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# Hyndburn Borough Council

## Development Management Policies DPD

### Sustainability Appraisal

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#### Non-Technical Summary

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# Hyndburn Borough Council

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### Sustainability Appraisal

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#### Non-Technical Summary

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# ABBREVIATIONS

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
AQMA	Air Quality Management Area
CO <sub>2</sub>	Carbon Dioxide
DM	Development Management
DPD	Development Plan Document
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment

# 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Hyndburn Borough Council has prepared a Development Management (DM) Development Plan Document (DPD) to help guide development within the Borough up to 2026. The DPD, together with other documents will replace the existing Local Plan, and will provide detailed guidance on a range of planning matters including environmental, social and economic issues. It will be considered when determining planning applications. The DPD does not allocate land as this is done elsewhere within the Local Plan (within the Core Strategy and the Site Allocations DPD). The policies within the DPD are therefore more focussed on ensuring that development is designed and delivered in a sustainable way.

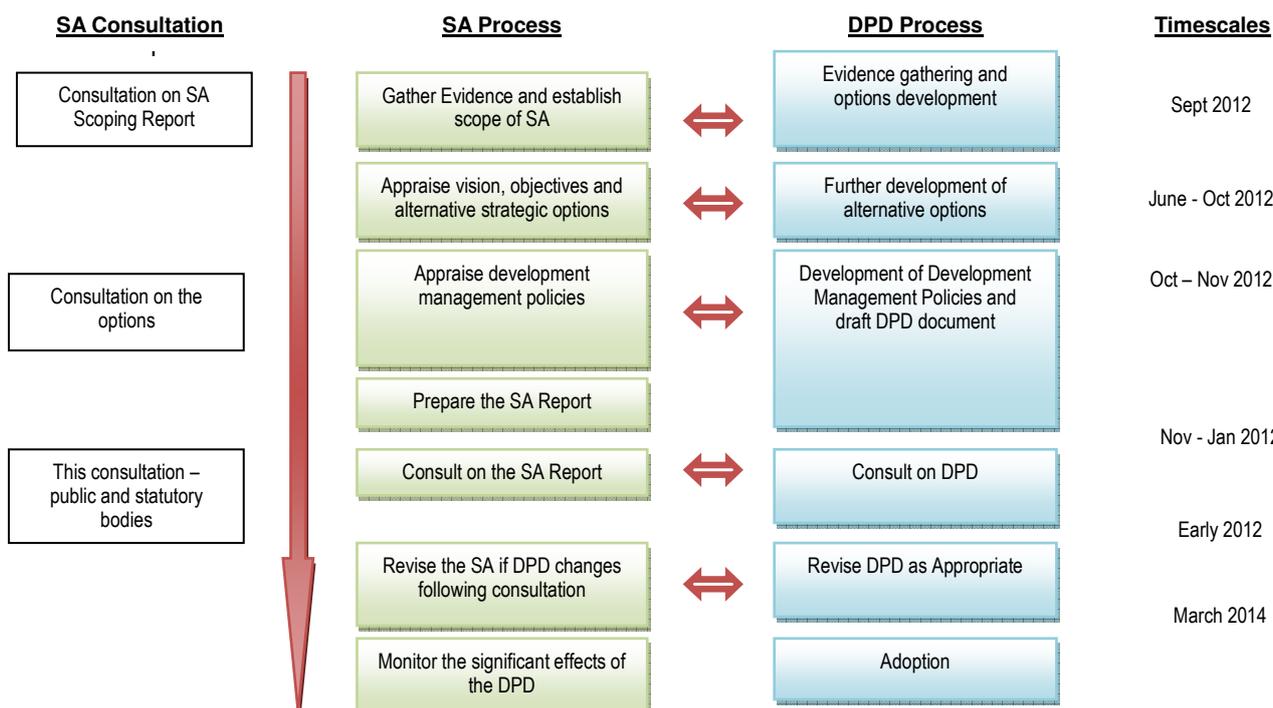
It is a legal requirement to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the DPD to ensure that it is developed within the principles of sustainable development. Independent consultants Hyder Consulting Limited have undertaken the SA during the development of the DPD. This report provides a summary of the findings. The detailed reports can be viewed at the Hyndburn Borough Council offices or on the website.

# 2 WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL?

SA is a process for assessing the social, economic and environmental impacts of a DPD as it develops. It is a legal requirement under planning law, which states that the SA must comply with requirements of the European Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive. SA aims to ensure that sustainable development is at the heart of the plan-making process.

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, which 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, English Heritage and Environment Agency) and the public is also required at key stages.

A high-level chart showing the SA stages undertaken alongside the plan-making stages is presented below. It also indicates the timeline and key consultation points.



### 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, which enabled key issues, opportunities and trends to be identified. A review of other relevant plans, policies and environmental protection objectives was also undertaken. The scope of the appraisal was documented in a Scoping Report, issued for consultation with the statutory bodies in September 2012.

#### Existing characteristics and issues in the Hyndburn Borough

It is necessary to understand the existing conditions and characteristics of the Borough in order to ensure that a robust assessment of the emerging DPD is undertaken, for example, the location of key environmental features like Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Listed Buildings, population statistics including growth patterns, health, employment and the condition of housing. Table 3-1 below identifies the topics covered in the SA and summarises some of the key characteristics and issues under each.

**Table 3-1 Summary of key existing characteristics and issues in the Hyndburn Borough**

SA Topic	Summary of key existing characteristics and issues in the Hyndburn Borough
Population	The Borough has a large, young population as well as a growing number of elderly people for which there will be a need to provide suitable accommodation. The Asian/Asian British community are the main ethnic minority and there needs to be appropriate service and housing provisions for all needs.
Education and Qualifications	Educational attainment in the Borough is low with some areas of very poor attainment. Improved educational choice and better access to high quality education would benefit the Borough and provide wider social benefits. There is a need to retain young people.
Human Health	Health is generally good although there are some pockets of poorer health. There is good access to outdoor recreation and services within urban areas. The growing number of elderly population may put pressure on care facilities, particularly within rural areas.
Crime	Crime levels are generally low although anti-social behaviour and juvenile nuisance are a problem in some areas and can cause fear of crime.
Water	Water quality across the Borough is generally considered to be moderate. Flood risk within the urban area of the Borough is relatively high. Certain watercourses may pose a risk to future developments.
Soil and Land Quality	Hyndburn has large areas of previously developed land, some of which could be contaminated.
Air Quality	There are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) identified in Hyndburn. Emissions of CO <sub>2</sub> (carbon dioxide), which are generated from vehicles amongst other things, are amongst the lowest in the whole of Lancashire.
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	Hyndburn is not as well noted for its biodiversity as other parts of Lancashire, though it does possess a wide variety of natural environmental assets.
Cultural Heritage	Hyndburn has a number of cultural heritage features and a number of conservation areas including Accrington town centre which are important for their historic townscape and heritage value.
Landscape	The Borough contains some distinctive landscape/townscape features and has a higher proportion of greenbelt land than in other authorities in the surrounding region.
Minerals and	The major strategic landfill site for the Borough is Whinney Hill quarry and landfill which also serves

SA Topic	Summary of key existing characteristics and issues in the Hyndburn Borough
Waste	other parts of East Lancashire. An effective waste recycling service operates in the Borough.
Transport	The borough has good road connections to other parts of Lancashire and the national motorway network. There are also rail links to other key settlements in the region and an extensive bus network which serves a number of residential areas. A high proportion of the population out commute.
Economy	The recent economic downturn has affected most parts of the UK and there is a need to ensure that the impacts on residents are reduced and that future needs continue to be met. Job density in Hyndburn is one of the lowest in Lancashire with high levels of residents out-commuting to work in other boroughs.
Deprivation and Living Environment	Some areas of the Borough are experience high levels of deprivation with high unemployment and low aspirations among the young communities.
Housing	House prices in Hyndburn are lower than regional levels but have shown gradual improvement. There is a shortage of affordable housing. The number of vacant housing has increased and is also higher than regional and national levels. Opportunities exist for higher levels of sustainable construction in new homes and the provision of suitable homes to accommodate the expected rise in the elderly population.

## Policy context

A review of other international, national, regional and local plans, policies and environmental protection objectives that could influence the development of the SA and the DPD was undertaken. The findings are recorded in the SA Report.

The review of these documents focussed upon identifying key environmental and sustainability objectives that would need to be considered in the SA and the DPD, and included the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg (2002), relevant European Directives, the UK Sustainable Development Strategy, the National Planning Policy Framework and the Sustainable Community Strategy for Hyndburn amongst others.

## Which aspects of the DPD were appraised?

The following aspects of the DPD were appraised through the SA:

- DM DPD Policies and their alternative options.

Following the appraisal of the above, recommendations were presented to the plan-makers to adapt the policy wording in order to minimise adverse effects and maximise benefits.

# 4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Hyndburn Borough Council identified 42 initial policy area options for review, with up to three options proposed for each. In addition to this, a 'No Plan' / 'Business as Usual' option was also appraised for comparison. The policy area options were identified under the following headings:

## Balanced Development Strategy

- DM1 Balanced Development Strategy

## Economy

- DM2 Employment Development
- DM3 Retail and Leisure Development
- DM4 Taxi Booking Offices
- DM5 Hot Food Takeaways

- DM6 Telecommunications

## Education

- DM7 New School Places
- DM8 Nursery Places
- DM9 Protection of Playing Fields, Sports Grounds

## Housing

- DM10 New Housing Development
- DM11 Open Space Provision in Residential Development
- DM12 Affordable Housing
- DM13 Development of Housing with Residential Gardens
- DM14 Housing with Care and Extra Care
- DM15 Gypsy and Traveller Sites
- DM16 Privacy and Impact in New Housing Development
- DM17 Minimum Space Standards for Residential Development

## Health

- DM18 Healthy Eating Near Schools
- DM19 Allotments and Other Food Growing Areas

## Environment

- DM20 Trees and Woodland
- DM21 Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment
- DM22 Protected Species
- DM23 Flood Risk Management
- DM24 High Quality Design
- DM25 Materials
- DM26 Public Art
- DM27 Heritage Assets
- DM28 Cultural (and Community) Development
- DM29 Advertisements
- DM30 Shop Fronts and Security Shutters
- DM31 Environmental Amenity
- DM32 Contaminated and Unstable Land
- DM33 Wind Energy
- DM34 Energy Efficiency
- DM35 Energy Generation in Major Development

## Accessibility

- DM36 Traffic and Highway Safety
- DM37 Parking Provision

## Rural Areas

- DM38 New Building and Conversion of Existing Buildings in Countryside
- DM39 New Building and Conversion of Existing Buildings in Green Belt
- DM40 Farm Diversification
- DM41 Agricultural Workers Dwellings
- DM42 Equestrian Development

Each option was appraised through the SA and recommendations to increase their sustainability performance were made to the plan-makers to help develop the preferred policy options. The 'No Plan' / 'Business as Usual Option' was also assessed.

## 4.1 Results of Policy Area Options Assessment

In the main part, the policy options focussed around either providing further detail to the policies in the Core Strategy or not adding further detail.

In general, the options which promoted the use of existing evidence to develop the final policy were considered to have a higher chance of delivering benefits. The SA has encouraged monitoring, feedback, trial and community involvement to take place as part of policy wording in cases where evidence was weak.

It has been important to ensure a balance between providing too much detail within the policies (which could deter development and limit opportunities) and not providing enough detail (which can help to steer development in a more sustainable direction that delivers benefits and avoids adverse effects).

The assessment focussed on promoting those options which would achieve the greatest benefits and overall, there were few policy options which were deemed to have clearly significant adverse effects.

## 4.2 'No Plan' / 'Business as Usual' Option

In the absence of the DPD there would be less detailed policy guidance available, and decision makers would need to rely more heavily on the Core Strategy and national / regional policy guidance. The following effects are likely to occur:

- A greater uncertainty over the exact form of new development.
- A greater likelihood of development being less sustainable and of adverse environmental, social or economic effects occurring.
- A lower likelihood of opportunities being met in order to solve the borough's existing social and economic issues. By not implementing the DPD, there is a greater likelihood of the borough's negative trends continuing in the future.
- The planning and consenting process would be slower as decisions would need to rely upon a wider range of policy and guidance where it is available. In addition, more inappropriate development could come forward on appeal as the Council would have fewer clear planning policy documents against which to determine proposals in the first place.
- The policy available to decision-makers would have had less input from local people.

# 5 APPRAISAL RESULTS

## 5.1 The Policies of the DPD

A preferred set of 36 policies (split into a number of headings, as identified below) was created following the options appraisal. The policies of the DPD are designed to guide development in Hyndburn, and are grouped together into main topic areas. The policies were assessed in detail, and a summary of the results is presented within the following sections.

### 5.1.1 Economy

The policies within this topic area relate to employment development, retail and leisure development, hot food takeaways, telecommunications and employment strategies (i.e. training links to businesses).

These policies perform very well against the sustainability criteria used in the appraisal and would lead to both direct and indirect benefits. Direct benefits would occur in relation to improved job opportunities, economic inclusion and sustainable economic growth in the long-term, which could indirectly benefit crime and health. Such benefits would particularly be realised as economic development would be in appropriate locations that are already served by existing infrastructure.

The policies collectively ensure the protection and enhancement of the natural and built environment, encourage high quality appropriate developments that are in keeping with the surrounding area, and also seek to ensure the consideration of energy efficiency and waste generation.

Although increased development can lead to increased traffic and congestion, focussing employment development within town and local centres, which are the most accessible areas by public transport etc, could make a contribution to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and an improvement in air quality in the long-term. In addition, the policies contain clear provisions for the promotion of sustainable transport.

### 5.1.2 Education

There is only one policy within this topic, relating to delivering new schools and early learning.

New and improved education facilities will help to improve educational attainment for all age groups, and can generate other indirect benefits upon health crime. Both urban and rural areas would benefit from this policy, as new educational facilities will be situated in accessible locations. However, its provisions to ensure adequate car parking could encouraged increased use of private car, which is not a sustainable method of travel.

The policy seeks to ensure that developments are designed to a high quality standard and enhance the landscape of the area, and also that they consider energy efficiency and the sustainable use of natural resources.

### 5.1.3 Housing

This topic contains policies relating to new housing, open space in new residential developments, affordable housing, housing for the elderly and gypsy and traveller sites.

This range of policies would help to provide a greater choice and quality of housing that meets the needs of the population, and could therefore potentially contribute to a range of social

benefits including a reduction in crime and improved physical and mental health and wellbeing in the long-term. They seek to ensure that housing is directed towards locations that are accessible by sustainable transport options, although it is noted that the development of new housing, and the resulting increase in population, is likely to increase greenhouse gas emissions.

Benefits to the natural and built environment would be generated through improved open spaces and also by ensuring natural features such as streams and trees are retained and incorporated into the spaces. In addition, there are commitments that seek to ensure the quality and character of the existing townscape, together with heritage assets, are protected and enhanced.

#### 5.1.4 Environment (Natural and Built Environment)

This set of policies relates to the protection and enhancement of the built and natural environment (including protected species), the protection of open spaces, flood risk and water resources and contaminated land.

These policies perform very well against the sustainability criteria, directly supporting those related to the environment such as biodiversity, heritage and water etc. In addition, the protection and enhancement of the borough's natural environment and heritage assets can indirectly contribute to improved physical and mental health, and encourage healthier lifestyles. Sustainable travel links can also be important as green infrastructure (e.g. cycle routes, Public Rights of Way) and enhancing these links could help contribute to greater levels of walking and cycling which would have air quality, climate change as well as health benefits in the long-term.

#### 5.1.5 Environment (Design and Quality)

The policies within this topic area relate to ensuring the high quality design of new developments, protection of community facilities, environmental amenity and pollution control, energy efficiency, waste management and planning enforcement.

The specific provisions to ensure high quality development appropriate to the existing area, together with protected and enhanced environmental amenity, would directly generate numerous environmental benefits and indirect benefits upon crime, health and wellbeing and community spirit in the long-term. Good urban design which encourages efficient use of materials and resources can reflect positively in adapting to climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

#### 5.1.6 Accessibility

This topic contains policies relating to traffic and highway safety, travel plans and transport infrastructure.

Together, these policies encourage the use of sustainable transport as opposed to private car use which could generate benefits to the health and wellbeing of travellers and improve access to existing and future services and facilities. Improved transport infrastructure will also help to encourage economic development and bring jobs closer to homes.

A reduction in traffic through the increased use of sustainable transport could help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality in the long-term, which could also benefit wildlife and the landscape and townscape character. However, new transport infrastructure has the potential to adversely impact biodiversity and could also encourage increased car use.

## 5.1.7 Rural

This set of policies relate to farm diversification, new buildings and the conversion of existing buildings in the Green Belt and the countryside, and also equestrian development.

The policies all contribute towards ensuring that development within rural areas creates business and investment opportunities to ensure sustainable rural communities. This will contribute to increased rural inclusion and potentially improved health and wellbeing. However, new development within rural areas could increase the use of vehicular transport, which could contribute to a reduction in air quality and increased greenhouse gas emissions.

These policies collectively contain commitments that ensure the protection of the countryside environment from inappropriate development. In addition, waste and water management in relation to equine development is addressed.

## 5.2 Cumulative Impacts

The combined impacts of the DPD with the impact of other plans and programmes, including those in neighbouring authorities, have been assessed. The policies within the DPD tend to be complementary and to contribute positively overall to sustainability objectives when viewed together. Cumulative benefits are identified on crime and fear of crime, education, access to goods and services, health and wellbeing, housing, community spirit and cohesion, sustainable economic growth, biodiversity, landscape/townscape, climate change, air quality, energy efficiency, natural resources, sustainable transport, water resources and waste.

There are some potential concerns centred on the combined impacts of various developments on climate change, air quality, natural resources, sustainable transport and water resources.

Mitigation measures are proposed for individual policies which, if successfully implemented, would reduce the potential for cumulative impacts to occur.

## 5.3 Further SA Recommendations

Further recommendations have been made to improve the sustainability performance of the published set of policies. These cover a broad range of issues but common themes include the need to:

- Encourage greater levels of sustainable transport use (including public transport, walking and cycling) across the borough. This includes encouraging the use of travel plans.
- Provide a stronger focus upon the sustainable use of natural resources.
- In some specific cases provide a stronger focus upon the need to protect and, where possible, enhance the natural environment.
- It is recommended that provisions to ensure the protection and enhancement of the existing landscape / townscape and heritage resources are strengthened. Reference to historic landscapes should be included.
- It is recommended that the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure links are specifically referenced as such features provide multi-functional benefits for wildlife, sustainable travel and health.

## 6 MONITORING

Monitoring is an ongoing process, integral to the implementation of the DPD and a requirement of the SA process. The proposed monitoring framework was designed to focus mainly on significant sustainability effects identified during the SA, including effects:

- 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.

A monitoring framework is presented in the SA Report which identifies the factors that should be monitored, by whom and when. It also identifies how remedial action should be taken if unforeseen effects occur. Monitoring should occur throughout the lifetime of the DPD.

## 7 WHAT NEXT?

The DPD along with the SA Report and associated appendices will be consulted upon for a minimum of six weeks. Following the end of the consultation period the Final DPD will be prepared and the SA Report will be updated accordingly.

If you would like to comment on the SA, please contact:

Responses to this consultation should be sent to:

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