

SEA/SA
of
**THE CORE STRATEGY
PREFERRED OPTIONS**
Non Technical Summary

**Prepared for
Craven District Council**

**by
Land Use Consultants**

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I. NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Introduction

- I.1. Land Use Consultants was appointed by Craven District Council to undertake the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) / Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of their Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF must be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and must be prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive¹.
- I.2. The difference between SEA and SA is that SEA is more focused on environmental impacts, whilst SA includes a wider range of considerations, extending to the social and economic impacts of the Local Development Framework as well as the environmental impacts. This joint SEA/SA was undertaken in line with ODPM guidance on SA². A key output of the SEA/SA process is a Sustainability Appraisal report which describes which elements of the Local Development Framework have been appraised and how, and the likely significant sustainability effects which may result from the implementation of the LDF.
- I.3. This report constitutes the Non Technical Summary relating to the SEA/SA of the **Preferred Options Core Strategy**. It provides a brief overview of the character of Craven, the key issues, options, conclusions and recommendations. Detailed findings are included in the SEA/SA Core Strategy report and associated appendices. The full SEA/SA is split into five documents and supporting appendices. These include:
 - Volume 1: Scoping Report
 - Volume 1a: Supporting Appendices
 - Volume 2: Issues and Options Review
 - Volume 3: The Core Strategy Preferred Options
 - Volume 3a: Supporting Appendices

SA/SEA Stages

- I.4. ODPM's guidance specifies a number of stages of work which need to be undertaken. The following three stages have been completed:
Stage A: Setting context and scope
- I.5. The scoping stage gathered information about other relevant plans, programmes, Craven's characteristics and SEA/SA objectives and indicators. This information was then used to identify the key sustainability issues for Craven and the draft SEA/SA

¹ European Directive 2001/42/EC

² Sustainability of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents, Guidance for Regional Planning Bodies and Local Planning Authorities, ODPM, November 2005

objectives and indicators specifically for the District Council. The SEA/SA objectives, see Table 1 below, were based on the Government's four pillars of sustainable development:

- Social progress which meets the needs of everyone
- Effective protection of the environment
- Prudent use of resources
- Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment

I.6. ODPM's SA guidance recommends that objectives are developed with an input from key stakeholders. The draft objectives were considered at a workshop in May 2005 and revised accordingly, also taking into account comments from statutory consultees. The outputs of the tasks outlined above formed part of Scoping Report which was published for consultation in August 2005.

Table 1: Revised Headline SA/SEA Objectives	
1	To maintain and enhance the natural and built environment
2	To protect and improve air, water and soil quality and minimise noise pollution
3	To minimise the consumption of natural resources
4	To develop a managed response to the effects of climate change
5	To achieve and promote sustainable land use and built development
6	To develop a strong, diverse economic base
7	To improve health and well being and reduce inequalities
8	To provide sufficient good quality housing to meet all local needs
9	To safeguard and improve accessibility
10	To achieve and promote high level provision and use of sustainable transport modes where possible
11	Promote good governance

Stage B: Developing and refining options

I.7. Stage B of the SEA/SA involved the identification and appraisal of issues and options presented in the "Shaping Places and Spaces" Consultation Papers³. The appraisal was conducted in June 2006 (**Volume 2**) and the recommendations made were

³ Consultation Paper 1: Vision, Strategic Objectives and Settlement Strategy, 2 Housing Strategy and Distribution, 3: Economic Strategy and Distribution, 4: Environment and Design and 5: Transport

considered by the Council and incorporated in the current version of the Core Strategy Preferred Options. The findings of this work were carried forward, where relevant, into the existing appraisal.

Stage C: Appraising the effects of the plan

- I.8. Stage C entailed predicting and assessing the effects of the preferred options for the Core Strategy against the SEA/SA objectives, where relevant potential mitigation measures were proposed, as well as measures for maximising beneficial effects. This stage also included proposals for future monitoring of the sustainability preference of the LDF.

Stage D: Consulting on the Plan and the SEA/SA Report

- I.9. The output from Stage A to C will result in a Sustainability Appraisal report on the Preferred Options of the Core Strategy, or Submission Core Strategy. This document will take on board recommendations made in the SEA/SA April 2007 alongside representations received between June/July 2007. The Submission Core Strategy will be reappraised in light of changes (SA Annex of Submission Core Strategy) and both documents will be submitted to the Secretary of State. This will be followed by a period of public consultation and then an examination before an independent inspector to consider the soundness of the Core Strategy. Following the publication of the binding Inspector's report, the final Core Strategy will be adopted.

Who was consulted?

- I.10. Public involvement through consultation is a key element of the SEA/SA. The SEA Regulations set out specific requirement for consultation with the Statutory Environmental Bodies as well as the public and other "interested parties". Statutory Environmental Bodies are:
- Natural England (formerly the Countryside Agency and English Nature)
 - English Heritage
 - Environment Agency
- I.11. Detailed comments received during the consultation process during Stage A are included in **Volume 1 A, Appendix 5** of the SEA/SA of the Preferred Options, April 2007.

What does the SEA/SA Report contain?

- I.12. The SEA/SA report contains the following elements:
- An outline of contents, the methodology and description of the SEA/SA process and the specific SEA/SA tasks undertaken (Volume 1).
 - A review of other plans and programmes and relationship to the Core Strategy (Volume 1).

- A description of the environmental and sustainability context (Volume 1).
- A summary of key sustainability issues (Volume 1).
- The SEA/SA Framework which sets out the SEA/SA objectives for assessing the Core Strategy (Volume 1).
- A review of the Issues and Options papers (Volume 2).
- A review of the Preferred Options based on the Core Strategy Preferred Options (Volume 3).

Some of these elements are described in further detail below:

A Review of Plans and Policies relevant to the Planning Strategy (Stage A)

- I.13. The Core Strategy is affected by and will itself influence a wide range of other plans and programmes at a national, regional and local level. The SEA/SA of the **Core Strategy Preferred Options, April 2007** contains a full review of relevant plans and programmes and details how they interact in the development of the Core Strategy and the preparation of SEA/SA Objectives.

Characterisation of Craven (Stage A)

- I.14. Craven District lies on western edge of North Yorkshire, covering 117,876 ha (15% of North Yorkshire). It borders the Forest of Bowland AONB to the south and the Yorkshire Dales National Park to the east; managed by the Yorkshire Dales National Park. In several locations⁴ the boundary of the National Park bisects settlements. In land use terms the District is predominately rural in character; the eighth most sparsely populated in the whole of the UK⁵.
- I.15. Craven has good connections to the national road network via three principal trunk roads; including the A65 which links the conurbations of West Yorkshire to the Dales and the Lake District, and the A59 and A629. The District is also well served by the mainline rail network, and Skipton is the terminus for the Airedale line from West Yorkshire. The nearest airports are situated in Leeds and Bradford to the south-east and Manchester to the south-west.

Social

- I.16. In 2001, the total population for the District excluding the area within the Yorkshire Dales National Park was 44,006. Around 31% of the population live in Skipton, which is the District centre, and the remainder within the larger villages situated along the

⁴ Craven District Council (1999) *Craven District (outside the Yorkshire Dales National Park) Local Plan*, adopted 2 July 1999.

⁵ Craven District Council (2005) *Aiming High*, Priorities for Improvement Performance Indicators for Best Value Performance.

main transport routes, including Settle, Ingleton, Hellifield, Glusburn and Sutton-in-Craven. There are also a large number of dispersed villages and hamlets particularly in the north and west of the District.

- I.17. The rural nature of the District restricts access to services and hampers improvements in the implementation of health improvement programmes with pockets of deprivation due to poor geographical access to essential local facilities and services. Glusburn and Skipton North fall within the top 10% Super Output Areas nationally.
- I.18. Housing affordability is a key issue for Craven. The District offers a high quality of life, where low crime rates and an attractive natural environment have driven up house prices. The 2005 Housing Needs Assessment has identified that one of the fundamental problems across the District is that demand outstrips the supply of housing, and this has resulted in pressure on existing stock. There is also a very low proportion of social rented housing stock available, and over the next five years an expected shortfall of 1,440 affordable dwellings is predicted (288 per year) both for general housing needs and older people. Levels of hidden homelessness are also high and household structures indicate that there are more couples without children.

Environment

- I.19. The landscape character of Craven District is of high value and includes the upper reaches of Wharfedale, Ribblesdale Airedale and part of Lonsdale with the famous limestone ridges and caverns. The importance of the landscape is recognised by the designation of the Forest of Bowland as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and much of the remainder of the District is a Special Landscape Area. Most of the Forest of Bowland AONB is designated as Special Protection Area (SPA) or Special Area of Conservation (SAC), important for its moorland habitat and a major breeding ground for upland birds. There are 12 designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and a further three SSSIs that border the National Park. A wealth of archaeological sites, listed buildings and conservation areas have also been recorded in Craven.

Economy

- I.20. Craven is characterised as having an entrepreneurial spirit with the largest number of businesses per head of population within Yorkshire. However, many of these businesses are quite small and employ under eight employees⁶. The 2001 Census records 25,005 of the population (aged between 16 and 74) of Craven being employed, out of a total population of approximately 54,000. Of this figure 14.88% were self-employed⁷, the second highest self-employment rate throughout the York

⁶ Craven District Council (2005) 'Aiming High' – Performance Indicators for Best Value Performance & Craven's Corporate Plan

⁷ Learning & Skills Council North Yorkshire (November 2004) *National Employers Skills Survey 2003: Key Findings in Craven Local Authority District* report by NOP Social and Political, London

and North Yorkshire area, while unemployment was fairly low and recorded at 2.49%. Sectors contributing the largest number of jobs are:

- Distribution, hotels and restaurants (30%);
- Public administration, education and health (20%);
- Manufacturing (16%).

- I.21. 61% of jobs were full time in 2002, with men accounting for 47% of the employment workforce. The most significant change since 2000 has been the decline in the number of people employed in agriculture, fishing, transport and communications sectors. The impact of the foot and mouth epidemic on the region in 2001, followed by recent CAP reforms has also resulted in a number of farm diversification initiatives. Within Craven, agriculture accounts for 2,153 workers which is 5.2% of the total employed within Yorkshire and the Humber⁸. A review of employment, due in July 2007 is currently being undertaken for the Scrutiny Board of the Regional Assembly by Yorkshire Forward to help determine the employer base in the future of the region, how the workforce can be prepared for this and what types of funding initiatives are available.
- I.22. One in five employers reported that there is a significant skills gap²³ despite the majority offering training to existing employees. This is thought to relate to high staff turnover and external competition, as well as unwillingness by staff to undertake courses. Despite this, a third of employers in Craven expected their workforce to grow during 2005, but a quarter (24%) of employers had vacancies.

Appraisal of Issues and Options (Stage B)

- I.23. Five Issues and Options papers "Shaping Places and Spaces", published by Craven District Council, were reviewed against the SEA/SA objectives in June 2006 see **Volume 2** of the SEA/SA report. The overall findings of this report are summarised below.
- I.24. The proposed policy options were considered at this stage too general to make an accurate assessment of their impacts, but their generality also implied that the District was openly questioning the desired overall 'direction.'
- I.25. A question which ran through many of the options was whether the District wished to prioritise economic, environmental or social objectives or if it wished to maximise the benefits of all these objectives⁹. It was no surprise that this was an issue in a District such as Craven. Craven has strong commuting flows and economic ties to the cities of Bradford and Leeds, but is also a sparsely populated rural District, with many small towns, villages and hamlets, a high proportion of small to medium sized

⁸ Government Office for Yorkshire & The Humber (2005) *A Rural Evidence Base for Yorkshire and The Humber*

⁹ see options in Consultation Document 1: Vision, Strategic Objectives & Settlement Strategy, 2: Location of New Housing Development and 3 : Location of Economic Development

businesses and large areas of high environmental quality. This situation may make it appropriate to adopt different approaches in different areas in the District, namely between the towns and in the more remote rural areas, to reflect their different circumstances.

- I.26. Ultimately, 'sustainability' is about simultaneously maximising the benefits to environmental, social and economic objectives, but this does not mean that the most sustainable policies will be those that express a 'balance between these three 'pillars'. Indeed, a policy that focuses on one of the pillars can be sustainable as long as it will not have a negative impact on the other pillars. Also, in identifying the most sustainable approach within the District, there is a need to consider the wider context in which the LDF policies will operate. In this context, there will be imbalances and biases and the LDF will need to redress these if it is to protect the qualities of the District which are of value to society at large. To be most effective, policy needs to state those unique characteristics of the District which are a priority to protect and which should be overriding factors when taking decisions on proposals where there is conflict between environmental, social and economic factors.
- I.27. A key component of the Core Strategy will be the **Settlement Strategy**. Five definitive options have been put forward, each of which identifies Key Settlement/s for Growth, Larger Local Service Centre/s and Smaller Local Service Centres. The options differ in the number and choice of settlements identified in these categories. Of the options presented, the appraisal concluded that:
- *No clear conclusion can be made as to which option is the most sustainable, since many of the options presented are very similar and judgements relating to the smaller settlements are difficult to make without a clear understanding of their services/facilities, how they function and relate to other towns and villages. However what is evident is that there is a north south divide across the District, and that Skipton, as the largest town, has the greatest opportunities for providing employment and economic growth, and public transport. It is therefore likely to be the most sustainable location for development. Settle is also a town that offers a range of services and is likely to be used as a service centre by smaller settlements in the more remote north of the District.*
 - *Whilst Option 3 (Strategy led by environmental objectives) and Option 4 (Strategy led by sustainable communities) both go some way to being the most sustainable strategy, there are uncertainties associated with each Option. No information is provided on the level of protection given to environmental assets associated with Option 4, and for Option 3, whether the strategy will inhibit a diverse economic base by constraining growth outside core settlements, reduce or increase travel and the consumption of natural resources.*
 - *If further detail can be provided which supports environmental protection, Option 4 could be the most logical option. It identifies Skipton and Settle as Key Settlements for Growth, with Cross Hills/Glusburn and Sutton as Larger Local Service Centres. A further six settlement are defined as Smaller Local Service Centres. This option identifies fewer settlements than the existing Local Plan, indicating a more concentrated approach to development. It also introduces the concept of 'clusters' of villages which function*

together in 'networks' to provide employment or, more likely, services. Villages that work in close networks are more sustainable in terms of travel patterns and offer strong support local services and will experience less access deprivation – all of which are key challenges for rural settlements.

I.28. The Settlement Strategy will guide the overall level and spatial distribution of new development and will be complimented by additional housing, economy, environment and design and transport policies. Key recommendations of the SEA/SA were that the LDF should include:

- A **housing type and tenure** policy that requires all housing developments to be mixed in type, size and tenure. This will help to provide good quality housing to meet local need in desirable locations and also support the integration of different socio-economic sectors of society. The release of exceptions sites for 100% affordable housing may also be needed to meet the need for affordable housing.
- An **affordable housing** policy which identifies an appropriate percentage requirement for affordable housing based on both settlement size and level of local need. It is suggested that the LDF adopts a 'zero threshold', requiring that all scales of housing development contribute to the development of affordable housing.
- An **employment land allocation** policy that guides developments for employment purposes to where there is need but also to where sites will have minimal impact on landscapes and biodiversity and where they will generate least additional car traffic. While this is the most sustainable approach, the District will need to identify which factors will be prioritised where conflicts arise.
- An **economic development** policy which prioritises support for the tourism industry and office-based sectors. These sectors, if developed within the framework of strong and sustainable development and transport policies, can be catered for with least land take and can enhance the natural and built environment. The sectors that are attracted to the District will however be largely beyond the control of the LDF.
- An approach to **regeneration** that utilises all available mechanisms (the market, existing and emerging strategies and funding regimes) so as to improve the quality of life within key settlements and thus attracts more people and businesses. The key settlements are likely to offer the greatest potential for economic development but a focus on these economies should not detract from supporting more rural economies.
- Planning policies relating to **renewable energy** developments are likely to cause controversy in the District. A recent report¹⁰ suggests that the potential for large scale wind energy generation in the District is far greater than the potential for large scale hydro or micro renewables and that the harnessing of the wind energy resource will be necessary to meet the District's 2010 renewable energy target. The key concern with wind energy development is the visual and landscape impacts which will depend upon the surrounding landscape and its visual integration. Since there are designated

¹⁰ Delivering Sustainable Energy in North Yorkshire: Recommended Planning Guidance, Land Use Consultants, October 2005

landscapes within and adjacent to the District, any policy should encourage high standards and design for renewable energy project.

- *The SA/SEA supports combining this with encouragement for greater energy efficiency and micro-renewables. This can make a valuable contribution to meeting the 2010 target with no extra land-take and minimal environmental impact. Energy efficiency measures are the most cost effective way of providing well-heated homes. In reality, these measures are only likely to be taken if policy makes such measures a requirement of all new build, covering new housing and business developments.*

Appraisal of Preferred Options (Stage C – April 2007)

- I.29. The emerging Core Strategy¹¹ outlines a spatial vision for Craven in 2021, supported by 15 sustainable spatial objectives, which will form the basis for all LDF documents and thirty one preferred policies. The appraisal reviewed the sustainable spatial objectives and the preferred policies and the summary of findings are detailed below .

Appraisal of the Sustainable Spatial Objectives

- I.30. The sustainable spatial objectives were reviewed against the SEA/SA objectives detailed in **Volume I** of the SEA/SA report to determine any incompatibilities or inherent tensions. The Appraisal has noted that:
- Some conflict may be anticipated between the different plan elements including employment land, housing, social infrastructure, community services and facilities and environmental priorities (natural, built, historic and cultural environment). The type and duration of impacts will vary depending on the nature of development and its requirements. For example renewable energy development such as wind turbines may not be in accessible locations and could have strong negative impacts on the environment and public perception.
 - Careful consideration needs to be given, when design briefs are prepared or individual planning applications are considered, as to how new development could alter the existing demographic make up of communities. In the context of the SA/SEA it is impossible to determine the mix of dwelling units which will come forward in relation to each site. It will be important at the design and planning stage to ensure that all socio economic groups and ages are catered for in order to help create balanced and sustainable communities. It is noted that preferred policy HO4 and HO5 covers housing size, mix and density.
 - Focusing future development in service centres and maximising the use of previously developed land is a strategy which is supported by the SEA/SA. However the success of this approach will depend upon the care taken to ensure that the value of sites for townscape character, nature conservation, geodiversity, heritage and culture are assessed and important features recognised and retained where possible.

¹¹ Preferred options Report, March 2007, Craven District Council

- In addition, a balance needs to be achieved between creating vibrant sustainable communities within higher level centres (principal, local and smaller centres and villages with facilities) with meeting the needs of communities in other rural villages and the open countryside. It has to be accepted that in such locations there will inevitably be a higher reliance on the private car despite improvements to reduce the need to travel through innovative travel solutions.

Appraisal of the Core Policies

- I.31. The thirty one preferred policies that detail the Council’s overarching approach for development within Craven District were assessed against the SEA/SA headline objectives and sub objectives, using matrices which also include a more detailed justification for some of the recommendations see **Volume 3** and **3a** of the SEA/SA report. **Table 2** below summarises the key conclusions for each of the Core Policies, highlighting where they comply with the SEA/SA objectives, and recommending mitigation measures where applicable. SEA/SA objectives in italics identified possible positive or negative effects.
- I.32. Please note that SEA/SA Objective 11, Promoting good governance is an over-arching objective which relates to all other objectives and should be addressed through effective participation and local decision making.

Table 2: Summary of the appraisal of Core Strategy policies up to 2021 against the SEA/SA objectives and proposed mitigation measures.						
Relevant Policy	Compliance with SEA/SA objectives					Summary of mitigation measures
	++	+ +/?	?	- -/?	+/-	
Policy INF 1: Planning Obligations		2, 4d, 5a, 6d, 7b, 8, 9a, 9b, 9d, 10	5b, 9c		1, 4a, 4b, 4c, 6	Consider including specific reference to landscape works and the protection of cultural heritage in the list of matters covered by Planning Obligation in the supportive text. The legal agreements could include obligations to provide energy efficiency and renewable energy measures in relation to large developments.
Preferred Policy INF 2: Community Infrastructure	9a, 9b, 9d	7a, 10a 1, 5, 6, 9c	9e			The text could refer to improving access to IT and broadband facilities, particularly in more remote areas.
Policy INF 3: Sustainable Transport	2a, 10	2d, 4a, 5b, 6, 7a, 9	5a, 4b, 3a	2b, 2c, 4d	2b	Consider adding to the supplementary text a note stating that more innovative transport solutions could include encouraging more flexible working, live/work units and improvements in IT and Broadband. It is important to ensure that recycled and

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	++	+ +/?	?	- -/?	+/-	
		1, 3b, 4c,				secondary materials are used in construction, local materials are sourced where possible and measures are taken to minimise environmental effects including impacts on water pollution, land contamination and landscape character. Opportunities should be explored to reduce consumption through for example alternative fuel sources.
Policy INF 4: Kildwick Level Crossing and Cross Hills Railway Station	10	1a, 2a, 2d, 4a, 4c, 5b, 6d, 9	1b, 1c, 2b, 2c, 5a			Further clarification is required in the Allocations DPD as to the obligations of developers, the implications on the type of development which is likely to come forward within such locations and if all development is to contribute to the road bridge, associated road works and provision of a railway station.
Policy INF 5: Skipton to Colne Railway Line – Safeguarding of Route		2a, 4a, 5a, 6d, 7, 9, 10				Further clarification is required as to whether through the realignment of the A56, there will be the resultant loss of sections of the disused railway line and whether this will have a long term impact on creating a viable route.
Preferred Policy SS 1: Principal Service Centre & Policy SS 2: Local Service Centres <i>(NB: The review of these policies has been amalgamated because of the similarities in the assessment)</i>		4a, 4d, 5b, 6, 7a, 8a, 9, 10a 1, 5a				No mitigation measures proposed.
Policy SS 3: Smaller Local Service Centres & Policy SS 4: Villages with Facilities		9b, 1, 5, 6, 7a, 9a, 9c,	4a, 4d		10	Clarify how the needs of the community in terms of local employment, services and community facilities/infrastructure will be determined. Accessible and frequent public transport provision between rural and service centres is

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	++	+ +/?	?	- -/?	+/-	
<i>(Please note: The review of these policies has been amalgamated because of the similarities in the assessment).</i>		9d, 9e				needed, particularly for SS4 villages with facilities, to reduce car dependency as well as encourage more innovative community schemes, flexible working improvements in IT and Broadband.
Preferred Policy SS 5: Other Rural Villages and Open Countryside	4b	8 1, 4c, 6	4a, 4d, 5b, 7a, 9a, 9c, 9d, 9e, 10			Consider including within this policy a reference to the cumulative effect of incremental development outside settlement boundaries which needs to be carefully monitored. Consider including criteria against which new development proposals are assessed. This could cover an assessment of highway capacity, impacts on the viability of adjacent land uses and adjacent communities' quality of life. Clarify whether this Policy will support small scale local facilities/services in rural villages.
Policy HO 1: Overall Housing Provision		8a 5a, 6			1, 2	Where planning applications are submitted associated with the development of previously developed land, they should be accompanied by a remediation plan and care should be taken to ensure that development is not sited on high grade agricultural land.
Policy HO 2: Housing Provision within Settlements		5 6, 8a, 9a, 10			1, 2, 4a	Clarification is needed as to what is considered under environmental capacity constraints. Where planning applications are submitted in association with previously developed land, they should be accompanied by a Remediation Plan. Care needs to be taken to ensure that development is not sited on high grade agricultural land.
Preferred Policy : HO 3: Use of previously developed land		4, 4a, 4b, 4c, 5, 8a, 9, 10	3a, 6		1, 2	Further clarification is needed of the terms 'environmental quality' and of the timescale and phasing of greenfield land to be released.

Table 2: Summary of the appraisal of Core Strategy policies up to 2021 against the SEA/SA objectives and proposed mitigation measures.						
Relevant Policy	Compliance with SEA/SA objectives					Summary of mitigation measures
	++	+ +/?	?	- -/?	+/-	
Preferred Policy HO4: Mix of Housing	8b	2, 3b, 3c, 4, 6a, 8a, 9 1, 5b	6, 7b			No mitigation measures are suggested
Preferred Policy HO5: Housing Density		5, 10 4a, 7a, 8a, 9	6, 7b		1, 2	It will be important to ensure that the provision of facilities, especially primary schools, health and community facilities, keeps pace with the phased scale of housing proposed, and that necessary infrastructure is provided.
Preferred Policy HO 6: Affordable Housing Requirements	8a	6, 7, 9, 10	5			Specific reference should be made either in the supporting text or the policy to the proximity of development to services/facilities and public transport infrastructure.
Preferred Policy HO7: Rural Exception Sites		8a	1, 2, 4d, 5, 6c, 7a, 9, 10a			Consider including in this Policy or the supporting text specific reference to the need to undertake a Local Housing Needs Assessment, to inform those people who need or wish to remain a resident in the community, but are unable to gain access to affordable housing. Consider clarifying either in the policy or the supporting text whether rural exemption sites will be well related to a range of local facilities i.e. within walking distance. In considering possible rural exemption sites, it will be important to ensure that development does not impact on the viability of adjacent businesses.
Preferred Policy HO8 : Gypsy and Traveller Sites		1, 2, 3b, 8a	5, 6, 7, 8b, 9, 10			No mitigation measures are suggested
Preferred Policy EC 1: Employment Land Provision		7a, 9d	2, 4d, 6d, 8a, 9a		1, 6a, 6b, 6c	No mitigation measures are suggested
Preferred Policy EC 2:		5b, 6a,	8a, 9c,		1, 2	No mitigation measures are suggested

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Relevant Policy	Compliance with SEA/SA objectives					Summary of mitigation measures
	++	+ +/?	?	- -/?	+/-	
Protecting Employment Land		6b, 6c, 9d	10			
Preferred Policy EC 3: Rural Diversification & Sustainable Rural Economy		1, 5a, 6, 9d 2a, 2b, 2c, 3b		8a	4a, 4b, 10	The Core Strategy should give greater encouragement to activities with synergies, particularly existing rural projects
Preferred Policy EC4: Sustainable Tourism		9d 5a, 6, 9b	1, 2a, 2b, 2c, 3b, 3c, 4, 5b, 8b, 9c	2d, 8a, 10		<p>Consider exploring opportunities for all tourist developments to be supported by a travel assessment, considering the cumulative impacts of a number of developments in close proximity to each other.</p> <p>As part of the planning application process a detailed assessment needs to be undertaken of tourism capacity levels to ensure that there is a sensitive balance between communities' needs and those of tourists, and where new enterprises are introduced consideration should be given to the potential negative cumulative effects on the viability of existing businesses.</p> <p>Further emphasis could be placed on the need to improve existing sites before developing on greenfield land, reuse existing buildings and concentrate development within a group of existing buildings.</p>
Preferred Policy EC 5: Maintaining and enhancing town centres		1, 2a, 2b, 2c, 6, 9d 5a	5b, 8b, 9b, 9c, 9e	2d, 10		Consider making reference to the use of previously developed buildings outside Skipton and local centres, in exceptional circumstances linking with policy SS5.
Preferred Policy ED1: Environmental Protection		1b 1a, 3a, 3b, 5a, 8a, 9b	2, 6	9c		<p>Further clarification is required regarding the term "natural processes" and "other environmental assets" either within the policy or the supplementary text, and the policy should include reference to soil quality.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to including a specific clause under this policy relating to Appropriate Assessment and a clause recognising the ecological and historic importance of brownfield land.</p>

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Relevant Policy	Compliance with SEA/SA objectives					Summary of mitigation measures
	++	+ +/?	?	- -/?	+/-	
						There is also a need to qualify what exactly is referred to under rural diversification, and if this is in line with the identified need to develop the knowledge based/high quality economy in the district.
Preferred Policy ED2: Flood Risk	4d	3c, 6, 8b 1, 2a, 2b	8a			5b No mitigation measures are suggested
Preferred Policy ED3: Conservation of the Historic Environment		1a, 1c	1b, 4, 5, 6, 8a, 10			The Policy should be expanded to include specific reference to new development and improvements to existing structures within the setting or listed buildings, archaeological sites, conservation areas and historic parks and gardens. The Policy should be refined to avoid repeating elements of Policy ED4. Ideally reference to design and access should be omitted from this policy and covered under Policy ED4.
Preferred Policy ED4 : Improving the Quality of New Development	1a,	1c, 5b, 7b, 8b, 9b 1b, 6c, 9a				No mitigation measures are suggested
Preferred Policy ED5: Open Space and Recreation	9b	1a, 1c, 4a, 10a 1b, 2a, 2c, 7b	4d, 5			In determining the loss of open space, it is important to ensure that open space important for biodiversity and/or geodiversity is not lost.
Preferred Policy ED6: Tackling Crime through Design	7b	1a, 6a, 6b, 6c 1, 3, 8a	1b, 1c, 9			No mitigation measures are suggested

Table 2: Summary of the appraisal of Core Strategy policies up to 2021 against the SEA/SA objectives and proposed mitigation measures.						
Relevant Policy	Compliance with SEA/SA objectives					Summary of mitigation measures
	++	+ +/?	?	- -/?	+/-	
Preferred Policy ED7 Promoting Sustainable Construction	8b	2a, 2b, 2d, 4 1, 3, 8a, 10				The text could refer specifically to soil as a natural resource, and ensure measures are in place to protect high grade land and minimise soil contamination. Challenges may also arise when trying to provide development which incorporates sustainable construction and design measures, such as reuse of construction and demolition materials, the sourcing of local materials, water and energy efficiency measures, or providing storage for waste to be recycled and adequate recycling facilities.
Preferred Policy ED8: Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy	4a, 4b, 4c,	2a, 3a, 8b 7, 9e	1, 5a, 6	5b		For clarity this policy should be revised to ensure due consideration is given environmental impacts of other renewable sources, revising the clause to read: "In addition the Council will encourage the development of other renewable energy sources such as biomass, photovoltaic and wind turbines where appropriate. Such small and medium scale renewable energy proposals....."

Conclusions and Recommendations (Stage C – April 2007)

Conclusions

- I.33. Conflicts may occur between the different elements of the preferred policies, including employment land, housing, infrastructure, community services and facilities, leisure opportunities and environmental priorities (natural, built, historic environment). By concentrating development on previously developed land in the principal, local and smaller service centres, and in line with the settlement hierarchy, opportunities will be created to improve the provision of public transport, increase accessibility to services/facilities, natural, built, historic and cultural assets and reduce social exclusion. This therefore represents the most efficient use of land and is likely to increase access to employment and investment, new and affordable housing, and services and facilities in those areas. However, such an approach may be at the expense of more peripheral and remote areas, potentially creating inequalities, especially for those without access to transport.
- I.34. Leading on from spatial planning, is the recurrent topic of accessibility. Deprivation due to poor geographical access to facilities and services is a key issue for the District, and one which will not be addressed alone through public transport. Whilst the Core Strategy does seek to "promote innovative public and sustainable transport solutions to improve accessibility, especially in the more remote areas" (Policy

INF3), it does not expand on the Regional Spatial Strategy or respond to concerns raised by the SA of the Regional Spatial Strategy. The SA of the Regional Spatial Strategy specifically recommends that more detail could be included on how “accessibility should be encouraged through Local Development Frameworks and the Local Transport Plan.” Consideration should be given to opportunities to promote live work units, encourage greater flexibility in home working and access to Broadband and IT facilities as some of the more innovative solutions which could be explored further.

- I.35. The scale, duration and significance of potential impacts will depend on the timing, location and type of development as well as the mitigation measures used. It is also important to note that some mitigation measures will occur at different stages in the planning process, e.g. using the Allocations DPD to help determine decisions for planning applications or alternatively through development briefs.
- I.36. There will inevitably be some environmental impacts associated with meeting housing and employment requirements and associated infrastructure. However, a certain amount of housing has been identified at a regional level as being necessary to meet the requirements of predicted increases in population, and provision of affordable housing is a key priority for Craven. Whilst the Strategy seeks to ensure that all development is required to make full and effective use of previously developed land, the targets set are below those recommended in the draft Regional Spatial Strategy (which advocates 70%, as opposed to 55% in the Core Strategy). In addition, uncertainties exist over the phased release of previously developed / greenfield land. It is assumed that this will be addressed through the proposed review of the Urban Potential Study, 2003 to confirm not only the figure of 55% previously developed land but also the phased release of land.
- I.37. The drafting of the Core Strategy makes it clear that the settlement hierarchy is unlikely to impact on the Forest of Bowland AONB, which is designated in part as either a SPA or SAC. This is a view based on information provided for the SEA/SA and it is considered that a screening decision, which forms the first stage of an Appropriate Assessment should be undertaken and discussed with Natural England to confirm that there is no need for an Appropriate Assessment.

Recommendations

- I.38. Whilst a number of specific recommendations for changes were made, and outlined in **Table 2 above**, some general issues also need to be considered:
- Alongside a Housing Needs Assessment, a local needs housing assessment should be undertaken to inform affordable housing provision.
 - The Strategy would benefit from providing further information on the intended phased released of land for housing and employment use.
 - Whilst the DPD refers to “natural processes”, “environmental quality”, “environmental capacity constraints” and “other environmental assets,” there are uncertainties as to the definition of such terms, which ideally should be qualified in the supporting text.

- No reference is made in the Core Strategy to soil quality, the importance of protecting high grade agricultural land, or to the need to remediate contaminated sites.
- Cumulative impacts outside settlement boundaries will need to be considered, particularly impacts associated with rural diversification schemes resulting in potentially negative effects on the viability of adjacent businesses and communities' quality of life.
- Many of the specific policies under environment and design could be covered by the proposed Sustainable Design SPD requiring "*all new development proposals to incorporate sustainable design and construction objectives and to meet best practice standards*". It is uncertain whether this document will explore in much more detail opportunities for dual use, and require through example planning conditions, the provision of a demolition plan associated with contaminated sites.
- New development on the periphery of the settlements should ensure that links are maintained to the wider countryside and to the settlement itself.
- It is important to ensure that proposals in the Plan do not affect the integrity of SPAs/SACs or other sites covered by the Habitats Directive. The SEA/SA considers that a screening decision should be undertaken and discussed with Natural England to confirm that there is no need for an Appropriate Assessment.
- Further consideration should be given to opportunities to promote live work units, encouraging greater flexibility in home working, access to Broadband and IT facilities are some of the more innovative transport solutions.

Monitoring Implementation of the Core Strategy:

I.39. The SEA Directive requires that the significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme should be monitored in order to identify at an early stage any unforeseen adverse effects, and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action. The suggested monitoring regime includes:

- Determination of the scope of monitoring;
- Identification of the necessary information;
- Identification of existing sources of information;
 - Data at project level;
 - General environmental monitoring; and
 - Other data;
- Filling the gaps;
- Procedural integration of monitoring into the planning system; and
- Taking remedial action.

- I.40. Details of effects which should be monitored are included in Volume 4 of the SEA Report.