural economy should also be to encourage sustainable land management and nature

conservation, and this link could be strengthened in policies DP28 and DP29. The effects of this Policy DP39 on the economy are difficult to assess, although there may be benefits to the economy associated with re-processing.

Providing closer links between where people live and where they work

- 1.70. No recommendations have been identified against this objective.

Encouraging sustainable distribution and communication systems

- 1.71. There are no specific recommendations to strengthen this policy, but policies DP20 and DP21 could be combined as there is considerable overlap in content.

To encourage the provision of support services

- 1.72. No recommendations have been identified against this objective.

Improving the skills-base of Hambleton

- 1.73. No recommendations have been identified against this objective.

Enabling improved community participation

- 1.74. Providing examples of what constitutes a community facility within Policy DP5 may assist in predicting the likely effect of the policy.

To provide support to deprived areas and disadvantaged groups

- 1.75. DP14 is tailored to meet the specific needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling show-people, and includes a number of criteria to guard against unsustainable effects. It is recommended that research required to establish the needs of these communities is completed as early as possible to enable specific allocations to be included, thereby reducing uncertainties of meeting these needs.

Improving the health of the population

- 1.76. An alternative to DP1 would be to include standards for amenity, which could be usefully applied to certain topics such as public open space, to avoid over-intensification of development. This may be more appropriate within Policy DP40 Open Space, Sport and Recreation.

Reducing levels of crime

- 1.77. No recommendations have been identified against this objective.

Providing housing to meet local needs

- 1.78. Affordable housing is a key policy area that will require an effective Supplementary Planning Document and site-level detail in the Allocations DPD to ensure local housing needs are met in the locations where it is needed most as early as possible in the Plan period. Policies DP11 and DP12 could provide more certainty about how affordable housing fits into the phasing strategy and brownfield land targets.

Improving education and skills of the population overall

- 1.79. No recommendations have been identified against this objective.

Improving access to a range of services and facilities

- 1.80. No recommendations have been identified against this objective.

IMPLEMENTATION, MITIGATION AND MAXIMISING BENEFITS

- 1.81. This appraisal follows the SA of the Core Strategy Submission completed in December 2005, which identified many positive sustainability effects of the Plan which are likely to support improvements to the quality of life for residents of Hambleton.
- 1.82. Whilst the Development Policies DPD is required to be in conformity with the Core Strategy, the more detailed policies it provides in relation to the implementation and control of development may result in a variety of sustainability effects, synergies and conflicts. The SA has found that on the whole the DPD helps to work towards a more robust and comprehensive planning policy framework for Hambleton. Where policies are already covered by the Core Strategy DPD, there may be opportunities to streamline the document, whilst some policies require strengthening to take account of the full range of sustainability issues.
- 1.83. Development policies are often positive by nature and will assist with the implementation of the Core Strategy and as well as mitigation of potential adverse effects. Policies which are key to implementing the Core Strategy include developer contributions, targets for brownfield development (when completed at sub-regional scale) and phasing of development.

- 1.84. Key policy areas will often require effective Supplementary Planning Documents and site-level detail in the Allocations DPD to ensure they are properly implemented. For example, ensuring ambitious targets for affordable housing can be met by providing housing in the locations where it is needed most as early as possible in the Plan period. Other key issues include the degree to which travel can be minimised in a rural district highly reliant on car use and the need to provide a sufficient level of policy guidance in relation to natural resources e.g. renewable energy technologies.
- 1.85. No significant negative effects have been identified and the balance of effects shows that environmental issues are well catered for. However, the recommendations in this report seek clarification of some policies and include further measures that will mitigate for potential adverse impacts e.g. recognising the nature conservation value of brownfield sites
- 1.86. We have inevitably had to make assumptions in coming to judgements of the effects of the DPD. Our assumption with respect to effects, cumulative or otherwise, is on the basis of the intention of policy i.e. what it is trying to achieve. It should be noted that past experience suggests that, when considering development proposals, there will often be tensions when applying different policies, and deciding where weight should apply. Despite the best intentions of the planning authority, it may not always be possible to deliver development that meets all policy criteria, and frequently choices will often have to be made.

MONITORING

- 1.87. 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.