

An Easy Guide to the New Policies at a Glance

The Current document being prepared is called a **Core Strategy** and will form the main part of the **Local Development Framework for the Peak District National Park**. This will be supported by a more detailed **Development Management Policy** document with criteria to help manage and control development, and a suite of **supplementary planning documents**, covering very detailed design matters, e.g. for sustainable buildings, renewable energy and modern agricultural buildings.

Overall picture: All planning policies are based on the legislation that created national parks

This requires us to:

- Conserve and enhance the Peak District National Park's special qualities
- Provide opportunities for their enjoyment and understanding

In doing this we have duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of the National Park's communities. We take this duty as seriously as we do our two purposes.

Where there is a conflict between the two purposes the first one is given priority.

Taking account of National and Regional policy

All policies have to demonstrate how they support both national policy, as set out in Planning Policy Statements, and regional policy, as set out in the East Midlands Regional Plan. These are key documents that shape the preferred approaches set out. Alongside this we must also take account of any other evidence, testing for sustainability, and comments made during the process.

General planning policies in the Local Development Framework (LDF)

Overall the main aim of the proposed planning policies in the LDF is to deliver national park purposes. This means, in general, that major building projects will not normally be allowed in the national park. Instead we are looking to encourage well designed sustainable development that takes into account the special character of the area and takes account of climate change issues.

Settlement strategy (hamlets, villages and towns where building can take place)

We have considered the range of services in each place and the ease with which people can access them.

We are offering communities the chance to help shape the new policy if they feel the existing one is too restrictive about where affordable houses can be built.

We are also seeking your views on whether we have put individual hamlets, villages and towns in the right category and whether you want your community to be named in the policy.

The new approach allows for better local assessments of capacity for new development before final decisions are made.

The preferred approach highlights three categories of place, A, B and C.

- 'A' comprises villages and towns that are considered to have a reasonable level of services (shops, roads, community facilities) and proven capacity for new development.
- 'B' comprises villages with a reasonable level of services but very limited proven capacity for new development. It is here that assessments of capacity are important.
- 'C' comprises hamlets and remaining settlements with scope for a smaller range of developments such as extensions and the restoration of existing buildings.

(If you do not live in a place proposed as A or B – you live in a place proposed as category C)

Landscape and conservation

- Some national park landscapes are so special that no building will be acceptable. The proposed new policy uses the Landscape Character Assessment, Landscape Strategy and Action Plan (see www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/landscape) to provide detailed information about the different characteristics of landscape and outline plans for its management.
- The preferred options also stress the importance of cultural heritage and biodiversity (plants, flowers and wildlife) and our desire to protect these features, such as stone walls, stone barns, listed buildings, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and national nature reserves).

Visiting and enjoying the national park

- The old planning policy had what were called 'recreation zones'. These outlined places that could accept large scale developments like visitor centres and big car parks through to minor ones, like car parks for a few vehicles.
- The new policy focuses more on the way visitors from neighbouring towns and cities come in to the national park to visit the countryside. There is a bigger emphasis on:
 - managing places to help people access and enjoy the national park in new ways
 - encouraging schemes that link public transport up with visitor facilities
 - working across administrative and county boundaries to join up visitor and transport services.
- Policies about what types of development are acceptable have been widened to include venues for environmental education in suitable locations.

Climate change

This is probably the biggest area of change proposed to existing planning policies.

The starting point is that **all new buildings should be sustainable** – they should be energy efficient and the lowest possible carbon footprint.

We are also keen to see the national park reduces its carbon footprint as far as possible:

- The policy suggests that large scale renewable energy projects (e.g. wind farms) are not suitable but small scale projects that do not harm the landscape should be encouraged. Those that have the least impact on the landscape, **like ground source heat pumps and hydro power,** are best suited to a national park.
- Renewable energy projects will be encouraged where they are well designed, support an individual or community need, and suit their location. As a general rule individual wind turbines up to 15 metres high could be suitable in the White and South West Peaks but would not be suitable for open countryside areas in the Dark Peak. Certain types of solar panels are preferable to others and restrictions are likely to be tougher in conservation areas.

This section also:

- **Has a flood risk reduction policy**
- Looks at the impact of climate change on plants, flowers and wildlife (biodiversity)
- Sets out a policy to allow small scale generation of power through agricultural waste (anaerobic digesters).

Homes and communities

- The proposals keep the existing priority which is to provide affordable housing to meet the needs of local people.
- The aim is to provide as much affordable housing as possible without harming the landscape or the character of a hamlet, village or town (known as the built environment).
- Sometimes housing will help to enhance the environment of a hamlet, village or town (for example where a traditional building in a poor state of repair is re-used **or a former mining or employment sites are redeveloped.**)
- As well as helping to respond to the needs of an ageing population new affordable homes will help younger people who have left the national park to return if they wish.
- The proposed new approach differs from current policy by opening up new ways to provide affordable homes for local people. For example, it suggests:
 1. Housing providers could buy existing homes when they are for sale and turn them into affordable homes, adding to their numbers without any of the damage to landscape that building new homes can cause.
 2. Making all developers provide affordable homes rather than open market housing unless they can prove affordable housing is not viable. Those restoring a barn, for example, are currently allowed to create open market rather than local needs homes.
 3. Extending the current flexibility that allows homes for farmers or forestry workers so that it includes other key workers involved in land or estate management that conserves or improves the national park landscape - for example, estate managers, game wardens. However, we will expect these homes to be provided by re-using redundant farm buildings wherever possible before considering new-build.
- The need to protect local services (**eg pubs, shops, village halls**) will remain a key planning policy. Anyone wanting to remove a community service (eg convert a pub to a house) would have to clearly demonstrate that it cannot be sold as a going concern before being allowed to do it.

Economy

- This policy seeks to establish what new buildings are needed to help businesses in the national park diversify or expand.
- During public consultations a key issue has been the way current planning policies restrict the types of businesses classed as acceptable diversification of a farm (eg making cheese, a farm shop). The new policy covers other business ideas that could provide farmers with the income they need to continue running a farm and managing the land of the national park, especially where it helps link the economy with the environment.
- **Industrial estates – the policy proposes to protect existing industrial estates but not to build new ones.**
- Existing policies around holiday accommodation will largely remain. Bakewell is identified as the only suitable location for a new hotel. Other accommodation should generally be small-scale, such as holiday cottages or bed and breakfast.
- The policy allowing former farm buildings to be converted into holiday accommodation will remain.
- Policies will continue to give scope for caravan and camping sites where these are well sited and of appropriate scale in the landscape.

Minerals

- This section continues existing planning policies which aim to reduce, over time, the amount of minerals coming from the Peak District National Park.
- The policy says that alternative sites for getting minerals outside the national park should always be considered first. Developers will be expected to prove this is the case before making applications to open mines or quarrying sites in the national park.
- No new opencast mining sites would be allowed but some underground mining of fluorspar, stone roofing or building stone may be possible.
- The restoration of areas that have been mined is given greater importance. This includes measures within planning agreements to ensure wildlife, plants and flowers flourish on restored sites.

Traffic, travel and accessibility

- This policy aims to encourage more public transport and reduce the impact of pollution and congestion caused by traffic on the national park.
- Planning policies would try to prevent new road schemes as they will promote more vehicle use, particularly larger ones that go across the national park connecting neighbouring towns or cities. If a new road was approved by a planning inquiry then the policy would require that it was designed to minimise the environmental impact.
- In the last planning policy, land around Tintwistle and Bakewell was protected in case plans were developed for a Tintwistle bypass or Bakewell Relief Road. The new policy says it would not be acceptable to build either road.
- The policy encourages measures to change the behaviour of visitors coming to the area. It proposes the use of park-and-ride schemes, with the car parks outside the national park and public transport bringing visitors in. The policy will also encourage better access to visitor attractions by public transport.
- The use of former railway lines is encouraged for quiet activities, such as setting up trails for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.