

Arnside & Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
Development Plan Document (DPD)

Issues and Options Consultation



Discussion Paper

Part of Lancaster City Council and South Lakeland District Council Local Plans

November 2015

www.lancaster.gov.uk
www.southlakeland.gov.uk



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1. Introduction

What is a Development Plan Document?

- 1.1 Lancaster City Council and South Lakeland District Council are Local Planning Authorities. This means that they are responsible for preparing Local Plans and determining planning applications in their areas. A Local Plan sets out what development is needed in an area and contains policies to ensure that those needs are met in a sustainable way. Local Plans are used to determine planning applications and also to influence infrastructure provision and environmental management. A Development Plan Document (DPD) is part of the statutory Local Plan.

What area will this DPD cover?

- 1.2 The Arnsdale and Silverdale area (see map on page 5) is designated as an **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)** with the statutory purpose of **conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area**. This means that the area's landscape has been identified by the Government as being of **national importance**. Designation as an AONB and the resulting legal powers and statutory obligations arise out of the **National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000**.
- 1.3 The AONB is **characterised by** an intimate mosaic of low limestone hills, woodland, wetland, pastures, limestone pavements, intertidal flats, coastal scenery and distinctive settlements. Reflecting these, the AONB's **special qualities** are:
- Outstanding landscape and spectacular views;
 - Unique limestone geology;
 - Morecambe Bay – a stunning seascape;
 - Rare and precious habitats;
 - Internationally and nationally important species;
 - Rich sense of history;
 - Distinctive settlement character;
 - Strong community and culture;
 - Opportunities to enjoy the countryside;
 - A sense of tranquillity, space and place; and
 - A highly designated area
- 1.4 The AONB straddles the boundary between two counties (Lancashire and Cumbria) and two Districts (Lancaster and South Lakeland). The two District Councils (along with other public bodies) have a **statutory duty under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000** to have regard to the statutory purpose of AONBs in carrying out their functions. Within the AONB, Government policy requires that councils give great weight to conserving landscape and scenic beauty.
- 1.5 The AONB covers 75 km² and has a population of around 7,800. The main settlements are Arnsdale (population 2,334), Warton (1,805), Silverdale (1,326) and Storth/Sandside (978). Around 2,800 people work within the AONB. The largest single employer is the Billerud Paper Mill in Beetham. Other important sectors are land management, education, health, accommodation, food and

drink, tourism and construction. Arnsdale and Silverdale are the main service centres within the AONB. The area has close links to Carnforth, Lancaster, Kendal and Milnthorpe for employment and for services such as supermarkets and secondary education. Many people living in the AONB work and use services further afield.

1.6 Management of the AONB is co-ordinated by the **Arnsdale & Silverdale AONB Partnership**, which is made up of the County and District Councils, government agencies and community and business representatives. The Partnership recently adopted an updated **Statutory Management Plan**¹, which sets out the overall strategy for managing, conserving and enhancing the AONB. The Management Plan also sets out some key principles for the DPD. These include that it should:

- reflect the national importance of the AONB;
- contain policies to conserve and enhance landscape quality and character, tranquillity, dark skies, local distinctiveness, settlement character, pattern and local vernacular architecture, habitats and species, geodiversity and the historic environment;
- identify appropriate sites for the delivery of housing to meet local community needs demonstrated by a housing needs survey, prioritising affordable housing and use of brownfield sites;
- identify appropriate sites to support the delivery of local employment and business opportunities, prioritising use of brownfield sites;
- support the development and retention of local services and facilities and advocate the need for local services to support community life and the local tourism industry;
- define and conserve areas of important open green space within settlements;
- protect the setting of, and views out from, and into, the AONB;
- support small-scale renewable energy developments appropriate to the local landscape character;
- manage tourism related development such as camping, lodge and caravan development and car parking;
- promote appropriate diversification and sensitive re-use of rural buildings and consider the spatial relationship with surrounding areas, in particular Milnthorpe and Carnforth.

¹ Adopted by Lancaster City Council and South Lakeland District Council in 2014

Why do we need a joint Development Plan Document for the AONB?

1.7 **This Development Plan Document will be known as the AONB DPD.** The reasons for preparing the AONB DPD are:

- While the AONB is an area of National Landscape Importance, it is relatively small and lies on the edge of both Districts. This means that district-wide Local Plans for Lancaster and South Lakeland would not have the AONB as their main focus. **An AONB DPD can focus on the AONB and have its conservation and enhancement at its heart.**
- The **AONB DPD** is an important means of implementing the AONB Management Plan and will give **statutory development plan policy force** to some of the principles of the management plan when planning applications are considered.
- The **special character of the AONB** requires a different approach to local planning to that outside nationally important landscapes, an issue that was raised by the Inspector considering South Lakeland's Local Plan Land Allocations document.
- Councils and other public bodies now have a **duty to co-operate**, which means that, in areas where planning issues cross boundaries, they must work together.
- **Policies and decisions need to be consistent** across the whole of the AONB in respect of the conservation significances and the response to development pressures.
- **The communities within the AONB have a strong desire to be involved in shaping its future.** The AONB Partnership provides a strong and well established forum to bring the communities together.
- The compact size of the AONB and its complex self-contained inter-relationships and related settlement pattern give a **strong sense of unity and cohesiveness** to the AONB.

1.8 This will **be the first AONB DPD in England.** It is a pioneering and innovative approach and is being followed closely by other AONB Partnerships up and down the country as an example of how an AONB Partnership, councils and communities can work together to produce the best outcomes for the AONB .

What is the Issues and Options discussion paper for?

1.9 We are at an early stage in the process of preparing the AONB DPD and the purpose of the Issues and Options Discussion Paper is to seek your initial views on what should go into the plan. Before we begin writing policies and taking any decisions about sites, we need to listen to peoples' views on:

- the **development and conservation needs** of the area;
- what **issues the plan should address**;
- which **strategic options** are favoured; and
- **sites put forward for housing, employment or open space use.**

You will see that there are questions throughout the Issues and Options Discussion Paper. All of these relate to issues where **we need to know what you think** before we prepare a Draft Plan.

How is the Issues and Options Discussion Paper structured?

1.10 The document is split into 7 sections:

- **Part 1 is this Introduction.** It tells you what the plan is for, the stages that the plan has to go through before it is adopted and what our estimated timetable is for implementation. It explains how the two Councils will work together. It also explains how you can make comments on the plan.
- **Part 2 explains influences on the plan** including the AONB Management Plan, existing Local Plan policies in Lancaster and South Lakeland, and national planning policies that the plan has to be in line with.
- **Part 3 looks at the evidence base**, which contains the objective assessment of housing, employment and infrastructure needs that the plan has to meet.
- **Part 4 looks at the vision and objectives** that the plan should seek to deliver for meeting the identified needs, including how development should be distributed across the plan area and the role that different centres inside and outside the AONB should play.
- **Part 5 looks at the issues** that the plan needs to manage and address.
- **Part 6 looks at options** for meeting the objectives and delivering the vision.
- **Part 7 looks at the delivery** of the plan and issues such as the phasing of development.

What stages does the plan have to go through?

1.11 The process for preparing a Development Plan Document is set out in Government regulations. It includes:

- **Collecting the Evidence.** This means making an objective assessment of needs for housing, other development and infrastructure and making an assessment of the sites that are suitable, achievable and available to meet those needs (key evidence base documents are set out in Part 3), as well as gathering information on other topics such as heritage and open space.
- **Early stakeholder engagement.** We have involved key stakeholders and the wider public in the process so far through three stakeholder meetings, the housing needs survey, the call for sites and consultation on the sustainability appraisal scoping report and site assessment methodology/criteria. An interim consultation report setting out how we have engaged others in the process so far accompanies the Issues and Options Discussion Paper.
- **Sustainability Appraisal Scoping.** In accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, this exercise sets the objectives, criteria and methodology for testing site and policy options to ensure that the most sustainable options are selected. The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report accompanies the Issues and Options Discussion Paper.
- **Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening.** In accordance with the Habitats Regulations, all the suggested sites will be screened to check whether they are likely to have any significant effects on sites of international biodiversity conservation importance.

1.12 Where we are now?

- **Issues and Options Consultation.** Public consultation on the evidence base, vision, objectives, issues and site and policy options. This is taking place from **6 November 2015 to 18 December 2015**.

1.13 What happens next?

- **Draft Plan Consultation.** Drawing on the evidence base, the sustainability appraisal, habitats regulations assessment and the comments made during the Issues and Options consultation, a Draft DPD will be prepared and public consultation undertaken. **This is expected to take place in Summer 2016.**
- **Publication.** The Draft Plan will be worked up into a Publication edition of the plan. There is then a period during which people can make formal representations on the DPD to be considered by a Planning Inspector at the Independent Examination (see below). **The period for formal representations is expected to be in Winter 2016/2017.**
- **Submission.** The DPD, together with the representations made on the Published Plan, will be submitted to the Secretary of State who will appoint an Inspector to carry out an Independent Examination.
- **Examination.** The Inspector will examine the DPD to make sure that it is 'sound'. He/she will look at whether the DPD is positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national legislation and policy.
- **Adoption.** If the Inspector finds that the AONB DPD is sound, Lancaster City Council and South Lakeland District Council will each be able to adopt the Plan. It will then form part of the statutory development plan for each district. We are aiming to have an adopted plan in place by **Summer 2017**.

How do I comment on the Issues and Options Discussion Paper?

- 1.14 As well as being available to view on both Council's websites and the Arnside & Silverdale AONB website, the Issues and Options document, evidence base documents, Interim Consultation Statement, Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and Habitats Regulations Screening Report are available at local libraries (Arnside, Carnforth, Kendal, Lancaster, Milnthorpe, Morecambe and Silverdale); at both Councils' offices and at the AONB offices during normal opening times.

Comments on the Issues and Options Discussion Paper are invited between **6 November 2015 and 5pm on 18 December 2015**. To assist us in processing responses efficiently, we encourage you to make your comments electronically at <http://applications.southlakeland.gov.uk/ldfconsultation/>

Alternatively you can post a response to:

**Development Plans Manager, South Lakeland District Council,
South Lakeland House, Lowther Street, Kendal, Cumbria. LA9 4DQ.**

2 Background

What other key documents guide development in the AONB?

- 2.1 The AONB DPD is only one of a number of plans and strategies affecting the AONB. It will complement existing plans and strategies including the AONB Management Plan and other existing and emerging local plan documents. These other documents can be found on the Lancaster City Council and South Lakeland District Council websites – the most important are the following:

National Planning Policies

- 2.2 Local Plans have to be in general conformity with national planning policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012). The central theme of the NPPF is a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development', which states that local authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet development needs in their area and meet objectively assessed development needs unless adverse impacts would significantly outweigh the benefits. It also states that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection and that the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in these areas.
- 2.3 The National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG), which accompanies the NPPF, re-iterates Local authorities' statutory duties in relation to AONBs, setting out that Local Planning Authorities should have regard to AONB management plans, including their contribution to setting the strategic context for development by providing evidence and principles.

The Lancaster District Local Plan

- 2.4 The relevant parts of the Lancaster Local Plan are:
- The **Lancaster District Core Strategy (2008)**, which sets out the overall development strategy and vision for the District. It identifies the AONBs as key elements of the District's environmental capital, identifies the need for a spatial strategy for the AONB and identifies Silverdale as a focus to meet local development needs in the area.
 - The **Lancaster District Development Management Policies (2014)**, which sets out policies used to help determine planning applications in Lancaster District. It identifies Warton and Silverdale as sustainable settlements in which it is appropriate for some development to take place. The DPD is written in anticipation that certain policy areas may be subject to further consideration in the preparation of the Arncliffe & Silverdale AONB DPD.
 - Saved policies of the **Lancaster District Local Plan (2004)**.
- 2.5 Lancaster City Council is currently preparing a **Land Allocations DPD** for the whole District, excepting the Arncliffe & Silverdale AONB. It is being prepared on the same timetable as the AONB DPD (see paragraph 1.13, above). When complete, the Land Allocations DPD will replace all other allocations in the District for the area outside the AONB.

The South Lakeland Local Plan

2.6 The relevant parts of the South Lakeland Local Plan are:

- The **South Lakeland Local Plan - Core Strategy (2010)**, which sets out the overall development strategy and vision for the District, recognises and safeguards the special characteristics of the AONB and identifies Arnside and Storth/Sandside as Local Service Centres.
- The **South Lakeland Local Plan – Land Allocations (2013)**, which identifies the AONB as an area for which a specific DPD will be prepared and sets out some issues that the plan is intended to address including, an indicative requirement of 123 dwellings on the South Lakeland side, review of settlement boundaries, landscape and building design and policies on new visitor facilities. The Local Plan - Land Allocations does not allocate sites in the AONB.
- Saved Policies of the **South Lakeland Local Plan (1997)** including Development Management Policies, policies identifying important open spaces in the AONB and an unimplemented allocation of land for local employment use at Quarry Lane, Storth.

2.7 South Lakeland is currently preparing a **Development Management Policies** document. Existing policies set out in the old 2006 Local Plan will be superseded by the new Development Management Policies document (some of which may apply to the AONB), and, where relevant and appropriate, the new AONB DPD policies. The new policies will complement the existing Core Strategy policies.

The Arnside & Silverdale AONB Management Plan

2.8 The statutory AONB Management Plan is a critical document. It is prepared by the AONB Partnership (which includes Local authorities, Parish Councils, Government agencies, local businesses and landowners and community groups), who are committed to delivering it. The current Management Plan was adopted in March 2014 and covers the 5 years to 2019. It defines the special qualities of the AONB, sets out the shared vision for the AONB and sets out objectives and actions by which the purposes of the AONB will be delivered. The aims of the Management Plan reflect the purposes of the AONB and are to:

- conserve and enhance the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB.
- promote and support sustainable agriculture, forestry and other rural industries.
- promote the social and economic wellbeing of people living within the AONB.
- increase public understanding and enjoyment of the AONB.
- meet the recreational needs of local residents and visitors alike – where these are compatible with the purpose of AONB designation.

2.9 Objective 10 of the Management Plan is to implement a development planning approach that delivers services, infrastructure and affordable housing to meet local community need while conserving and enhancing landscape character and the special qualities of the AONB. The AONB DPD is a key means by

which both Objective 10 and the wider strategy and vision of the Management Plan will be delivered. The Management Plan itself is not part of the statutory Local Plan for the area, but it is a material consideration in making planning decisions.

Principles of Development

- 2.10 One of the principal purposes of the AONB DPD is to identify and allocate the most sustainable sites to meet development needs, taking into full account the protection and enhancement of the natural beauty of the area, and also to protect from development areas of land that if harmed, would compromise or otherwise detract from the area's natural beauty. Alongside allocations for development, planning policies will be developed to help developers, land owners, local communities and planners to consider planning proposals that might arise during the life of the plan.
- 2.11 The policies contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) do not need to be repeated in the DPD; neither do the policies in the existing plans adopted by the two Councils. For the Arnside & Silverdale AONB there is an opportunity to add more detail to existing district-wide policies on certain matters, but in other instances, existing adopted policies in other Local Plan documents or the NPPF will suffice. The purpose of this section is to identify which areas of planning policy require more detail in the AONB DPD and which do not.
- 2.12 Plan policies should be positive in tone with wording that supports the Plan objectives.
- 2.13 The NPPF offers guidance in paragraph 14 on the need for Local authorities to base their plans and policies around the principle of sustainable development:

At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking. For plan-making this means that:

- Local Planning Authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area;
- Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless:
 - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstratively outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or
 - specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.⁹

- 2.14 Footnote 9, which relates to the above paragraph, states: "For example, those policies relating to sites protected under the Birds and Habitats Directives (see paragraph 119) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**, Heritage Coast or within a National Park (or the Broads Authority); designated heritage assets; and locations at risk of flooding or coastal erosion."

2.15 Paragraph 115 of the NPPF states:

Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and **Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty**, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.

2.16 The NPPF also confirms that Local Planning Authorities should set out the strategic priorities for their areas within Local Plans and deliver the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, including landscape (NPPF paragraph 156). It also states that:

- Planning should contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment (paragraph 17, bullet 7, first part), and Local Plans should identify land where development would be inappropriate because of its environmental or historical significance (paragraph 157);
- Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value (counting AONBs as the highest value: paragraph 17 bullet 7, second part);
- Local Planning Authorities should set evidence and criteria based planning policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting landscape will be judged (paragraph 113).

2.17 Paragraph 116 of the NPPF states:

Planning permission should normally be refused for **major developments** in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- The need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;
- The cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
- Any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.

2.18 Statutory Instrument 2010 No.2184 – *The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010* offers a definition of major development (paragraph 2):

Major development means development involving any one or more of the following:

- (a) the winning and working of minerals or the use of land for mineral-working deposits;
- (b) waste development;
- (c) the provision of dwelling houses where:
 - (i) **the number of dwellinghouses to be provided is 10 or more;** or
 - (ii) the development is to be carried out on a site having an area of **0.5 hectares or more** and it is not known whether the development falls within sub-paragraph (c)(i);
- (d) the provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 1,000 square metres or more; or
- (e) development carried out on a site having an area of **1 hectare or more.**

2.19 In contrast the NPPG, specifically in relation to AONBs, says that what constitutes major development will be a matter of judgement for the decision maker, suggesting that a hard and fast definition is not considered appropriate and what is major will vary on a case by case basis. This is also the approach applied by Planning Inspectors in some recent appeal cases in AONBs.

Q1: Should the AONB DPD define what would constitute ‘major development’ (a threshold above which planning consent would not normally be granted) in the AONB or should this be considered on a case by case basis? If there should be a definition, what should it be?

3 Evidence base

Evidence gathered

- 3.1 Lancaster and South Lakeland Councils have gathered information to inform their existing Local Plan documents, and the AONB Partnership has done the same to inform the AONB Management Plan. Much of this evidence is relevant to and can help inform the AONB DPD. This includes for example Employment Land Studies, the AONB Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment and a wealth of information provided by mapping local, national and internationally protected biodiversity sites and other designations such as sites of heritage importance. However, there are some topic areas in which new information was required, the most important of which is the AONB-wide Housing Needs Survey undertaken in 2014. New evidence has also been prepared (or is being prepared) for the historic environment (Historic Designed Landscapes Study, lists of locally important heritage assets and management approaches for them) and caravan sites (recording the number and location of caravan pitches).

Housing Requirements

- 3.2 An important part of district-wide plan preparation is the identification of objectively assessed housing needs (OAN). This includes needs for affordable housing, but also any needs for other, open market housing. When a plan is submitted for examination, the Government Inspector will consider very closely whether and how a plan is meeting evidenced needs. Although South Lakeland has an identified level of need, and Lancaster District is refining theirs, these figures represent the position across the whole of each District. It is difficult to apportion a figure specific to the AONB as a whole or in line with the two local authority parts, and no precedent exists for such an approach. OAN calculations are district-wide assessments and Local Planning Authorities would have difficulties in calculating an OAN for a smaller area such as the AONB. However, some form of requirement calculation is necessary in the AONB so that the Councils have a measure against which to assess the potential supply of housing development.
- 3.3 The Housing Needs Survey for the AONB identified a need for 72 affordable houses between September 2014 and September 2019 (5 years) for people living within in the AONB. The AONB DPD will need to plan for 15 years, and so the Councils will need to consider how best to roll the Housing Needs Survey information forward to cover the whole plan period.
- 3.4 As well as identifying needs, delivery mechanisms must also be taken into account, for example, affordable housing may need to be cross-subsidised by open market housing. Further to this any constraints must be taken into account. When the needs, delivery and constraints have all been taken into account, the resulting figure determines the total number of dwellings the plan should seek to deliver (see also Section 5 of this Issues & Options Discussion Paper).

Q2: Should the Councils identify housing requirements for the AONB area over the plan period? What additional information is required, and what calculations should be made to guide housing requirements?

Infrastructure

- 3.5 The infrastructure requirements to support the delivery of the plan will also need to be assessed. This includes highways and public transport, utilities, schools, health facilities, community facilities and footpaths. We are engaging with infrastructure providers including the County Councils during the early stages of plan preparation, including as part of this consultation process and they will be helping to identify the infrastructure issues and likely requirements in the AONB, as well as the delivery mechanisms to meet those needs.

Q3: What additional evidence, if any, do we need to collect to support the preparation of the AONB DPD? Where could we get this information from?

4 Vision and objectives

- 4.1 The vision for the AONB DPD should reflect the aspirations for the AONB set out in the AONB Management Plan, the two relevant Local Plans, national policy, the evidence gathered and wider context.

Vision

- 4.2 The Vision for the AONB set out in the adopted Management Plan is:

Arnside & Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is a landscape of international importance, whose distinctive character is conserved and enhanced for future generations.

It is a place that is much loved and highly valued, for its strong sense of place, unique geology, rich wildlife and cultural heritage and the benefits it provides to society.

Its distinctive landscape character - an intimate mosaic of low limestone hills, woodland, wetland, pastures, limestone pavements, intertidal flats, coastal scenery and distinctive settlements - is enjoyed, cherished and conserved by those who live in, work in and visit the area.

The high quality landscape supports and is supported by the area's thriving rural economy and vibrant diverse local communities.

There are many and varied opportunities for people to access, enjoy and understand the area's special qualities, and participate in their conservation, creating a strong connection with nature and the landscape.

Challenges and pressures are effectively and sensitively managed in an integrated way through a partnership approach. The area's natural and cultural assets are managed and used wisely for future generations.

- 4.3 The Vision for the AONB DPD needs to reflect and supplement the adopted Management Plan Vision above, to set out how development and planning considerations will support the Vision and Management Plan delivery. We have identified the following supplementary **Vision for the AONB DPD**:

New housing, employment, services and infrastructure will be managed and delivered to meet the needs of the communities in the AONB in a way that:

- *is sustainable in its location and excellent in its design;*
- *is shaped by effective community engagement;*
- *conserves and enhances the special qualities of the area and its settlements to achieve a strong sense of place; and*
- *protects the important landscape character, wildlife and heritage of the area.*

Q4: Have we set out the right vision for the AONB DPD? If not, how should it be changed?

Objectives

4.4 The next section sets out the proposed objectives for the AONB Plan. These state what the Councils want to achieve in order to make the vision a reality. They provide a link between the vision and the options and issues for development in the AONB.

- (1) To protect and enhance the special natural, historical and landscape qualities of the AONB.
- (2) To create and maintain a thriving local economy which supports rural employment and livelihoods, and sustainable tourism.
- (3) To provide a sufficient supply, quality and mix of housing to meet local needs without adverse impact on the landscape character and special qualities of the AONB.
- (4) To provide the necessary infrastructure to support both new and existing development, and create sustainable communities.
- (5) To support the development of a safe and sustainable transport network to improve connectivity, reduce the need to travel and encourage sustainable forms of transport.

Q5: Have we set out the right objectives for the AONB DPD? If not, how should they be changed?

5 Policy issues

- 5.1 The following sub-sections examine the existing district-wide local planning issues and the relevant policies that apply in the AONB under the broad topic headings of Community, Economy and Environment. This is followed by questions about how best to deal with any inconsistencies or gaps in the policy guidance, or opportunities to provide more detail for the specific circumstances of the AONB. The answers to these questions will help the Councils develop policies for the AONB DPD, subject to the support of appropriate evidence.
- 5.2 Not all topic areas require a special planning policy approach to be set out in the AONB DPD, as they are (or will be) appropriately covered by existing or evolving policies in other adopted Local Plan documents or in the NPPF.
- 5.3 Lancaster District has strategic and Development Management Policies in place. South Lakeland has strategic policies in place in the Core Strategy and also has some extant old policies from the 2006 Local Plan. South Lakeland is currently preparing a Development Management Policies document to supplement Core Strategy policies and replace old Local Plan policies. Existing up-to-date policies of both Councils have been carefully considered to help establish what policy areas are appropriately covered elsewhere and which need to be covered in the AONB DPD. This will also be taken into account by South Lakeland when preparing their new district-wide Development Management Policies, to avoid overlap and duplication.
- 5.4 We consider that policies on open space, sport and recreation, gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople, minerals and waste, education and skills, town centres and retailing are all covered appropriately elsewhere. However, this is dependent on the outcome of further assessment and this consultation. Policy areas for which the district-wide approach would not necessarily be appropriate or adequate for the AONB will need to be covered by new policies in the AONB DPD.

1. Communities

- New Housing

- 5.5 The provision of new housing, especially affordable housing and starter homes, is one of the highest government priorities. Paragraphs 47-55 of the NPPF set this out in some detail, beginning with the requirement that Local Planning Authorities will use their evidence base to ensure that their district-wide Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing, including identifying key sites for development.
- 5.6 In South Lakeland, the district-wide requirement is to develop 400 dwellings per annum from 2003-25. In Lancaster, the district-wide requirement is also to develop 400 dwellings per annum from 2003-21, but this figure is under review and will inform the forthcoming Land Allocations DPD, which will cover the whole district. Neither of the district-wide plans contains an apportionment of the district-wide figure within the AONB. Both Councils have adopted policies that set criteria for the consideration of planning applications for all new housing: these relate to aspects of sustainability including the location, environment, availability of infrastructure, and dwelling mix of any proposal.

- 5.7 Given the existing national and local policies for housing development, the AONB DPD will attempt to set a housing requirement for development within the area according to the evidence available, including a review of local housing needs. Within the context of the environmental significances and constraints of the AONB, the Plan will also allocate sites for development to meet local needs arising within the AONB (see also section 3 of the Issues & Options discussion paper).
- Affordable Housing and Local Occupancy
- 5.8 A key type of new housing is affordable housing. Both Councils have adopted policies designed to increase affordable housing provision in response to local needs identified in evidence. Some aspects of affordable housing provision are currently under review following ministerial announcements in 2015 on affordable housing and starter homes. Any revisions to national planning guidance will be incorporated into later versions of the AONB DPD as appropriate.
- 5.9 The district-wide plans set high targets and low thresholds, qualified only by the need for developments to be achievable and viable: in South Lakeland the requirement is for not less than 35% affordable housing on sites of nine or more dwellings (policy CS6.3); in Lancaster District the requirement is for up to 30% affordable housing on sites of ten or more dwellings in rural locations, increasing to 40% on green-field sites (policy DM41). The Housing Needs Survey for the AONB identified a need for 72 affordable houses between September 2014 and September 2019 (5 years) for people living within in the AONB. The AONB DPD will need to plan for 15 years.
- 5.10 Rural exception sites are small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where the land would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. Small numbers of market homes may be allowed at the local authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.
- 5.11 Both Councils have adopted district-wide policies for rural exception sites, which are designed to help accommodate people in housing need who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection.
- 5.12 The Housing Needs Survey for the AONB produced evidence that some local people are priced out of the housing market in the AONB by second home purchasers or by people who work away from the area. The Councils could explore the development of policies that restrict occupancy of new housing to local people and/or those who are going to use the property for their sole or main occupancy.
- 5.13 Explanations of what we mean by 'affordable housing' and 'local connection' are set out on the Councils' websites and in their Local Plan documents.
- Q6: Should the AONB DPD identify the proportion of affordable housing to be developed in the AONB? If so, what proportion and how would it be delivered?**

Q7: Should the AONB DPD restrict new housing development to local people and/or those who are going to use the property for their sole or main occupancy?

- Housing mix and types

5.14 Both Councils have adopted policies to ensure that new housing developments offer a range of housing sizes and types, including provision for vulnerable communities such as older people and people with disabilities. The Housing Needs Survey for the AONB has gathered evidence about particular housing needs. For instance, it showed that most people in need of affordable housing required a 1 or 2 bed roomed flat or house and that most of these needed rented accommodation. The AONB DPD will need to ensure that these specific identified needs are prioritised and met. In addition, a high proportion of AONB residents are older people, so the Councils will therefore aim to ensure that new houses are suitable, or easily adaptable, for occupation by the elderly and infirm. These features should help to increase choice, independence and contribute to individual and community wellbeing.

Q8: How should the AONB DPD promote the development of certain housing types within the AONB to meet particular housing needs?

- Housing outside settlements

5.15 Both Councils have adopted policies that set out the circumstances when housing development would be appropriate in rural areas (outside of settlements). Policy DM42 of the Lancaster District's Development Management DPD sets out criteria for development on rural estates and new homes in isolated locations, whilst policy DM43 sets the criteria for considering applications for accommodation for agricultural and forestry workers.

Q9: How should the AONB DPD plan for housing development on rural estates, in isolated locations or specifically for agricultural and forestry workers?

- Brownfield land and the density of development

5.16 South Lakeland's Core Strategy contains a policy designed to make effective use of land and buildings, by setting a target of developing 28% of the district's housing on brownfield (or previously developed) land. It also sets a target of an average density of 30 dwellings per hectare for all housing developments, but acknowledges that this may vary according to the defining characteristics of the area (as acknowledged in paragraphs 58 and 59 of the NPPF). Lancaster's Development Management DPD does not include policies on brownfield land or the density of development, but does continue to have an urban-focused approach to development. The development on brownfield land is likely to have a lower landscape impact than greenfield development and may even enhance settlement character and amenity. However, there may be other issues regarding the amount of brownfield land available and the viability of delivering development on such sites.

Q10: Should the AONB DPD prioritise and/or set a locally appropriate target for the use of brownfield land? Is there enough brownfield land in the AONB to do this?

Q11: Should the AONB DPD seek to guide the density of new development? If so, what approach should the plan adopt?

- Community infrastructure

5.17 A strong community requires services and facilities that contribute to the quality of life and functioning of a community. Both Councils have adopted policies to ensure that there are opportunities to develop and maintain features including recreation facilities, health services, allotments, shops, places of worship, pubs and village halls. There may also be locally specific needs such as for new provision for car parking or for new pedestrian or cycle routes. In some cases, it will be possible for new development to contribute towards the provision or maintenance of these facilities, through the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or funds secured through planning conditions or legal agreements. CIL is operational in South Lakeland and under investigation in Lancaster District.

Q12: Should the AONB DPD identify allocations of land for community infrastructure? What community infrastructure is required and where?

2. Economy

- Local employment

5.18 A key consideration of the AONB DPD is to support a sustainable rural economy. The type, location and scale of new employment opportunities should be balanced against the need to protect and value the distinctiveness of the rural character, landscapes and villagescapes (scale is also a matter of consideration in the Introduction, with the questions on major development). Both Councils have adopted policies designed to consider all relevant factors in the management of rural development. In the South Lakeland part of the AONB, there is an existing allocation for employment development on Quarry lane in Storth. This will need to be reappraised so that we can decide whether to re-allocate it or whether an alternative allocation(s) is needed. At the more detailed level of the AONB, there may be scope to focus on more creative approaches to employment opportunities, with more detailed and positive policy advice on the re-use of old buildings, live-work arrangements, or developments that positively enhance the special qualities of the AONB.

Q13: Are there any particular locations, buildings or types of development that should be incorporated into the AONB DPD for employment uses?

- Telecommunications and energy infrastructure

5.19 National planning guidance challenges all communities to respond to the need for sustainable energy generation, including through the use of renewable and low carbon technologies. Technological developments also heighten demand for telecommunications infrastructure. In practice this includes the delivery of faster broadband connections, and scope for small-scale renewable and low-carbon energy schemes to be introduced in the AONB. The Councils are aware of pressures for more major energy infrastructure projects such as wind, solar and tidal energy and fracking². Both Councils have adopted policies to

² Current policy in the UK is that fracking can take place beneath protected areas but that their wells must start outside the protected area

explain how new technologies can be introduced with safeguards to the environment. In Lancaster District, the Council has adopted a policy (DM19) to explain that any proposed upgrades to National Grid infrastructure should not compromise the designated landscape of the AONB.

Q14: What types of energy technology should policies in the AONB DPD cover? How should policies deal with energy-related developments?

- Transport and accessing services

5.20 Most travel in the AONB is undertaken by use of private cars, using narrow country lanes, with key services concentrated in a few larger villages, or located just outside the AONB in Milnthorpe and Carnforth. Both Councils have adopted policies designed to ensure that new development is located close to existing services such as workplaces, health facilities and schools, so that the need to travel is minimised, particularly by private car. However, there may be scope in the AONB DPD to be more specific about the problems or prescriptions relating to transport and access, including the promotion of walking, cycling and public transport. The Furness Line railway is particularly important to the AONB's communities for commuting to work and school. Travel related to leisure and tourism, including walking and cycling, is also an important consideration in the area.

5.21 A number of stakeholders have identified car parking in Arnside as a concern. This includes parking to meet the needs of visitors and the needs of users of Arnside Station, where there are no formal, dedicated parking facilities. There is a small number of spaces for disabled drivers' vehicles in Station Yard, but this area is linked to the southbound platform via a narrow footbridge which is unsuitable for people with limited mobility, or via a circuitous and unsatisfactory route under the Sandside Road railway bridge.

Q15: What policies should the AONB DPD contain to manage the impact of new development on highways and other services?

Q16: Do you consider that there is a need for any additional parking facilities in the AONB's settlements and, if so, where should it be located?

- Caravan/camp sites and similar accommodation

5.22 Tourism and leisure play an important role in the economy of the AONB and opportunities to enjoy the AONB. In particular, the AONB contains a large number of caravan and camp sites, which provide a valuable source of visitor accommodation and contribute to the local visitor economy. Many of the sites have impacts on the local amenity of the area, through traffic creation or their intrusion into the natural landscape. Caravan sites in particular can have significant impacts. Within the AONB or its setting, Lancaster District has adopted a policy (DM14), which will not permit proposals for new caravan sites, or the expansion of existing sites that have an adverse impact on the landscape or scenic beauty of the area. South Lakeland's 'saved' Local Plan policies T5 and T7 relate to caravan development in the AONB. T5 prohibits new caravan development in the AONB unless specific exceptions apply whilst T7 permits extensions to caravan parks' open season only where there will be no adverse impacts on the AONB.

Q17: What policy stance should the AONB DPD take towards proposals for new or expanded caravan sites within the AONB?

3. Environment

5.23 The many qualities and significances of the environment in the AONB are key to its designation. Any local plan for the AONB will aim to conserve and enhance the special qualities so that they may be enjoyed today and by future generations. Both Councils have adopted policies that cover the main characteristics of the built and natural environment. However, the AONB DPD offers scope for the development of policies or the allocation of sites at a finer grade of detail in the area.

- Open spaces

5.24 The preparation of a new Plan is an opportunity to look at existing open space designations and consider whether, when balancing a range of criteria and issues, they are still the most appropriate sites to be designated as **Important Open Spaces**.

5.25 We propose to include designations for both private and public open space in the Plan, and protect them from development. The former should include sites that do not have public access but which nevertheless make a substantial and important contribution to the look, feel and character of the immediate local area. The latter should include sites that do have public access and offer one or more types of recreational benefit, such as parks, gardens, children's play areas, general amenity space, civic space or outdoor sports pitches/facilities.

5.26 All private and public open spaces currently identified in the Councils' Local Plans will be assessed to establish whether their designation remains appropriate. In addition, new suggestions for open space designations will be considered.

5.27 Whilst we expect that most designations will remain in place, it may be appropriate to make new open space designations. Equally, the Plan is an opportunity to ask if any existing designations (or parts of them) are no longer appropriate and should change. In striking the most appropriate balance, some could be more suitable than other sites for new uses. For instance, there may be open spaces within settlements that are more suitable for development than alternative sites on the edges of settlements.

5.28 Public open spaces will be identified and designated based on the quality, type and need for their existing uses based on the evidence base or where there is particular need and opportunity for new provision.

5.29 The designation of private open space as Important Open Space should take into account the following elements:

- Does it represent a positive element in the villagescape / landscape?
- Is the open space prominent in the street scene? Is the open space visible from a significant amount of or location in the surrounding area?
- Does the open space contribute to the rural character of the area or the street scene by softening the urban texture, opening up views or adding to the variety of sights, sounds and smells?

- Does it provide the setting for buildings or groups of buildings?
- Does the space provide variety in the urban form?
- Is the space of historic or cultural importance or does it contain a feature that is?
- Does the space provide an important visual outlook? For example, important views from villages to the open countryside and vice versa?
- Does it have a large degree of tree or vegetation cover that is particularly important for the visual amenity value and the contribution they make to local character?
- Does the open space contribute significantly to the balance of open space and buildings in the area?
- Does it offer benefits to wildlife whether for food, rest, shelter, dispersal or migration?
- Is it crossed or bounded by a Public Right of Way?
- Does it perform the function of preserving the separate identity of settlements?

Q18: Have the right elements for assessing the designation of private open spaces as Important Open Space been identified?

Q19: Of the existing designated open spaces shown on the accompanying maps, are there any you feel need not be designated as Important Open Space or any that could be suitable for other uses? What uses?

Q20: Aside from those spaces marked on the accompanying maps, are there any other parcels of land that you feel should be given Important Open Space designation? Why?

- Landscape, Green Gaps and Green Corridors

5.30 The special protection of the AONB is bound up in its landscape. The landscape provides benefits to the setting of built development and to the setting of the AONB as a whole including views into and out of the AONB, as well as for visual amenity, local character, tranquillity and dark skies. It also contributes to local recreational assets and ecological significances. Green gaps and corridors are important means of keeping settlements distinct and protecting their individual character. Both Councils have adopted policies designed to protect and enhance landscape (including coastal landscapes), settlement character and the role that green gaps and green corridors can play.

Q21: How should the AONB DPD provide for the assessment of development proposals that may impact on landscape, seascape, coastal features or settlement identity and separation?

- Biodiversity and Geodiversity

5.31 Biodiversity and geodiversity are key environmental significances in the AONB, with many sites subject to the highest level of protection in national and international law, as well as some locally protected sites and priority habitats. Both Councils have adopted comprehensive policies on biodiversity and geodiversity, which have clear implications for the protection of sites within the AONB. However, there may be scope to clarify or expand on some of the details of the protections within the preparation of the AONB DPD, including

with reference to particular species, habitats, connectivity, rock formations or ecosystems.

Q22: How should the AONB DPD protect or enhance the biodiversity and geodiversity of the AONB?

- Flood Risk and Drainage

5.32 Both Councils have adopted policies to ensure that inappropriate development is directed away from areas of highest risk from flooding. This is especially relevant in the AONB where there are risks from coastal flooding. Many areas are not served by mains drainage or do not have mains sewerage systems, including the whole of Silverdale. There are also areas that can be susceptible to surface water run-off, which can lead to flooding. Through their roles as Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFA), Cumbria and Lancashire County Councils now lead on flooding and drainage issues. As such, these issues are likely to be covered at County and District levels. Lancaster District's Development Management DPD contains a policy (DM39), which deals with the new requirements for surface water and sustainable drainage, following the enactment of The Floods and Water Management Act 2010. An equivalent policy will be developed by South Lakeland in their forthcoming Development Management Policies DPD.

Q23: What are the implications for development in places without mains drainage or mains sewerage systems?

- Historic Environment

5.33 The AONB contains a wide range of significant historic landscapes, features and distinctive settlement patterns. Both Councils have adopted detailed policies on the identification and protection of features in the historic environment and are supplementing their historic environment information and policy with further evidence work, such as compiling a local list of heritage assets and undertaking work on conservation areas. This includes conservation area appraisals for Warton and the Yealands, a management plan for Beetham and consultation on the designation of a new conservation area in Arnside in 2016. A historic designed landscape survey and a traditional orchards survey for the whole AONB have also been undertaken.

Q24: How should the AONB DPD manage the protection and enhancement of the historic environment?

- Design

5.34 The design of buildings and the character of settlements contribute to the "sense of place" and quality of the environment. The siting, design, scale and materials of a development should be of a character that maintains or enhances the quality of the landscape or villagescape and, where possible, should be in keeping with local vernacular tradition. Both Councils have adopted policies that set out the principles of design requirements for new buildings, repairs and conversions, including principles of sustainable construction and energy efficiency. However, as the ministerial foreword to the NPPF states, "our standards of design can be so much higher". The AONB DPD could develop further guidance on the approach required to protect

existing design features, and on the design of new buildings and the treatment of the public realm.

Q25: How should the AONB DPD manage the significance and protection of design features, and the standards of design required for new development in the area?

6 Options for meeting the objectives and delivering the vision

- 6.1 In order to establish how the vision and objectives should be met, it is necessary to determine what **strategic, overall approach** should be taken to development in the AONB. The basis of this is considering the distribution of existing development, services and facilities and using this to inform the most appropriate approach to the distribution of new development.

Settlement hierarchy

- 6.2 In South Lakeland's Core Strategy, Arnside and Storth/Sandside are identified as 'Local Service Centres', having a range of local services. The equivalent category in Lancaster District, 'settlements with 5 key facilities', includes Silverdale and Warton. There are also smaller villages, including Beetham, Yealand Conyers, Yealand Redmayne, Yealand Storrs, Carr Bank, Slackhead and Hale. Some of these, especially Beetham, have some local facilities. Further to those settlements, there are hamlets or groups of houses/farms and the open countryside.

Table 1: AONB Settlements Hierarchy Criteria and Policy

South Lakeland Core Strategy policy CS1.2	Lancaster District Core Strategy policy SC3 as amended by Development Management DPD Policy DM42
Local Service Centres with "a limited range of services to the local economy"	Sustainable Rural Settlements "that contain or have good access to an appropriate range of local services"
Presence of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local shop • primary school • "good" public transport 	Access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local shops • education facilities • public transport • health facilities • other valued community facilities
Settlements of: Arnside Storth/Sandside	Settlements of: Silverdale Warton

- 6.3 The table below shows the distribution of existing development, services and facilities in relation to the settlement hierarchy in the AONB. In general, the larger the settlement, the more services are supported, and the more sustainable those services are likely to be. Therefore the hierarchy should be used to inform the spatial distribution of development in the AONB.
- 6.4 Beetham could be included as a primary settlement in the settlement hierarchy. Although it is not named as a Local Service Centre in the South Lakeland Core Strategy, it has a range of services and facilities comparable to other primary settlements. Alternatively a further category could be created to accommodate Beetham and recognise the level of its facilities.

Table 2: Key public services and facilities available in the AONB settlements

Facility	Shop to meet day to day needs	Primary School	Public transport	Health services	Public House	Village Hall/ Community Building	Church	Library
Settlement								
Arnside	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Silverdale	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Storth/Sandside	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X
Warton	X	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X
Beetham	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X
The Yealands	X	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	X
Carr Bank	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X	X
Slackhead	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hale	X	X	✓	X	✓	X	X	X

Table 3: Settlement Hierarchy	
Primary settlements	Arnside Storth/Sandside Silverdale Warton
Secondary settlements	Beetham, Yealand Conyers, Yealand Redmayne, Carr Bank, Slackhead, Hale
Hamlets and open countryside	

- 6.5 South Lakeland's Core Strategy, policy CS1.2, allows for small-scale infilling and rounding off development in small villages and hamlets and outside of these (and aside from Local, Key and Principal Service Centres) development must comply with the rural exception policy CS6.4, which allows for housing development outside of the small villages and hamlets only when specific criteria apply.
- 6.6 Lancaster District's Core Strategy policy SC3, coupled with Development Management DPD policy DM42, states that aside from the District's larger settlements (none of which are within the AONB), proposals for new housing outside of the identified 'sustainable rural settlements' (which in the AONB include Silverdale and Warton) will be supported if they enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Proposals lacking sufficient justification will be considered using the rural exceptions policy.
- 6.7 Based on the hierarchy above, and considering the existing policy approaches, there are a number of options for the spatial distribution (but not the quantities) of new development.
- (i) Development sites allocated in primary settlements only + highly restrictive policies for everywhere else limiting any development outside these to exceptional cases only (accompanied by exceptions criteria).
 - (ii) Development sites allocated in primary settlements only + policies to judge each application on its merits for everywhere else but with an assumption that a moderate proportion of new development will be delivered outside of the primary settlements.
 - (iii) Development sites allocated in 4 largest settlements (primary settlements plus Beetham) only + highly restrictive policies for everywhere else limiting any development outside these to exceptional cases only (accompanied by exceptions criteria).
 - (iv) Development sites allocated in 4 largest settlements (primary settlements plus Beetham) only + policies to judge each application on its merits for everywhere else but with an assumption that a moderate proportion of new development will be delivered outside of these settlements.
 - (v) Most allocated sites in primary settlements plus some in secondary settlements and highly restrictive policies limiting development to exceptional cases/policies to judge each case on its merits elsewhere.
 - (vi) Most development in 4 largest settlements, some in smaller villages, some in hamlets or open countryside.

- 6.8 The table below shows some advantages and disadvantages of each option. The options focus solely on the distribution of any development that takes place within the AONB. They do not seek to identify the amount of development each settlement could accommodate in any given case and it may be the case that environmental or other constraints result in some needs arising within the AONB being met outside of the AONB.

Table 4: Spatial Development Strategy Options		
Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
(i) Allocate in Primary Settlements only + exceptions criteria for everywhere else	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricts development beyond largest centres potentially minimising wider impacts • Focuses new development in locations with the most services/facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need not met in smaller settlements/smaller settlements lose vitality • May be lower impact sites in smaller settlements that could meet some needs • Greater impact in primary settlements
(ii) Allocate in Primary Settlements only + assumption of some development elsewhere judged by policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses new development in locations with the most services/ facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be lower impact sites in smaller settlements that could meet some needs • May not be able to rely on windfalls to meet need
(iii) Allocate in Primary Settlements and Beetham + exceptions criteria for everywhere else	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricts development beyond largest centres potentially minimising wider impacts • Focuses new development in locations with the most services/facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need not met in smaller settlements/smaller settlements lose vitality • May be lower impact sites in smaller settlements that could meet some needs • Greater impact in primary settlements
(iv) Allocate in Primary Settlements and Beetham + assumption of some development elsewhere judged by policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses new development in locations with the most services/ facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be lower impact sites in smaller settlements that could meet some needs • May not be able to rely on windfalls to meet need
(v) Allocate predominantly in Primary Settlements and in smaller amounts in Secondary settlements and Beetham + exceptions criteria for everywhere else	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority of development in those settlements with most facilities • Supports vitality of smaller settlements and ensures opportunity to utilise the most suitable sites, even where these are in smaller settlements • Reduces the potential for significant adverse impact on environmental quality whilst meeting community needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could have some adverse impact on environmental quality. • Development impacts spread across wider area
(vi) Allocations in all sizes of settlement and also in hamlets and open countryside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services and facilities are sustained in most rural settlements by allowing development • Could help to target new affordable housing local need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development would take place in locations with poor community services. • Would be a greater reliance on car journeys. • Development impacts spread across the AONB, including impacts on environmental quality

- 6.9 We do not believe that a spatial strategy based on there being no development in the AONB would be credible or consistent with national planning policy, as summarised in Section 2, or with the vision and objectives set out in Section 4 of the Issues & Options Discussion Paper. In the same context, we do not believe that the spatial strategy should be based on there being no allocations for development. If development is to be delivered, undertaking the process of identifying where that development can go (with detailed site assessment and public consultation), provides for a more robust position than allowing development to take place on an unplanned, case-by-case or ad hoc basis. For these reasons, Table 4 does not contain a “no development” option or a “no allocations” option.

Q26: Which option(s) represent the most appropriate approach to development in the AONB? Are there any other options we should consider?

Identifying sites

Call for sites

- 6.10 As a key early step in preparing a plan for the AONB, it is important to gather information about potential development sites in the area. Firstly, it is important to establish where such sites exist and so we undertook a ‘call for sites’. This is a process during which we ask people to put forward proposals for sites they believe to be suitable for development.

Our starting point

- 6.11 In addition to sites put forward through the ‘call for sites’ process, we also drew upon survey information prepared for the Councils’ Local Plans, such as the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments (SHLAA). These processes have highlighted a number of potential sites within the AONB that will all be assessed and considered alongside sites suggested through the call for sites.

Criteria for suggesting sites

- 6.12 Sites put forward through the call for sites had to meet some basic criteria and be accompanied by basic site information. Site suggestions were required to:
- be within the Arnside and Silverdale AONB;
 - avoid harm or adverse impacts on wildlife, landscape or heritage significances;
 - be new proposals and not subject to extant planning permissions;
- 6.13 Suggestions were made on a standard form accompanied by a location map showing the site to be considered. The form was designed to obtain all relevant information about a site’s availability, suitability or deliverability for development. Key details included:
- the type(s) of development proposed;
 - the landowner’s contact details, and confirmation that the site is available for the development/use proposed;

- any known covenants, easements or other restrictions on the land;
- the availability of services.

The site assessment

- 6.14 All the sites under consideration are identified on the maps accompanying the Issues and Options Discussion Paper and can be found alongside it at the locations listed in the 'How to comment' section on page 8.
- 6.15 The site assessment process is running concurrently with this consultation. We have begun considering the sites against the evidence base by undertaking a desk-based investigation to record additional information about each site. We have also visited each site.
- 6.16 Site assessments will be guided using the pro-forma at Appendix 1. We will exclude any sites from further consideration that do not meet the basic criteria. The assessment will consider each site from an equal starting point and in the context of a wider range of more detailed criteria, as summarised on the pro-forma. In conjunction with consultation responses, the results will form the basis of judgements about which sites should be proposed for allocation.
- 6.17 A site proposed for built development will be automatically excluded from further assessment if:
- it does not meet the criteria for assessing sites;
 - it transpires that the owner is not willing to release the site and it cannot be made available;
 - development of the site would be a clear breach of either South Lakeland's or Lancaster's Local Plan or the AONB Management Plan objectives;
 - development of the site would represent a clear breach of National planning principles relating to AONBs: i.e. development in that location would have a materially adverse impact but could not be demonstrated to satisfy an overriding national need;
 - development of the site would constitute a major development and could not be demonstrated to be in the overriding public interest;
 - development would harm a protected species, a site designated for its biodiversity importance or an area of priority habitat or would compromise habitat connectivity;
 - development would cause harm to the landscape or settlement character of the AONB, or the visual amenity of the AONB in a way that could not be mitigated;
 - it is at risk of flooding according to up-to-date flood risk information.
- 6.18 Sites remaining after the initial exclusion criteria have been applied will be assessed considering:
- A **sequential approach** that looks first at previously used land and buildings within settlements, secondly at suitable infill sites and thirdly at other land that is as well located as possible for housing, jobs, services and infrastructure;
 - **Sustainability** considerations including the distance to key services, the quality of public transport, walking and cycle links, the scope for renewable

energy and local energy networks, the risks of flooding, potential contamination, air quality issues and exposure to noise and smells (see South Lakeland's Core Strategy Policy CS1.1 and Lancaster's DM DPD Policy NPPF1);

- Local and wider **community** views including those expressed through community engagement and through Parish Plans;
- **Heritage considerations** such as the potential impact (including impacts on setting) of development on listed buildings, scheduled monuments, historic parks and gardens, conservation areas, locally important heritage assets, orchards and on potential archaeological value and scope to enhance historic features;
- **Biodiversity and geodiversity** considerations including the potential impact of development on the conservation, enhancement and restoration of habitats and species and geodiversity assets, and the scope to maximise opportunities for restoration, enhancement and connection of habitats;
- **Landscape and Settlement** considerations including the potential impact of development on landscape and settlement character and views, the impact of topography and relief, the scale of development relative to the settlement size, whether the site preserves the separate identity of settlements and open spaces and the impact of development on site features such as trees, watercourses and buildings;
- The ease and safety of **accessing the site** by road and other means;
- The **capacity** of the site, the appropriate density at which it could be developed;
- Any evidence about the site's **suitability, availability and achievability**;
- **Infrastructure** including impacts on the local highways, water, sewerage and energy networks, future community and wider infrastructure needs, impacts on Green Infrastructure, and the potential regeneration and enhancement benefits of development;
- **Other demands on the site** including the scope for alternative uses or mixed-use, access and maintenance requirements to watercourses, pipelines, railway lines etc. and the implications of development for the existing and future use of neighbouring sites.

6.19 The judgement on whether a site will be taken forward to be proposed as a potential allocation at the next stage of the process will be made by having regard to all the factors listed above and looking at what balance the site strikes between all factors in comparison with other sites. Where part of a site is considered suitable but other parts are not, we may propose that parts of sites are taken forward to the next stage. It is important to note that no decisions have yet been made on any site's suitability for development.

6.20 Sites proposed for open space uses will be assessed to establish whether they warrant special protection for this purpose, for example, because they are well-used by the community or because of their importance in the street scene or wider landscape.

Q27: Have you any comments on any of the sites put forward?

Q28: Do you know of any other sites that might be suitable for development? Which sites? If so, please request and complete a site suggestion form.

Development boundaries

- 6.21 A development boundary³ is a line drawn around a settlement on the policies map part of a development plan to indicate the area within which development will be acceptable in principle. Outside a development boundary, development is more restricted and may only be permitted in exceptional cases, such as where the proposal would deliver 100% affordable housing or is a dwelling specifically for a particular purpose: for instance an agricultural or forestry worker who needs to live near his/her work. Development boundaries do not necessarily follow parish, ward or other types of boundary, including land ownership or property curtilage boundaries.
- 6.22 Not all settlements are subject to a development boundary and not all planning authorities use development boundaries. In South Lakeland's area outside the AONB, development boundaries have been defined for all Principal, Key and Local Service Centres. However, no development boundaries are identified for small villages and hamlets. In these settlements, small scale infilling or rounding off development is permitted in principle and each proposal for development is considered on its merits.
- 6.23 In Lancaster District, no development boundaries are defined. Instead, decisions on planning applications are made on a case by case basis using the policies in Lancaster's Core Strategy and Development Management DPD and the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 6.24 The line of development boundaries is normally guided by:
- including existing housing, shopping and other urban uses where these are grouped and continuous;
 - including recreational open space (note this does not mean that these are suitable for development);
 - including small infill or 'rounding off' sites;
 - excluding protected areas such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Historic Parks and Gardens;
 - including areas with scope to improve an unsatisfactory settlement edge;
 - including land proposed for allocation for housing, employment or other urban or village uses;
 - including brownfield sites;
 - excluding large gardens or open areas on the edges of settlements;
 - utilising natural features and boundaries, or man-made features such as roads and railways.
- 6.25 As part of preparing a plan for the AONB, a decision will have to be made about whether or not to identify development boundaries for some or all of the settlements in the settlement hierarchy set out at Table 3.
- 6.26 There are various options for identifying development boundaries and for selecting settlements where development could take place. Some

³ Sometimes known by other terms such as 'development cordon' or 'settlement boundary'

considerations when deciding on whether to use development boundaries can be seen in the table below.

Table 5: Development Boundaries	
Having a development boundary may:	Having no development boundary may:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the use of brownfield sites / sites in need of regeneration within settlements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the use of brownfield sites/ sites in need of regeneration throughout the AONB
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise the encroachment of development into the open countryside 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow flexibility when needed for needs to be met as locally as possible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be very restrictive and prevent the use of appropriate sites based solely on location, rather than suitability of changes in circumstances over time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow applications to be judged on a case by case basis on their own merits and on circumstances at the time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be particularly difficult to define for some settlements e.g. those with dispersed settlement form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow applications to be judged on a case by case basis on their own merits and on circumstances at the time

Q29: Should the AONB DPD identify development boundaries? For which settlements?

7 Delivery of development

Phasing

- 7.1 The NPPF advises that Local Plans should be drawn up over an appropriate time scale, preferably covering 15 years, to take account of longer term requirements.
- 7.2 The existing and Draft Plans for South Lakeland and Lancaster have a range of start dates, but all have a 15 year time horizon. Assuming the AONB DPD is approved and adopted in 2017, then the advice in the NPPF is that it should plan for the period 2017-2032.
- 7.3 Most plans consider the need for or suitability of phasing development, to give some guidance on the pace at which development might come forward. There are several reasons for this, including:
- To co-ordinate development with the provision of infrastructure. This can include situations where part of a site can only be built on after an initial phase has been built out;
 - To communicate a “brownfield first” strategy before greenfield sites are released;
 - To accommodate and allow a flexible response to market conditions;
 - To respond to a variety of landowner or developer priorities;
 - To manage impacts by ensuring that mitigation measures are put in place before development begins;
 - To match supply with need and demand in a measured way.
- 7.4 The first five years of any plan have the most certainty. This period relates to the need for Councils (planning at a district-wide scale) to have a 5-year supply of deliverable housing land available for development. It is also the time period over which other organisations make their most detailed plans; this includes the capital planning horizons of most services and utility companies, and detailed planning for the provision of school places.
- 7.5 Broadly, there are two ways in which the AONB DPD could deal with phasing. It could identify sites for development in three five-year time periods, or it could set criteria to be fulfilled before certain sites come forward for development. These could include reference to the availability of infrastructure or the need to relocate an existing use. Most plans adopt a blend of these approaches, and the AONB DPD will need to examine the best way for guiding development in the area.

Q30: Should the AONB DPD phase development during the 15 year time horizon of the plan? What phasing approach is appropriate?

Mechanisms for delivery

- 7.6 Delivery is key to ensuring the objectives and vision of the DPD are realised. Delivery of housing, employment, infrastructure and other types of infrastructure will be through:

- **Public Sector (including Registered Social Landlords (RSLs))** - through investment in buildings and infrastructure to create the necessary environment for policies and sites to be delivered, direct investment in delivering some policies and proposals such as affordable housing.
- **Private Sector** - through direct investment in land and buildings and developer contributions towards infrastructure delivery.
- **Voluntary Sector** - through direct investment in land and buildings.

7.7 Infrastructure Delivery Plans (IDP) prepared by both Councils will be updated to set out the scale, type and cost of infrastructure needed to support the proposed development in the AONB DPD. South Lakeland has an adopted Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule, which sets out contributions required from development to deliver necessary infrastructure. The IDPs will set out what infrastructure projects could be funded from this Levy and which will require funding through other sources. Lancaster is considering CIL, but has not set a detailed timetable for its introduction. Meanwhile, Lancaster will continue to secure developer contributions to help deliver site specific facilities or services through S106 agreements including affordable housing contributions.

Working in partnership

7.8 Both Councils will work proactively in partnership with a number of bodies including both County Councils, infrastructure providers such as United Utilities and the NHS, community groups and Housing Associations to deliver projects and infrastructure that will be integral to the delivery of the DPD.

Any other issues?

Q31: Are there any other issues that the AONB DPD should address? Have you any other comments?

Appendix 1: Site Assessment Summary Sheet

Summary Sheet		Site Ref:	
BASIC INFORMATION			
Grid Reference:		Site Area (hectares):	
Source of Site Suggestion:			
Existing Use:		Proposed Use:	
Brownfield		Greenfield	
Location relative to settlement	within	edge	outside
Flood Zone	1	2	3
Landscape Character Type & Area:			
EXCLUSION CRITERIA			
International	National	Local Geological or Nature Conservation	Limestone Pavement Order
Priority Habitat	YES	NO	
Habitat Connectivity	YES	NO	
Housing Sites: Flood Zone 3	YES	NO	
Existing/recent recreational use or community facility (with no appropriate replacement facility or service proposed)	YES	NO	
Would the development of the site:			
• Harm the landscape or settlement character of the AONB?	positive/neutral	mitigate impacts	cannot mitigate
• Harm the visual amenity of the AONB?	positive/neutral	mitigate impacts	cannot mitigate
OVERALL			
Is this site suitable for development as proposed?	YES	NO	
Could the site be suitable for some other use?	YES	NO	
Why is the site being taken forward?			
Why is the site being rejected?			

Site Name:		Site Location/Address:	
SUITABILITY / SUSTAINABILITY CRITERIA			
Is the site located within walking distance (400m) of:			
• A public transport route (bus or train)	YES	NO	
• A range of community services (e.g. shops, village hall)?	YES	NO	
Would the development of the site:			
• Result in the loss of an identified area of open green space?	YES	NO	
• Result in the loss or impact on public access?	YES	NO	
• Result in the loss of agricultural land or woodland?	YES	NO	
• Harm a heritage asset or its setting (including conservation areas)?	YES	NO	
• Harm a site identified on the historic environment record?	YES	NO	
• Cause settlements to merge (coalesce) with each other?	YES	NO	
• Present an opportunity to develop brownfield land?	YES	NO	
• Enable the conservation of a heritage asset?	YES	NO	

DELIVERABILITY CRITERIA				
Is the site located within close proximity (100m) of existing:				
• Water services?	YES	NO		
• Sewerage services?	YES	NO		
• Electrical services	YES	NO		
• Gas services?	YES	NO		
• Telecommunication services?	YES	NO		
Can the site be accessed safely from an adopted road without obstacle (including ownership difficulties)?	YES	NO		
Do the topographical characteristics of the site allow for development?	YES	NO		
Is the site likely to be subject to pre-existing contamination, poor ground conditions or other hazards?	YES	NO		
Is the site available for development?	no	now	in 5 years	in 10 years

