

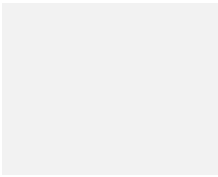
ARNSIDE AND SILVERDALE AONB DRAFT DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal

Non-Technical Summary of the SA Report

OCTOBER 2016

CONTACTS



BEN TWISS
Environmental Consultant

Arcadis.
401 Faraday Street
Birchwood Park
Warrington
WA3 6GA
United Kingdom

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This report dated 12 September 2016 has been prepared for Lancaster City Council & South Lakeland District Council (the "Client") in accordance with the terms and conditions of appointment dated 01 September 2016(the "Appointment") between the Client and **Arcadis (UK) Limited** ("Arcadis") for the purposes specified in the Appointment. For avoidance of doubt, no other person(s) may use or rely upon this report or its contents, and Arcadis accepts no responsibility for any such use or reliance thereon by any other third party.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full Term
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
DPD	Development Plan Document
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SuDS	Sustainable Drainage Systems

1 Introduction

This Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report has been prepared by Arcadis Consulting UK Ltd. (formerly known as Hyder Consulting (UK) Ltd.) on behalf of both Lancaster City Council and South Lakeland District Council as part of the combined SA and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) (hereafter referred to as SA) of the emerging Arnsdale & Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Development Plan Document (DPD). The DPD will be the first for the Arnsdale & Silverdale AONB and will guide development in the AONB over the next 15 years (2016-2031).

The SA process commenced in June 2015 with a Scoping Study that set the scope and level of detail of the SA. In autumn 2015, an SA of the DPD Issues and Options was undertaken which appraised the emerging vision and objectives as well as draft development and policy area options.

This SA Report provides a summary of the SA process and documents the findings of the appraisal and its influence on the DPD's development. It will be used as a consultation document and issued to statutory bodies and stakeholders for comment alongside the Consultation Draft DPD. It will also be made available to the public.

2 Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal

SA is a process for assessing the social, economic and environmental impacts of a plan as it develops and it aims to ensure that sustainable development is at the heart of the plan-making process. It is a legal requirement under planning law. The law states that the SA must comply with requirements of the UK's Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations.

Good practice guidance proposes a number of prescribed stages in the SA process, each of which links with stages of the plan-making process. It is important that the SA is able to feed into the plan-making process. This involves the ongoing appraisal of the plan and makes recommendations to help steer its direction to avoid potentially adverse consequences. This is particularly important when considering alternative strategy options. Consultation with statutory bodies (Natural England, Historic England and Environment Agency) and the public is also required at key stages.

3 Scope of the Appraisal

The scope of the SA was determined through collecting information on the environmental, social and economic characteristics of the borough. This enabled key issues, opportunities and trends to be identified. A review of other relevant environmental protection objectives and policies was also undertaken. The review of these documents focused upon identifying key environmental and sustainability objectives that would need to be considered in the SA and the Arnsdale and Silverdale AONB DPD.

The scope of the appraisal was documented in a Scoping Report, issued for consultation with the statutory bodies in June 2015.

4 Key Sustainability Issues and Opportunities

To ensure that a robust assessment of the emerging AONB DPD is undertaken, it is necessary to understand the existing conditions and characteristics of the borough such as population dynamics, levels of deprivation, health, employment patterns and the condition of housing stock and its affordability. These are detailed in the SA Report. The table below identifies the sustainability topics covered in the SA and provides a summary of key issues and opportunities.

Table 1 Sustainability Topic Descriptions and Key Sustainability Issues

Topic	Description of the Topic	Key Issues (extracts from full list in the SA Report)
Population	Addressed demographics and implications for service provision and housing; sense of community identity; opportunities to access and understand local heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A high proportion of people over 65 has implications for healthcare provision, access to services, public transport, the labour force, and housing supply and need.
Education and Qualifications	Levels of attainment and implications of development on school places; gap between skills and suitable job availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to education should be maintained alongside growth in population within the AONB. Maintain the AONB's good performance in this area.
Health	Addresses potential implications of development on health and opportunities for health, including improvements to quality of life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the good levels of health experienced in the AONB A growing older population is likely to increase pressure on local health provision. Coupled with the rural nature of the AONB this could potentially become a difficult issue to tackle. Access to doctor's surgeries and dentists within the rural areas is more limited and could be improved. Opportunities to further promote walking, cycling and access to outdoor recreational pursuits within the AONB.
Crime	Levels of crime in the AONB, and fear of crime.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anti-social behaviour makes up the largest proportion of offences within the AONB. Further work is needed to reduce such problems.
Water	River water quality; drainage; wastewater capacity; flood risk; aquifer protection; bathing water quality; and water efficiency/water sensitive design.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor water quality, particularly in Hawes Water and Leighton Moss catchments, is an issue in the AONB. The main contributory factors are agricultural run-off and septic tank overflow. Coastal flooding poses a risk to the area. Potential to improve bathing water quality further.
Soils and Land Quality	Considers conservation of agricultural soils; soil quality; levels of brownfield land re-use over greenfield land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AONB contains a number of important geological designations, particularly its limestone pavements which are offered protection. The AONB's soils will suffering from climate change impacts: more severe droughts and more extreme rainfall events can reduce and wash away productive soils.
Air Quality	Existing air quality and opportunities to reduce travel distances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Air quality across the AONB and the surrounding region is good with pollutants below objectives set and classified as 'safe'.

Topic	Description of the Topic	Key Issues (extracts from full list in the SA Report)
Energy and Climate Change	energy efficiency; flood risk; sustainable design; renewable/low carbon energy and consideration for other topic areas in association with this; sustainable travel modes; and natural environment adaptation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Predicted climate changes have the potential to affect many aspects of the AONB, including biodiversity, agriculture, forestry, human health and the historic environment. ▪ Reducing the carbon footprint through energy conservation and efficiency and the promotion of appropriate renewable energy sources should be a priority for the area. ▪ High car reliance in the AONB.
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	Considers threats to the high-quality environment of the AONB from development; internationally, nationally and locally designated sites; and green and blue infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is a large percentage of nationally and locally protected areas, species and habitats present within the AONB. ▪ There are six internationally designated sites in the AONB. ▪ Woodlands cover around a third of the terrestrial AONB. 46% of the total woodland area is currently unmanaged. ▪ The condition of a number of SSSIs can be improved.
Cultural Heritage	Considers the cultural heritage resource of the AONB and the wider historic landscape including non-designated heritage and archaeological resources; importance to local culture and tourism potential.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conservation or restoration efforts should continue to return the cultural assets within the AONB currently on the 'at risk register' back to better conditions so that they can continue to add to the area's cultural diversity and value. ▪ Parkland, designed landscapes and gardens within the AONB are at risk.
Landscape	Landscape and townscape distinctiveness and benefit for quality of life; seascape; potential coalescence of settlements; impact of development on the edge of settlements and impact of infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A need to protect and enhance a distinctive landscape character; there are many outstanding and special scenic qualities within the AONB including dramatic views over Morecambe Bay. ▪ Threats to tranquillity from increased noise and light pollution. ▪ The AONB's high-quality landscape is an important resource for attracting visitors and enhancing the quality of life for residents. ▪ The distinctive settlement character is an identified special quality of the AONB. ▪ Views into, across, within and out of the AONB are very important and are one of the AONB's special qualities.
Minerals and Waste	Considers strategic landfill sites and their implications; environmental issues of sand extraction; recycling and composting rates; fly-tipping; and sustainable waste management opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nearly all development requires the use of raw materials for construction, as well as operation, which are finite resources. ▪ All development leads to the production of waste, and typically some of this will end up in landfill. Land is also a finite resource, and there are national and county-level drivers to eliminate reliance upon landfill. ▪ There is one household waste recycling centre within the AONB which is located in Carnforth. There are additionally small recycling points within the villages for example located in Arnside.
Sustainable Access / Transportation	Ease of access to high-quality community facilities and services, the countryside and open spaces; level of car dependency and car ownership rates; modal shift potential; congestion at motorway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The dominant travel to work method across the AONB is by car. Better facilities to encourage more sustainable transport use would be beneficial to the area.

Topic	Description of the Topic	Key Issues (extracts from full list in the SA Report)
	junctions; rail service quality, frequency and connectivity; public transport provision in rural areas; accessibility of employment sites; and the use of technology to reduce the need to travel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A greater integration of transport could be promoted, linking rail and buses with cycling routes and allowing for combining modes of transport for the public. With much of the area being rural, access to public transport can be difficult for some and is reflected in the lower proportion of people utilising these methods to travel to work.
Economy	Addresses diversity of the employment base; provision of highly skilled employment for skills retention; image of the borough to inward investors; rural employment threats; levels of in-commuting; enterprise zones; opportunities in the tourism industry; and improvement to broadband capacity and speeds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local employment dependent in the tourism industry (perhaps less diverse than other areas), and many people travel out of the AONB to work. Out-commuting doesn't support the growth of local jobs. Farming is a very important part of the economy in the AONB. Although dairy farming is declining, farms are diversifying and are now supporting tourism. Woodlands and the railways play an important role in the recreation and tourism economy. There is a developing local wood fuel economy and interest in wood products from forestry is rising within the AONB.
Deprivation and Living Environment	Pockets of deprivation in urban wards; need for improved accessibility to services and amenities in rural areas; and scope for involvement of local communities in neighbourhood planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There may be scope in the future to more actively involve the local community in decision-making. Local services should be retained and developed or enhanced to support community life and the local tourism industry. Opportunities should be sought to drive up wages where possible.
Housing	Addresses demand and population increases/in-migration; increase in house prices and affordability levels; housing need for families and the elderly; homelessness levels; gypsy and traveller accommodation needs; housing completion levels; and sustainable design and accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A preference for smaller homes within the area. House prices are often beyond the financial reach of local people. Sheltered housing needs are a particular issue due to the ageing population. Second homes affect local affordability and availability of homes for local people.

Individual components of the AONB DPD have been assessed to determine their sustainability performance and to provide recommendations for sustainability improvements. There was an 'Issues & Options' stage in developing the DPD, which was accompanied by an assessment of the DPD's Vision and Strategic Objectives. The following elements have been assessed in the current SA Report:

- The AONB DPD's proposed site allocations; and
- The AONB DPD's draft policies.

4.1 SA Framework for Assessment

The SA Framework underpins the assessment methodology and comprises a series of SA Objectives (covering social, economic and environmental issues) that are used to test the performance of the plan being assessed. The SA Objectives have been developed using the review of other relevant plans, programmes and environmental objectives, the baseline data and the key issue and opportunities. The SA Framework was amended following receipt of the Scoping Report consultation responses from statutory consultees in 2015. The following Objectives form the basis of the SA Framework:

1. To ensure there is housing to meet local needs in a manner sensitive to the AONB;
2. To improve wellbeing, physical and mental health for all and reduce health inequalities;
3. To improve the level of skills, education and training;
4. To improve sustainable access to services, facilities, the countryside and open spaces;
5. To create vibrant, active, inclusive and open-minded communities with a strong sense of local history;
6. To diversify and strengthen the local economy in a manner that is sensitive to the AONB;
7. To retain and create jobs and ensure the workforce meets local needs;
8. To encourage economic inclusion and access to jobs;
9. To protect and improve air quality;
10. To limit and adapt to climate change and increase energy efficiency;
11. To protect and enhance water quality, resources and reduce the risk of flooding;
12. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity;
13. To protect and enhance landscape, seascape and settlement character and quality;
14. To protect land and soil and ensure the sustainable use of natural resources;
15. To manage mineral resources sustainably, minimise waste and encourage recycling;
16. To conserve and enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and their settings; and
17. To increase the level of participation in democratic processes.

The above objectives are supported by a series of guide questions, indicators and targets, which can be found in the SA Report (Table 3-4).

5 Developing and Refining Options and Assessing Effects

5.1 Alternatives

Government guidance advises that only realistic and relevant alternatives should be considered and they should be sufficiently distinct to enable a meaningful comparison of their different environmental effects.

Good practice guidance recommends that the key aims and principles of the plan should be assessed against the SA Objectives, in order to test their compatibility and to determine whether they accord with broad sustainability principles. The assessment of the Vision and Strategic Objectives of the AONB DPD against the SA Objectives was undertaken during the SA of the 2015 Issues & Options document (see below), using a simple matrix-based approach. The results can be found in the SA of Issues and Options Report of November 2015.

In 2015 an Issues and Options Consultation Discussion Paper was consulted upon which presented six options for the spatial distribution of new development. The SA Report presents a summary of the findings of the DPD Options that were assessed – this can be found in Chapter 4. The DPD has been developed from a preferred option of “*c. 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)*”, which has been progressed further into the current draft DPD on the basis of the SA, consultation responses, and further planning considerations.

In addition to assessing the performance of the six spatial distribution options, a series of Policy options developed by the Council were also assessed through the SA at the Issues and Options stage. The results of the assessment of these options were documented in the SA of Issues and Options Report (November

2015), consulted upon with stakeholder and the public, and the information used by the Council to develop the preferred Policy wording.

5.2 Assessment of AONB DPD Site Allocations

The proposed site allocations (including residential and mixed use sites) of the AONB DPD policies were assessed against the SA Objectives using a matrix-based approach. This matrix allowed the identification of positive and negative impacts, as well as the potential for cumulative effects to occur as a result of the development of multiple sites in a specific location of the AONB. Mitigation measures and recommendations were suggested to offset or alleviate any predicted adverse impacts, or to enhance any opportunities that were identified.

A summary of the assessment of this is provided in Chapter 5 of the SA Report. The complete results of the assessment are presented in Appendix G of the SA Report.

In summary, the majority of predicted effects are positive or neutral. The assessment has led to the prediction of positive effects against all of the socio-economic SA Objectives, and mostly neutral effects for environmental SA Objectives – there are a few potential adverse effects (e.g. use of materials and generation of waste, which is unavoidable, and Site S56 is likely to have a slight adverse residual effect on visual amenity). Policy in the AONB DPD and local plans for South Lakeland and Lancaster City will seek to address the potential adverse effects further. No major negative effects have been predicted.

5.3 Assessment of AONB DPD Policies

The AONB DPD policies have been assessed together in light of the proposed site allocations as discussed above, the level of development proposed through DPD policy (if any beyond the allocations), and the relevant constraints and opportunities existing within the AONB relative to each SA Objective. The assessment has taken appropriate account of the policies of the South Lakeland and Lancaster City local plans that will apply within the AONB.

In summary, the AONB DPD is expected to have a minor beneficial effect on the SA Objectives for Housing; Health; Education; Sustainable Access; Local Economy; Retention and Creation of Jobs; Economic Inclusion and Access to Jobs; Biodiversity and Geodiversity (long-term); Landscape / Seascape (long-term); Heritage and the Community; Historic Environment and Heritage Assets; and Democratic Processes. There would be neutral effects on the SA Objectives for Air Quality; Climate Change and Energy Efficiency (long-term); Water Quality; and Land and Soil. There could be short to medium-term minor adverse effects on climate change emissions, and minor adverse effects on use of natural resources and waste generation.

With other mitigating or enhancing policy from the South Lakeland and Lancaster City local plans, the effect of the AONB DPD is expected to be major beneficial on the Housing SA Objective.

Mitigation

Where appropriate, mitigation measures have been recommended to avoid, reduce or offset the potential adverse impacts as a result of the AONB DPD, and to enhance benefits.

Cumulative Effects

The cumulative effects of the AONB DPD are considered intrinsically within the above assessment.

6 Monitoring

A monitoring framework has been developed to measure the performance of the plan against changes in defined indicators that are linked to its implementation. The monitoring framework has been designed to focus mainly on significant sustainability effects including those:

- That indicate a likely breach of international, national or local legislation, recognised guidelines or standards.
- That may give rise to irreversible damage, with a view to identifying trends before such damage is caused.

- Where there was uncertainty in the SA, and where monitoring would enable preventative or mitigation measures to be taken.

As well as measuring specific indicators linked to the implementation of the plan, contextual monitoring of social, environmental and economic change has been included i.e. a regular review of baseline conditions in the borough. This enables the measurement of the overall effects of the plan. The impacts predicted in the SA will not be realised until development occurs.

7 Next Steps

This SA Report will now be issued for consultation alongside the Publication Version of the Arnside and Silverdale AONB DPD to all key stakeholders (including statutory consultees and the public) for comment. Following the close of the consultation period, South Lakeland District Council will review the feedback and revise the plan as appropriate for Submission to the Secretary of State.

To assist us in processing responses efficiently, we encourage you to make your comments electronically at:

<http://applications.southlakeland.gov.uk/ldfconsultation/>

You can also email responses to:

development.plans@southlakeland.gov.uk

Email responses are preferable to written letters; however alternatively, you can post a response to:

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

Arcadis (UK) Limited

401 Faraday Street
Birchwood Park
Warrington
WA3 6GA
United Kingdom
T: +44 (0)1925 800 700

[arcadis.com](https://www.arcadis.com)

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