



Northumberland

County Council

COUNCIL

DATE: 9 JANUARY 2019

NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL PLAN – PUBLICATION DRAFT PLAN
(REGULATION 19)

Report of the Interim Executive Director: Place - Paul Johnston

Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing and Resilience: Councillor John Riddle

Purpose of report

To seek approval to publish the Northumberland Local Plan - Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19) and the Northumberland Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document - Scoping Document and the Highways and Transportation Design and Delivery Supplementary Planning Document - Scoping Document for consultation.

To agree that the Northumberland Local Plan be submitted to the Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government for Independent Examination, following the conclusion of the Regulation 19 publication period.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Council:

- 1. Agrees and publishes the Northumberland Local Plan – Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19) (Appendix A - Local Plan and Appendix B - Policies Map) (“the Northumberland Local Plan”) for a period of six weeks from 30 January 2019 to 13 March 2019 for representations as to technical and legal soundness in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) (“the 2012 Regulations”);**
- 2. Agrees the submission of the Northumberland Local Plan, along with representations received, to the Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government for Independent Examination under section 20 of the Planning Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) (“the 2004 Act”), together with the submission documents prescribed by Regulation 22 of the 2012 Regulations before 31 May 2019, following the conclusion of the Regulation**

19 publication period;

3. **Authorises the Interim Executive Director: Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing and Resilience, to make non-material typographical, formatting, mapping and other minor amendments to the Northumberland Local Plan prior to publication on 30 January 2019 and prior to submission of the Local Plan to the Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government;**
4. **Authorises the Interim Executive Director: Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing and Resilience, to write to the Local Plan Inspector appointed to carry out the Examination of the submitted Northumberland Local Plan asking him/her to recommend such modifications of the submitted Northumberland Local Plan as may be necessary to make the Plan sound and legally compliant, in accordance with section 20(7C) of the 2004 Act;**
5. **Authorises the Interim Executive Director: Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing and Resilience, to produce and submit any supplementary information and documentation to the Local Plan Inspector as may be required to complete the examination;**
6. **Authorises the Interim Executive Director: Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing and Resilience, to submit a schedule of proposed main modifications of the submitted Northumberland Local Plan to address any issues relating to soundness and legal compliance identified by the Local Plan Inspector;**
7. **Endorses the Northumberland Local Plan as a material consideration to be used in the determination of planning applications, with appropriate weight given in accordance with paragraph 48 of the National Planning Policy Framework; and**
8. **Agrees and publishes for consultation the Northumberland Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document - Scoping Document (Appendix C) and the Highways and Transportation Design and Delivery Supplementary Planning Document - Scoping Document (Appendix D) for a period of six weeks from 30 January 2019 to 13 March 2019.**

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the following key themes in the Corporate Plan for 2018-2021:-

- How - We want to be efficient, open and work for everyone;
- Living - We want you to feel safe, healthy and cared for;
- Enjoying - We want you to love where you live;
- Connecting - We want you to have access to the things you need;
- Learning - We want you to achieve and realise your potential; and
- Thriving - We want to attract more and better jobs

Key issues

1. The Northumberland Local Plan will:
 - Set the strategic planning policies of the Council, taking account of key factors like population trends, economic growth, climate change, resources and environmental character;
 - Set the general scale and distribution of new development which is required to meet Northumberland's needs to 2036;
 - Provide the planning principles¹, including detailed 'development management' policies to guide decisions on planning applications;
 - Show in detail where new homes, workplaces and facilities will be located through allocations of land; and
 - Show key environmental designations and include site specific proposals for the conservation and enhancement of historic and natural assets.
2. The Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19) is the final stage of consultation prior to the Northumberland Local Plan being submitted for Independent Examination.
3. In accordance with National Planning Policy the Council must, through the Local Plan, provide a positive planning policy framework that supports and grows the economy.
4. The most significant challenge to the delivery of the vision of the Draft Local Plan is the profile of the Northumberland population. Without positive policy intervention, projections show that there is likely to be a significant accelerating ageing of Northumberland's population. This change in the age profile has substantial potential to have a significant negative impact on the long term diversity and resilience of communities across Northumberland.
5. Without positive policy intervention, Northumberland will not have the working age population to support the delivery of the jobs which are required to allow Northumberland to deliver its share of economic growth as identified within the North East Strategic Economic Plan.
6. The Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19) is appended to this report at Appendix A - Local Plan and Appendix B - Policies Map. There has been significant evidence base and engagement work which has informed the preparation of the Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19).
7. The Local Development Scheme (April 2018) currently identifies that the Council will submit the Northumberland Local Plan for Independent Examination to the Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government in May 2019.
8. At the Examination the Inspector will look at the Northumberland Local Plan, the evidence supporting it and representations received at the Publication (Regulation 19) stage and judge whether it is sound and whether it meets the legal and duty to cooperate requirements. The Inspector may suggest further modifications to the Local

¹ Excluding the Northumberland National Park which is a separate Local Planning Authority and has separate planning policies.

Plan before it is formally adopted by the Council.

9. Two Supplementary Planning Scoping documents on Northumberland Design Guide (Appendix C) and the Highways and Transportation Design and Delivery (Appendix D) have been prepared to provide further guidance on emerging design policies in order to support the emerging Northumberland Local Plan in delivering high quality development.

Background

1. Following the withdrawal of the Northumberland Core Strategy in July 2017, the Council has been working on the preparation of a new Local Plan for Northumberland. Significant progress on the preparation of the new Local Plan for Northumberland has been made, supported by the all-party LDF Working Group. The preparation of the Local Plan is proceeding in accordance with the Local Development Scheme (April 2018).
2. The Spring 2018 Local Plan consultation which took place between 28 March and 2 May 2018, asked people to show the Council where, in their opinion, development should go and to flag up some key issues. Over 700 responses were received in reply to the consultation. The results alongside various other evidence base studies fed into Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan.
3. The Regulation 18 Local Plan consultation, commenced on 4 July and ended on 15 August 2018. During the consultation 23 drop-in events were held throughout the county and over 1,100 people attended the events. Presentations were also made to the 5 Local Area Councils, to which Town and Parish Council's were invited to attend. 2,827 responses were received from 548 consultees.
4. In addition, there have been on-going discussions with key stakeholders including Town and Parish Councils, statutory bodies and developers. Although the Council has not been able to make changes to reflect all of the concerns of everyone that has responded to the Regulation 18 consultation, changes have been made to the Local Plan and additional evidence work prepared to address feedback received.
5. The Council is now required by regulations to consult on a Publication version of the Local Plan in advance of formal submission to the Government. The Publication consultation is a formal, statutory stage. Responses to the Publication document must relate to the 'tests of soundness', which require the plan to be '*positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy*'.
6. The Publication Local Plan has been informed by integral assessments; namely the Sustainability Appraisal and the Habitats Regulations Assessment. A substantial number of evidence based studies have also been used to inform the preparation of the Local Plan. The assessments, evidence base studies as well as various technical papers are available to view on the Council's website at: www.northumberland.gov.uk/localplan.
7. The Council has worked closely with a number of bodies during the preparation of the Local Plan in accordance with the requirements under the Duty to Cooperate. The collation of evidence on joint working culminating in the production of the National

Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Statement of Common Ground is ongoing, and the statement will be produced as a two stage document. The Stage 1 Duty to Cooperate Statement of Common Ground has been prepared to support the Publication Local Plan. This is available to view on the Council's website at: www.northumberland.gov.uk/localplan.

8. Following the consultation on the Publication document, the Local Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination. During the Examination an Independent Planning Inspector will discuss and consider outstanding issues. The Inspector may suggest further modifications to the Local Plan before it is formally adopted by the Council.

Key Issues for the Local Plan

9. Section 2 of the Publication Draft Local Plan sets out the spatial portrait of Northumberland, defining the opportunities and challenges for the Local Plan to address. It highlights:
 - the importance of the natural and built environment and the need for the Local Plan to conserve and enhance it;
 - the importance of Northumberland to the regional and national economy;
 - that the Northumberland economy is intrinsically linked to the economies of neighbouring authorities, those in Tyneside in particular;
 - that the population of the County is ageing, and the significance of this demographic change makes it an important policy issue for the prosperity and resilience of communities across Northumberland.
10. The Draft Local Plan proposes a vision which sets out what it intends to achieve over the plan period (2016-2036). The vision, objectives and outcomes inform all of the draft policies in the plan. This reflects the Council's Corporate Priorities set out within the Corporate Plan 2018-2021 and the Northumberland Economic Strategy 2015-2020. It has also been informed by key partnership strategies such as the North of Tyne Devolution Deal and the Local Enterprise Partnership Strategic Economic Plan.

Delivering the vision for Northumberland

11. The Local Plan needs to define the level and distribution of development and specific policies that are required to deliver the spatial vision. The vision and objectives highlight the importance of protecting and enhancing the physical and cultural identity of Northumberland, but also the need to allow development to grow and diversify the economy to support the resilience of local communities.
12. A significant challenge to the delivery of the vision of the Draft Local Plan is the profile of the Northumberland population. Without positive policy intervention, projections show that there is likely to be a significant accelerating ageing of Northumberland's population and a substantial reduction in the working age population. The impact of this will be a significantly shrinking labour force and fewer working age families within the County. This change in the age profile has substantial potential to have a significant negative impact on the long term diversity and resilience of communities across Northumberland.

13. The Council considers that it is not an appropriate option to plan for a level of development only to meet population projections. This will not provide the working age population to allow the economy to grow as identified in the Council's Economic Strategy. It is considered that not planning for job growth across the County would unacceptably impact on the vitality and resilience of Northumberland Communities.
14. Some of the potential impacts include:
 - Reduction in the level of wealth created and retained within the County;
 - Further pressure imposed on spending in the public sector on social care and welfare;
 - Impact of reduced local expenditure - reducing income to local businesses and threatening further job losses;
 - The appetite for innovation and creativity may be suppressed - with those who have marketable or transferable skills moving elsewhere to find employment or further, higher education or training;
 - The County as a whole could become less competitive in increasingly competitive markets;
 - There is a risk of lower aspirations in education and learning;
 - The reduction in wealth creation may be accompanied by reduced investment in the buildings and spaces which make up the fabric of the County's towns and villages, together with its natural and historic environments;
 - This in turn may impact on the ability to attract new investment in the new economy; most notably digital, media, telecommunications and software;
 - A lack of choice in the housing market across the County, inhibiting the ability of existing households to secure the homes they need, and attract a working age population.
15. It is recognised that no or limited growth will reduce some of the pressures currently imposed on the County's environmental assets. Also, that an ageing population will create new employment opportunities, through the expansion of support services, increased levels of disposable income brought by in-migration, or simply by people working well beyond current retirement age. However, the Council consider there is a high level of risk of limited benefits and potentially high costs to the social and economic well-being of the wider community from the adoption of a policy of no or limited growth, because the County will not have the labour force to sustain economic growth.

A strategy for sustainable growth across Northumberland

16. In order to support the delivery of both the North East Strategic Economic Plan and the draft Northumberland Economic Strategy, the chosen development strategy for Northumberland is predicated on an ambition to support the delivery of additional, better paid and higher skilled jobs in the County, and to provide homes to meet not only the needs of the resident population, but also to accommodate the needs of people moving into Northumberland, who create and fulfil jobs across the County.
17. The vision proposes that the Local Plan will build upon existing strengths while diversifying and realising the potential of the rural and visitor economy. In order to deliver the economic objectives, the Local Plan will:
 - Provide a portfolio of high quality employment sites in the right locations which are attractive to the market;

- Support locations in the South East and Central Delivery Areas as cost effective alternatives to the Tyneside market for industrial development;
 - Provide a diverse range of interconnected sites around the Blyth Estuary to provide for growth of the strategically important sectors – low carbon and environmental goods, energy generation, and offshore engineering;
 - Support improvements to the County's gateways to international growth – The Ports of Blyth and Berwick, and links to Newcastle International Airport;
 - Support the development of high quality office accommodation at Northumberland Business Park, and key locations in the other Main Towns;
 - Enable the development and diversification of the rural economy, and deliver the Borderlands Initiative, by supporting the creation and expansion of hubs for business services and creative industries in the County's market towns, rural service centres and larger villages, and through more home run enterprises;
 - Support the growth and diversification of the visitor economy, including the development of tourism facilities and accommodation;
 - Support improvements to town centres;
 - Support initiatives to improve skills levels in Northumberland's resident workforce;
 - Support the objectives of partners including those within the North of Tyne, and North East Local Enterprise Partnership, to support business investment.
18. In order to maximise the potential to deliver the above, infrastructure improvements are essential. The Local Plan will:
- Support improvements to the East Coast Main Line, the re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Rail Line, and improvements to the strategic highways including the dualling of the A1;
 - Support the rollout of effective superfast broadband across the County, and improvements to mobile communications.

Extending choice in the housing market

19. In order to meet the needs of Northumberland's resident population, including the diverse needs of an ageing population, and to provide attractive housing options for those moving into the County to boost the economy, the plan proposes to extend choice in the housing market. As such, the plan proposes to deliver housing at a level above the minimum 'Local Housing Need' identified by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The plan proposes to deliver the right types of homes in the right places. This includes homes which will enable residents to get onto the housing ladder, affordable homes to rent, and specialist housing including extra care housing. The plan proposes the delivery of 17,700 dwellings (885 dwellings per annum). This housing will also help:
- Increase the numbers of skilled workers moving into the County, and reduce the number moving away, stemming the decrease in the size of the working age population;
 - To rebalance and re-energise the resident population, and strengthen the labour force;
 - Maintain and enhance vitality, and the provision of local services in the County's rural communities.
20. The indicative distribution of the dwelling requirements across the County is informed by the spatial strategy, and using disaggregated 'Local Housing Need' identified by the standard methodology as a guide. The Draft Local Plan seeks to ensure the

future sustainability and viability of communities, and improve choice to meet the needs and aspirations of all existing and future residents. The approach therefore takes account of the role of main towns and service centres, the presence of key local services and facilities in smaller settlements.

21. While planning to meet future needs, the distribution of new allocations in the Draft Local Plan is also informed by the scale of commitments in each area. Account is also taken of environmental constraints and designations (including the Green Belt) that may restrict the ability of some areas to fully meet their needs and thus necessitate a slightly higher provision in neighbouring areas.
22. Draft policies within the Local Plan seek to provide existing and future communities with access to a decent affordable home, including addressing the shortfall in affordable homes across Northumberland. The affordable housing policy in the Publication Local Plan proposes to introduce different affordable housing requirements based on value areas and viability issues, rather than a standard requirement across the whole the County.
23. Other policies in the Draft Local Plan seek to provide existing and future communities with access to a decent affordable home, including:
 - Identifying the need for a range of housing tenures, types, prices and sizes to be provided in order to help meet local needs for different groups of the population, including meeting the needs of an ageing population;
 - The potential to create lifetime neighbourhoods to support older people to remain independent as they age;
 - Identifying and providing for the needs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

Green Belt in Northumberland

24. The Government attaches great importance to the Green Belt and through the NPPF sets out the policy approach to Green Belt. The NPPF states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open, and that a key attribute of land in the Green Belt is its openness. The Green Belt within Northumberland forms part of the wider Tyne and Wear Green Belt, the overriding purpose being to prevent the unrestricted sprawl of the Tyne and Wear conurbation. An extension to the Green Belt around Morpeth was identified in the 1996 Northumberland Structure Plan, Regional Planning Guidance in 2002, with the Policy S5 of the revised Northumberland Structure Plan (2005) defining the general extent.
25. NPPF states that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances; through the preparation or review of Local Plans, and that their boundaries need to have permanence enduring beyond the plan period.
26. Given that Northumberland already has a significant amount of housing committed across the County, it is not considered that exceptional circumstances exist to justify the alteration of Green Belt boundaries for residential development as housing growth in the Draft Local Plan can be accommodated outwith the Green Belt. However, the Council has identified exceptional circumstances to release land from

the Green Belt in order to deliver an identified need for employment land in Hexham, Ponteland and Prudhoe.

27. The boundaries of the previously defined Green Belt have been amended in some areas to improve coherence across the designation. The Publication Local Plan defines the detailed boundaries of the Green Belt extension around Morpeth. Some settlements, previously washed over with infill boundaries, have been inset from the Green Belt to improve coherence across the wider Green Belt and allow development within sustainable locations. Minor amendments of the Green Belt boundary have also been made to address anomalies, enabling boundaries to better align more accurately to physical edges.

Settlement hierarchy and limits

28. A hierarchy of settlements for development is set out with the Draft Local Plan, which gives priority to identified Main Towns, Service Centres and Service Villages. There is no specific definition of a Main Town, Service Centre or Service Village. The role of settlements within these categories varies across the County.
29. In order to better manage the location of development, settlement limits are proposed within the Draft Local Plan. While criteria based policies will also be used, it is considered that settlement limits will provide a higher degree of certainty to communities regarding future development. They will help to protect the countryside from ad hoc development encroachment, prevent the merger of settlements, maintain the character and form of settlements, and protect the settings of historic and ecological assets.
30. The Draft Local Plan defines settlement limits for all Main Towns, Service Centres and Service Villages unless local communities, through the neighbourhood planning process, are defining boundaries or have specifically chosen not to.

Delivering sustainable development

31. The Draft Local Plan contains many other policies, which seek to deliver the vision for Northumberland.
32. In addition to the policy approach highlighted above, other policies within the Draft Local Plan seek to deliver a thriving and competitive economy by:
 - Allowing for appropriate retail, leisure and employment opportunities within town centres, to protect the existing vitality and viability;
 - Supporting and improving transport and communications networks and the County's gateways to international growth – the Ports of Blyth and Berwick, and Newcastle International Airport.
33. Policies to protect and enhance Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic and built environment included with the Draft Local Plan seek to:
 - Allow Northumberland's natural and historic environment to continue to be experienced and valued by residents and visitors, within the scope that is possible to maintain their full protection and allow for their enhancement;
 - Direct development away from our most sensitive and valuable natural assets, habitats and species, towards less sensitive locations;

- Ensure that new development contributes to the delivery of priorities set out by the Local Nature Partnerships;
- Maintain and enhance Northumberland's Green Infrastructure networks;
- Protect and enhance the landscape character of Northumberland;
- Protect and enhance Northumberland's the tranquillity and dark skies;
- Conserve and enhance features and areas of historical and cultural value, including the sensitive re-use of historical buildings and a reduction in buildings at risk;
- Use Northumberland's distinctive heritage as the inspiration for new developments;
- Protect archaeological sites and features;
- Protect the outstanding universal value of the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage site from inappropriate development.

34. Policies to ensure connectivity seek to:

- Ensure coordinated and planned provision of essential infrastructure e.g. transport, water supply, sewerage, energy, flood alleviation, telecommunication, education, and health care;
- Support effective partnership working between the Council, other infrastructure providers and developers to facilitate infrastructure delivery and opportunities for the co-location and multi-functional use of existing and new infrastructure services, amenities and facilities;
- Protect existing infrastructure services and facilities unless they are no longer needed, or there is alternative provision elsewhere;
- Support the provision of new or improved infrastructure, provided there is no detrimental environmental impact;
- Provide a range of viable, efficient sustainable transport alternatives to reduce reliance on the private motor vehicle, although it is recognised that in rural areas reliance on the private car is unavoidable;
- Support improvements to transport and communications infrastructure, and the County's gateways to international growth i.e. dualling of the A1 and A69, the Ports of Blyth and Berwick, passenger services on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line, and Newcastle International Airport.

35. Policies to ensure community health and wellbeing seek to:

- Protect and enhance accessible local services provision;
- Support the provision of state of the art hospitals to provide improved healthcare;
- Ensure strategic growth is matched by the delivery of improved and new infrastructure.

36. Policies to address climate change seek to:

- Support a sustainable pattern of development, including improvement to the self-containment levels of the main towns and service centres and a reduction in the need to travel;
- Support new development to incorporate sustainable building practices and where possible contribute to improving the existing building stock;
- Embed high energy efficiency into new development;
- Require new developments to incorporate appropriate adaptation and mitigation for climate change, particularly risk from flooding and rising sea levels.

37. Policies to manage natural resources seek to:
- Not unnecessarily sterilise finite mineral resources across the County and make land available to meet defined needs;
 - Ensure that minerals extraction, transport and processing does not have unacceptable adverse impacts on the environment or local communities;
 - Recognise the importance of the minerals industry as a source of employment;
 - Ensure Northumberland continues to have a well-established and spatially distributed network of waste management facilities, with sufficient capacity and that recycling and recovery rates are maximised;
 - Ensure that the need to generate energy is effectively balanced with the need to protect Northumberland's environment and communities from any significant adverse impacts associated with it, including the identification of area being suitable for wind energy development;
 - Ensure that efficient use is made of land, with priority given to the development of previously developed land, wherever possible.
38. Policies to ensure quality of place seek to:
- Ensure that the design of new development will be of a high quality;
 - Maintain and improve the individual character of places in Northumberland;
 - Improve the accessibility of services for communities;
 - Provided attractive living and working environments that are valued by their communities.

Northumberland Design Guide and Highways and Transportation Design and Delivery Supplementary Planning Documents

39. It is the Council's intention, through policies in the Local Plan, to drive improvements in the design agenda in respect of new development in the County. The Council made a commitment in the Northumberland Local Plan - Draft Plan for Regulation 18 Consultation to prepare a Northumberland Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) with a view to providing further guidance on emerging design policies in order to support the emerging Northumberland Local Plan in delivering high quality development.
40. The Council also made a commitment in the Regulation 18 Draft Plan to prepare a Highways and Transportation Design and Delivery SPD. as the Council's current highway design "Residential Roads and Footpaths in Northumberland" was published in 1980 and is therefore significantly out of date.
41. These SPDs will complement and dovetail with each other in order to provide developers, landowners and applicants with holistic design principles, guidance and good practice. In advance of the preparation of the SPDs there is the need to consult on the scope of these SPDs. Scoping Documents for both these SPDs have been prepared for consultation alongside the Publication Draft Local Plan to seek views and comments from stakeholders in respect of the guidance and information which should be contained in the SPDs.

Engagement Plan

42. The statutory consultation on the Publication Draft Local Plan (Regulation 19), its associated evidence base and the two Design SPD scoping reports is scheduled to commence on Wednesday 30 January 2019 for 6 weeks, ending on 13 March 2019. As well as the consultation documents being available online, hard copies will also be available at Customer Information Centres and Libraries throughout the County. Hard copies of the consultation document will also be available to purchase. A CD with the consultation documents will also be available on request.
43. To ensure effective engagement, it is essential to raise awareness of the consultation. The Council will be seeking to raise awareness of the consultation in the following ways:
- Early notification emails to Town and Parish Councils;
 - Formal consultation letters and emails to statutory and other consultees, including Town and Parish Councils and those registered on the consultation database – at the start of the consultation period;
 - 23 information sharing drop-in events have been arranged across the County, in each of the Main Towns and Service Centres;
 - Leaflet to all addresses in Northumberland publicising the consultation and the drop-in events;
 - Press releases – at the start, middle, and towards the end of the consultation;
 - Statutory notice;
 - Article in Northumberland News;
 - Use of social media to raise awareness about the start of the consultation – and in advance of drop-in events;
 - Clear links on the front page of the Council website;
 - Presentations to Local Area Councils during February - to which Town and Parish Councils will be invited to attend;
 - Parish Councils will also be asked to raise awareness of the consultation;
44. As explained above the Publication consultation is a formal, statutory stage and responses must relate to the ‘tests of soundness’, which require the plan to be *‘positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy’*. Response forms will be available to allow people to respond in the required way, and officers will be available to provide guidance.

Next Steps

45. Following the end of the consultation on the Publication Draft Local Plan, there will be a period of collation of the representations received and consideration of the issues raised. The Council will need to identify the key issues and consider whether any modifications are required to the Plan, to accompany the submission to the Minister for Communities, Housing and Local Government for Independent Examination. An independent Planning Inspector will be appointed to undertake the Independent Examination and to consider the soundness of the Local Plan having regard to all of the representations received.
46. At the Examination the Inspector will look at the Local Plan, the evidence supporting it and representations received at the Publication (Regulation 19) stage and judge whether it is sound and whether it meets the legal and duty to cooperate requirements. The Inspector may suggest further modifications to the Local Plan

before it is formally adopted by the Council. Further information will be provided on the Examination process when the Submission Stage commences.

47. The current timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan and consultation is set out in the published Local Development Scheme (April 2018). The remaining key stages are set out below:

Local Plan Timetable

Key Stages	Date
Regulation 19 - Publication of Local Plan - Consultation on Pre-submission draft (limited to 'Tests of Soundness')	January 2019
Regulation 22 - Submission to Secretary of State	May 2019
Regulation 24 - Independent Examination Hearings	September 2019
Regulation 26 - Adoption of Local Plan	March 2020

48. In order to meet the current timetable set out above, it is considered necessary for Council to agree to submit the Northumberland Local Plan to the Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government for Independent Examination, following the conclusion of the Regulation 19 publication period. In doing so, it is also considered that Council delegate authority to the Interim Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing and Resilience to :

- Make any no-material amendments to the Northumberland Local Plan prior to submission;
- Write to the Local Plan Inspector appointed to carry out the Examination of the submitted Northumberland Local Plan asking him/her to recommend such modifications of the submitted Northumberland Local Plan as may be necessary to make the Plan sound and legally compliant;
- Produce and submit any supplementary information and documentation to the Local Plan Inspector as may be required to complete the examination; and
- Submit a schedule of proposed main modifications of the submitted Northumberland Local Plan to address any issues relating to soundness and legal compliance identified by the Local Plan Inspector.

Implications

Policy	The Local Plan when adopted will form part of the Council's policy framework.
Finance and value for money	Plan preparation costs will be met from within existing Council's budgets.

Legal	Local Planning Authorities must prepare a Local Plan which sets planning policies in a local authority area. Local Plans must be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy in accordance with Section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and the National Planning Policy Framework, Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and the National Planning Policy Framework.
Procurement	External expertise has been procured to assist with the preparation of evidence base studies, where the nature of the work is of a specialist nature. Additional external capacity, in the form of project management and critical friend support has also been procured to assist in the preparation of the Local Plan.
Human Resources	Work on the Local Plan involves both Council Officers and Members.
Property	The adopted Local Plan will apply to land and buildings owned by the County Council as they apply to land and buildings owned by others.
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	An Equality Assessment has been undertaken and appended to this report. It will also be published alongside the Publication Draft Local Plan (Regulation 19) document.
Risk Assessment	There is a risk of intervention by the Secretary of State if delivery milestones are not met. The regulation 19 consultation is the second milestone on the LDS. A detailed project plan and resources plan are in place and are monitored on a regular basis.
Crime & Disorder	Crime and disorder considerations will be taken into account in the preparation of the Local Plan.
Customer Consideration	The Local Plan once adopted will supersede many planning policies from the former County and District Council planning documents into a single document, ensuring consistency in planning policies across the County and thereby making it easier for the public to understand.
Carbon reduction	The emerging Northumberland Local Plan includes draft policy approaches relating to climate change and carbon reduction.
Wards	All.

Background papers:

- Northumberland Local Plan - Local Development Scheme (April 2018)
- Northumberland Local Plan - Regulation 18 Draft Plan for consultation and accompanying policies map (June 2018)
- Northumberland Local Plan - Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19) and accompanying Policies Map
- Northumberland Local Plan - Sustainability Appraisal
- Northumberland Local Plan - Habitats Regulations Assessment
- Northumberland Local Plan - Equalities Impact Assessment

- Northumberland Local Plan - Health Impact Assessment
- Northumberland Local Plan - Stage 1 Duty to Cooperate Statement of Common Ground
- Northumberland Local Plan - Regulation 22 Consultation Statement
- Northumberland Local Plan - Various Studies and Evidence reports and technical papers
- Northumberland Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document - Scoping Document
- Northumberland Highways and Transportation Design and Delivery Supplementary Planning Document - Scoping Document

Report Sign Off

	initials
Finance Officer	AE
Monitoring Officer/Legal	LH
Human Resources	KA
Procurement	TP
I.T.	N/A
Executive Director (Paul Johnston)	PJ
Portfolio Holder(s)	JR

Author and Contact Details

Joan Sanderson – Senior Planning Manager (Planning Policy)

Telephone: 01670 623626

Email: Joan.Sanderson@northumberland.gov.uk