# Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) for the North East Transport Plan 2021 - 2035

**ISA Adoption Statement**

Transport North East Strategy Unit

March 2021

## Quality information

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## Revision History

| Revision | Revision date | Details | Name | Position |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| V3.0 | 29th March 2021 | Final version | Nick Chisholm-Batten | Associate Director |

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# 1. Introduction

## Background

1.1 The Transport North East Strategy Unit has recently prepared the North East Transport Plan 2021-2035 (NETP).

1.2 The NETP highlights the key transport challenges and opportunities in the North East region along with the transport infrastructure that needs to be delivered within the short, medium and longer term.  This is with a view to connecting people to good employment opportunities, generating economic growth, whilst enabling the region and its people to move to greener more sustainable ways of travel.

1.3 A parallel process of Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) was undertaken alongside the development of the NETP.  ISA is a mechanism for assessing and communicating the likely effects of an emerging plan, and reasonable alternatives, with a view to achieving sustainable development.  The integrated assessment has incorporated Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA), Health Impact Assessment (HIA), and a Rural Proofing process.  A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) has also been undertaken and reported on separately to the ISA.

## ISA explained

1.4 ISA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the environmental and social impacts of an emerging plan and potential alternatives.  The aim of ISA being to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating potential negative effects as well as maximising opportunities for positive effects.  Through this approach, the ISA seeks to maximise the NETP's contribution to sustainable development.

1.5 The ISA has been undertaken to address the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004), as well as duties under the Equality Act 2010.  The ISA fulfils the requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)[1] and discharges the duties for Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)[2] and Health Impact Assessment (HIA).  It also enables issues relating to rural areas to be effectively considered through a rural proofing exercise.

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[1] As set out by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004
[2] As public sector organisations, the North Tyne Combined Authority and the North East Combined Authority have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 and the associated Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to ensure that the objectives and policy options within the NETP eliminate unlawful discrimination (direct and indirect), as well as advancing equality of opportunity.

# The ISA Adoption Statement

1.6     Regulation 16 of the SEA Regulations sets out the post-adoption procedures for the ISA, and requires that, as soon as reasonably practicable after the adoption of the plan for which the ISA has been carried out, the planning authority must make a copy of the plan publicly available alongside a copy of the ISA Report and an ISA 'adoption statement', and inform the public and consultation bodies about the availability of these documents.  The consultation bodies are Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency.

1.7     An ISA Adoption Statement should include the following.

- An overview of the process which has been undertaken for the ISA to date;

- How the ISA has informed and influenced the development of the NETP (including through the consideration of reasonable alternatives);

- The consultation that has been undertaken as part of the ISA process; and

- Proposed monitoring processes.

1.8     Considering these requirements in turn, the ISA Adoption Statement is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 sets out an overview of the process undertaken to date and how the ISA process has informed and influenced the development of the NETP to date;

- Chapter 3 describes how consultation responses have been taken into account through the NETP/ ISA process; and

- Chapter 4 presents a monitoring programme for the NETP and ISA.

# 2. How the ISA process has informed and influenced the development of the NETP

## Consultation on the scope of the ISA

2.1    The procedures of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004) require consultation with Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the ISA Report.  As such, these authorities were consulted on ISA Scoping Report in April 2020.

2.2    The scoping information (including the evidence base for the ISA) was subsequently updated to reflect comments received and presented as an appendix to both the ISA Report (November 2020) and the ISA Report Update (March 2021).

## Appraisal of reasonable alternatives for the NETP

2.3    A key part of the assessment process has been the assessment of 'reasonable alternatives' for the NETP.  Following on from scoping, the ISA framework was used to assess options under consideration in the development of the NETP.

2.4    A central role of appraising reasonable alternatives is to help identify the relative sustainability merits of different approaches to delivering enhanced transport provision in the region.  In recognition of the diversity of the region, the approach to the appraisal of reasonable alternatives subdivided the North East region into a number of distinct geographical areas.

2.5    The six areas were as follows:

- **Tyne and Wear**: This area covers the main Tyne and Wear conurbation, encompassing much of the local authority areas of Newcastle city, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Sunderland and Gateshead.

- **City of Durham**: This area covers the city of Durham and its surrounding area.

- **Post-industrial communities**: This area incorporates the former coal-mining and steel working areas in the region. This includes the area around Consett, Stanley and Catchgate; the area around Peterlee, Easington, Shotton Colliery and Blackhall Colliery; a corridor between Peterlee and Ferryhill; a corridor along the A182 encompassing South Hetton, Hetton-le-Hole, and Houghton-le-Spring; and the area around Shildon.

- **Market towns**: This area incorporates the larger market towns in the region, including Bishop Auckland, Barnard Castle, Alnwick, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Morpeth and Hexham.

- **Coastal areas**: This area includes coastal areas located to the south and north of the main Tyne and Wear conurbation. It incorporates: the coastal areas between South Shields and Roker, including Marsden, Whitburn and Seaburn; Hendon to Seaham; and Blyth to Amble.

- **Rural areas**: This covers the rural areas of the region, including the rural parts of Northumberland and County Durham. It includes the parts of the region within the Northumberland National Park and the two AONBs (Northumberland Coast AONB and North Pennines AONB).

2.6 For each of these areas, options were identified and subsequently appraised. For all areas a 'do minimum' option was described which would be applied in all circumstances, together with one or more options for additional levels of intervention over and above the do minimum. The options were designed to reflect the key issues facing that area, and the different approaches that could be taken to intervention/ investment in transport infrastructure and management stages.

2.7 The findings of this work were fed back to the Transport North East Strategy Unit to aid decision-making in relation to the preferred options for the draft NETP. This approach also helped ensure that clear reasons could be identified by the Transport North East Strategy Unit for progressing the preferred options and rejecting alternative options.

# Appraisal of the draft NETP

2.8 The draft NETP was then assessed against the ISA framework of objectives. The assessment examined the potential effects of each of the seven work programmes put forward in the draft NETP and provides further assessment in relation to the potential 'in-combination' effects of the different work programmes together. Alongside the assessment findings, a series of mitigation and enhancement measures were also proposed. These were designed to offset the potential significant adverse effects identified and maximise the opportunities for enhancements potentially available through implementation of the NETP. The findings of this assessment, alongside the assessment of reasonable alternatives, were subsequently reported on through the ISA Report (November 2020).

# Consultation on the draft NETP

2.9 The draft NETP and ISA Report were subsequently released for consultation in November 2020. The accompanying ISA Report sought to:

- Identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of the NETP and alternatives; and

- Provide an opportunity for statutory consultees, interested parties and the public to offer views on any aspect of the ISA process which had been carried out to date.

2.10 The ISA Report contained:

- An outline of the contents and main objectives of the NETP and its relationship with other relevant plans, policies and programmes;

- Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and key sustainability issues;

- The ISA framework of objectives and assessment questions against which the NETP had been assessed;

- The appraisal of alternative approaches for the NETP;

- The likely significant effects of the NETP (in relation to the scope of the ISA);

- The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects as a result of the NETP; and

- The next steps for the NETP and accompanying ISA process.

# Updates to the NETP and ISA following consultation

2.11 Following consultation on the draft NETP and accompanying ISA Report, updates were made to the NETP prior to adoption. As part of an iterative process, the ISA Report Update was subsequently prepared in March 2021.

2.12 Following the same structure as the previous report, the update sought to take account of the changes and presents an appraisal of the final NETP for adoption.

2.13 A summary of the key significant effects identified, and proposed mitigation and enhancement measures, is presented below by ISA theme.[3]

## Table 2.1: Summary of likely significant effects and recommendations/ proposed mitigation

**Biodiversity**

| Likely significant effect | Effect dimensions | Recommendations, mitigation |
|---|---|---|
| Impacts on biodiversity from land take, habitat loss and fragmentation and disturbance from road, rail and public transport schemes proposed through the NETP. | Direct, short, medium and long-term, permanent and negative. | Potential impacts on habitats and species from landtake, loss of vegetation and trees and light pollution should be addressed through appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures. Opportunities to enhance green infrastructure networks along routes should be sought, supporting a premise of environmental net gain and delivering multifunctional benefits. This should be informed at the project level by a robust Environmental Impact Assessment[4] process. |
| Potential impacts on European designated biodiversity sites from new transport infrastructure schemes. | Direct and indirect, short, medium and long-term, permanent and negative. | Apply the recommendations of the Habitats Regulations Assessment process undertaken alongside the NETP. |
| Impacts on biodiversity from increased noise, light and air pollution linked to traffic increases resulting from the release of induced demand from new road schemes. | Indirect, medium and long-term, permanent and negative. | Ensure benefits of road improvements are 'locked in' through provision of complementary public transport and walking and cycling measures which limit road traffic increases. Opportunities for delivering this provision on the existing network should be considered first by Transport North East. |

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[3] ISA themes were established through scoping.
[4] Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a process of evaluating the likely environmental impacts of a proposed project or development. It is undertaken in association with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

| Impacts on internationally and nationally designated sites present on the coast from enhancements to the resilience of coastal transport infrastructure. | Direct, short, medium and long-term, permanent and negative. | Biodiversity enhancements should be facilitated alongside network improvements. Key habitats should be retained and the integrity of ecological linkages should be secured. Programmes of works should be developed to help ensure an increased proportion of the SSSIs and other important designated sites present locally are brought into favourable condition. |
| Impacts of new lighting and signage on nocturnal species. | Direct short and medium term effects, temporary and negative. | New lighting and signage should be designed to minimise impacts on nocturnal species. This should be informed by appropriate ecology surveys. |

**Water and Soil Resources**

| *Likely significant effect* | *Effect dimensions* | *Recommendations, mitigation* |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Improved management of surface water run off through enhanced maintenance of the road network and the delivery of sustainable drainage schemes alongside new transport infrastructure. | Direct, short, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | New infrastructure should be supported by appropriate drainage systems where necessary, to reduce surface water run-off and maintain or improve attenuation rates. Opportunities to improve strategic sustainable drainage solutions should be sought where possible. |
| Improvements to soil quality from improved management of surface water run off through enhanced maintenance of the road network and the delivery of sustainable drainage schemes alongside new transport infrastructure. | Direct, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | New infrastructure should be supported by appropriate drainage systems where necessary, to reduce surface water run-off and maintain or improve attenuation rates. Opportunities to improve strategic sustainable drainage solutions should be sought where possible. |

**Historic Environment**

| *Likely significant effect* | *Effect dimensions* | *Recommendations, mitigation* |
| --- | --- | --- |
| The delivery of new transport infrastructure schemes has the potential to lead to significant impacts on the key assets (including designated and non-designated features and areas) of historic environment interest located in the vicinity of the key routes and areas targeted for interventions. | Direct and indirect, short, medium and long term, permanent and negative. | Transport infrastructure schemes should be accompanied by a comprehensive package of avoidance and mitigation measures, as well as, where possible, enhancement measures. This should be informed at the project level by a robust EIA process. New infrastructure should be designed to facilitate enhancements to the fabric and setting of the historic environment. It should also seek to maximise opportunities for enhancing access to and understanding of the historic environment. |
| Enhancement to the fabric and setting of the historic environment through improved maintenance regimes. | Direct, short, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | Maintenance regimes should seek to facilitate enhancements to the fabric and setting of designated and undesignated features and areas of historic environment interest. |
| Enhanced accessibility to, and additional opportunities for enjoyment of the North East's heritage resource. | Direct, short, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | None proposed. |

## Landscape

| Likely significant effect | Effect dimensions | Recommendations, mitigation |
|---|---|---|
| The delivery of new transport infrastructure schemes (in particular, road schemes) has the potential to lead to significant impacts on landscape and townscape character. | Direct and indirect, short, medium and long term, permanent and negative. | Transport infrastructure schemes should be accompanied by a comprehensive package of avoidance and mitigation measures, as well, where possible, enhancement measures. This should be informed at the project level by a robust EIA process. New infrastructure should be designed to limit impacts on landscape and townscape character and facilitate enhancements. |
| Enhancement to landscape and townscape character through improved maintenance regimes. | Direct, short, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | Maintenance regimes should seek to facilitate enhancements to the quality of the public realm and local distinctiveness. |
| Enhanced accessibility to, and additional opportunities for enjoyment of the North East's landscape/townscape resource, including associated with valued landscapes and townscapes. | Direct, short, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | None proposed. |

## Air Quality and Noise

| Likely significant effect | Effect dimensions | Recommendations, mitigation |
|---|---|---|
| Air quality enhancements at key 'pinchpoints' on the network which have existing air quality issues. | Direct and indirect, short, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | None proposed. |
| Impacts from road schemes on air and noise quality over a wider area, including through the stimulation of induced demand. | Direct and indirect, medium and long term, permanent and negative. | Initiation of complementary measures alongside road enhancements to limit increases in traffic flows resulting from a release of induced demand. |
| Support for electric vehicles and cleaner fuels, with benefits for air and noise quality. | Indirect, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | None proposed. |

## Climate Change and Flood Risk

| Likely significant effect | Effect dimensions | Recommendations, mitigation |
|---|---|---|
| Recognition of declarations of climate emergencies across the North East through limitation of greenhouse gas emissions from transport, including through the stimulation of modal shift from the private car towards public transport and active travel, and enhanced connectivity and smart travel. | Direct and indirect, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | None proposed. |
| Promotion of electric vehicle use (including through the delivery of a Zero Emissions Vehicle Policy and Strategy), supporting the decarbonisation of the transport network. | Direct and indirect, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | None proposed. |

| Impacts on greenhouse gas emissions through the release of induced demand from new road schemes. | Direct and indirect, medium and long term, permanent and negative. | Initiation of complementary measures alongside road enhancements to limit increases in traffic flows resulting from a release of induced demand.<br>Identify, assess and integrate measures to further reduce carbon through on or off-site offsetting or sequestration. |
| Increased resilience of the transport network to the likely effects of climate change. | Direct, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | None proposed. |

### Population

| Likely significant effect | Effect dimensions | Recommendations, mitigation |
|---|---|---|
| Improved accessibility to services, facilities and employment opportunities. | Direct and indirect, short, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | None proposed. |
| Support for a reduction in deprivation from accessibility, congestion and severance issues, and elements relating to social exclusion. | Direct and indirect, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | None proposed. |
| Enhanced economic opportunities through improved connections with the strategic and local transport network and key employment and growth areas. | Indirect, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | None proposed. |
| Support for the visitor economy from enhancements in transport infrastructure. | Direct and indirect, short, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | None proposed. |
| Enhancements to the quality of the neighbourhoods through a reduction of the impact of traffic and congestion. | Direct and indirect, short, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | None proposed. |
| Enhanced maintenance of the road network, supporting its resilience, with associated benefits for the quality of life of residents. | Direct, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | None proposed. |

### Human Health

| Likely significant effect | Effect dimensions | Recommendations, mitigation |
|---|---|---|
| Improved accessibility to health services and leisure and recreational facilities. | Direct and indirect, short, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | None proposed. |
| Facilitation of healthier lifestyles through the encouragement of active modes of travel. | Direct and indirect, short, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | None proposed. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Support for a reduction in deprivation, which is one of the key contributors to poor health and wellbeing in the region. | Direct and indirect, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | None proposed. |
| Enhancements to the quality of the neighbourhoods through a reduction of the impact of traffic and congestion. | Direct and indirect, short, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | None proposed. |
| Improvements to road safety. | Direct and indirect, short, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | None proposed. |
| Benefits for health and wellbeing from air and noise quality enhancements at key 'pinchpoints' on the network. | Direct and indirect, short, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | None proposed. |
| Impacts on health and wellbeing from road schemes linked to increased traffic flows, including from the stimulation of induced demand over a wider area. | Direct and indirect, medium and long term, permanent and negative. | Design in measures to improve mobility by walking and cycling, limit severance and initiate green infrastructure enhancements. |

**Equalities**

| *Likely significant effect* | *Effect dimensions* | *Recommendations, mitigation* |
|---|---|---|
| Improved accessibility for groups with protected characteristics via a range of transport modes. | Direct and indirect, short, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | None proposed. |
| Reduction of impacts from the transport network on those groups with protected characteristics, including from severance, and contributions to a poor-quality public realm. | Direct and indirect, short, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | None proposed. |
| Improvements to road safety. | Direct and indirect, short, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | None proposed. |
| Impacts on groups with protected characteristics from effects of road schemes on the quality of the public realm and increased severance. | Direct and indirect, medium and long term, permanent and negative. | Incorporate measures within scheme design to improve mobility, limit severance and initiate green infrastructure enhancements. |

**Rurality**

| *Likely significant effect* | *Effect dimensions* | *Recommendations, mitigation* |
|---|---|---|
| Enhanced accessibility to the services, facilities and amenities located in the urban areas of the North East from rural areas by all modes of transport. | Direct and indirect, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | None proposed. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Improvements to rural areas' vitality through enhanced connections to key services, facilities and economic and employment opportunities. | Indirect, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | None proposed. |
| Support for the visitor economy from enhancements in transport infrastructure. | Direct and indirect, short, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | None proposed. |
| Enhanced maintenance of the road network in rural areas, supporting its resilience. | Direct, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | None proposed. |
| Limitation of the impacts of transport movements associated with timber and quarrying on rural areas. | Direct and indirect, short, medium and long term, permanent and positive. | None proposed. |

# 3. Consultation responses and how they have been taken into consideration

## Consultation responses received on the ISA

3.1   The procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004) require that the ISA Adoption Statement includes a description of how the opinions expressed by the public and consultation bodies during consultation on the NETP and ISA Report have been taken into consideration.

## Scoping consultation

3.2   As discussed in Chapter 2, Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency were consulted on an ISA Scoping Report in April 2020. The scoping information was subsequently updated to reflect comments received and presented as an appendix to both the ISA Report (November 2020) and the ISA Report Update (March 2021).

3.3   The scoping comments received and how they were considered are detailed in **Table 3.1** below.

**Table 3.1: Scoping consultation responses**

| Consultation response | How the response was considered and addressed |
|---|---|
| **Natural England**<br>*Response received via email on 2nd June 2020 from Michael Miller: Lead Sustainable Development Advisor, Northumbria Team* | |
| Natural England welcomes the comprehensive approach to the Scoping report and notes specific attention to:<br><br>• Designated and Protected sites, including comprehensive identification of the same.<br>• Biodiversity Strategy and policy Context<br>• Water and Soils Resource Policy context<br>• Landscape Policy Context<br>• Air Quality and Noise Policy Context<br>• Habitats and Species protection, conservation and enhancement. | Comment noted. |
| We welcome the detailed research approach to the above assessment headings and advocate the flexibility within the report to allow changes should they become necessary. | Comment noted. |
| Natural England consider the scoping report covers all necessary requirements for the purposes of this report. | Comment noted. |

| Consultation response | How the response was considered and addressed |
|---|---|
| **Historic England** | |
| *Response received via email on 1st June 2020 from Henry Cumbers: Principal Adviser, Historic Environment Planning Adviser (North East and Yorkshire)* | |
| Page 14, Section 2.18: Historic assets across the region, including two UNESCO assets and a National Park. <br><br> This bullet point would benefit from revision, replacing the word historic assets with heritage assets as a more universally recognised term. Also UNESCO World Heritage Sites in place of UNESCO assets and National Parks are landscape designations rather than heritage designations and would therefore benefit from being listed separately. | Information has been updated to reflect comment. |
| In respect of the historic environment and the planning system, the three key European legislative conventions are the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, The Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe, The European Convention on the Protection of Archaeological Heritage. The Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society is primarily related to heritage and human rights and democracy. It promotes a wider understanding of heritage and its relationship to communities and society, and therefore has less of a role in relation to transport policy. | Information has been updated to reflect comment. |
| It is considered that the Culture White Paper is of limited relevance to the North East Transport Plan. | Reference to White Paper has been removed as suggested. |
| 3.50-3.51: Whilst this paragraph contains key messages from the NPPF relating to the historic environment, it also include elements concerning landscape and the natural environment, given the specific focus on the historic environment it may be advisable to amend this paragraph to focus specifically on the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. | Paragraph has been amended to focus specifically on the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. |
| We have it noted that there are 70 conservation areas within Northumberland rather than 71. | This information has been updated. |
| The National Heritage List for England identifies the following number of entries for listed buildings for the authorities comprising the NETP area: <br> • County Durham: 3,108 <br> • North Tyneside: 225 <br> • Gateshead: 248 <br> • South Tyneside: 195 <br> • Northumberland: 5614 <br> • Newcastle upon Tyne: 774 <br> • Sunderland: 375 | This information has been updated. |
| In providing an explanation of scheduling, it should be stated that it is the designation used for sites of an archaeological character of national importance. Current legislation is provided by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. | Description of scheduling has been revised. |

| Consultation response | How the response was considered and addressed |
|---|---|
| The National Heritage List for England identifies the following number of entries for scheduled monuments for the authorities comprising the NETP area:<br>• County Durham: 233<br>• North Tyneside: 8<br>• Gateshead: 16<br>• South Tyneside: 5<br>• Northumberland: 975<br>• Newcastle upon Tyne: 42<br>• Sunderland: 10 | Updated with up-to-date information on scheduled monuments. |
| The list identifies a number of Registered Parks and Gardens that are not within the North East Region, which include…(*list supplied*) | References to these Registered Parks and Gardens have been removed. |
| There are 47 registered battlefields in England. | Information updated. |
| The Heritage at Risk Register contains assets other than listed buildings.<br>The number of assets on 2019 list are as follows:<br>• County Durham: 97<br>• Gateshead: 8<br>• Newcastle upon Tyne: 16<br>• North Tyneside: 1<br>• South Tyneside: 6<br>• Sunderland: 13 | Comment noted. Information on assets at risk has been updated. |
| It would be worth stating that transport infrastructure can often be an important historic asset in its own right | Key issues for historic environment have been updated to reflect comment. |
| Proposed ISA objectives and assessment questions: To be consistent with the NPPF, conserve is preferred over preserve as this acknowledges managed change within the historic environment. | Terminology updated. |
| Assessment questions: Whilst acknowledging the range of assets identified under the questions of the first objective, a further question should also be provided in relation to Registered Parks and Gardens. | Additional question added: "Conserve and enhance the significance of Registered Parks and Gardens". |
| Context review: In addition to legislation, plans programmes and strategies identified at a national level we would advise inclusion of Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979<br>which together form the two primary pieces of legislation<br>concerning the historic environment within the UK. | This has now been acknowledged. |
| Context review: We would advise including both the World Heritage Site Management Plans for Durham Castle and Cathedral 2017-2023 and Hadrian's Wall Management Plan 2015-2019. | The Management Plans have been added to the policy context review. |

**Environment Agency**

| **Consultation response** | **How the response was considered and addressed** |
|---|---|
| *Response received via email on 15th June 2020 from Lawry Cook Economic Development Specialist* | |
| I really appreciated the amount of detail the scoping report went in to and the level information provided for aspects surrounding rural proofing, biodiversity, and climate change and flood risk. | Comment noted. |
| A key point within the Proposed ISA Framework which needs to remain is around utilising green infrastructure to increase habitat connectivity across the transport network. As the report states, there is a risk of habitat degradation during transport development, therefore to mitigate that, infrastructure that minimises this is crucial. It is worth referencing that green/blue infrastructure has many co-benefits associated with it that can be attached to other aspects of the proposed framework – water and soil resources, climate change mitigation and flood resilience, air quality and health. It can also be linked back to economic growth and prosperity across the region with more GDP generated from tourism, more resilient businesses and a better state of health and wellbeing. I certainly think there could be a stronger section on green infrastructure with the co-benefits highlighted above. | Comment noted. These elements relating to green and blue infrastructure have been considered through the assessment (including assessment of reasonable alternatives and the draft plan). |
| The point within the proposed framework on reducing the need to travel is interesting. I suppose the main question and I would have on this is, is it time to diversify transport plans to incorporate other infrastructure such as digital? This feeds into the section on rural proofing, with connectivity being the main issue associated with reduced economic growth in rural areas. There could even be scope for increased rural connectivity in the energy sector to reduce the issues associated with fuel poverty etc. | Digital connectivity has been considered through the assessment, including through options considered as reasonable alternatives for rural areas in the region. |
| I am really eager to hear about how emissions are not increased from new transport infrastructure, especially with emissions associated from constructing these new assets, on top of those from using them. Is there any scope to consider offsetting emissions? This could be linked to the prospect of Biodiversity Net Gain – create a new habitat that enhances the biodiversity and sequesters the carbon from the development. Again this sort of work could be linked to other aspects of the plan – i.e. flood resilience through green infrastructure. | Elements relating to emissions and possibilities for Biodiversity Net Gain have been considered throughout the appraisal. |
| Again, really positive points throughout the report and I am excited to see what opportunities this presents for environmental improvements and economic growth across the North East. | Comment noted. |
| **Northumberland National Park Authority** *Response received via email on 2nd June 2020 from Duncan Wise, Visitor Development and Marketing Manager* | |
| The North East Transport Plan – Introduction Emergent Challenges and opportunities from the Covid 19 pandemic. Bullet Point should be modified: | Comment fed back to NETP development team |

| Consultation response | How the response was considered and addressed |
|---|---|
| "Potential reduction in international tourism and increase in domestic tourism" | |
| Links with other plans and programmes: Additional information should be included on the Northumberland National Park Local Plan. | Provisions of new National Park Local Plan have been considered in the assessment. However, unlike the Scoping Report, detailed information on each authority's Local Plan has not been included in the ISA Report to limit the size of the report. |
| We are pleased to see reference to the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan in Para 3.58, the NNPA Management Plan in Para 3.59, and a summary of the Aims of the Management Plan in Para 3.60. | Comment noted. |
| Biodiversity: Generally, we feel that you have covered all the statutory sites and mentioned priority habitats and species in the National Park. We welcome reference in paragraph 4.39 to Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, but believe it would be appropriate to also highlight the requirements of Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 within Chapter 4 of the ISA. However, there is no mention of the Government's intention to improve the planning system in England in order to protect the environment (biodiversity net gain) and build places to live and work. This could be referred to and emphasised more in Para 4.45. At a practical level, it would be good to see how management of the transport network can positively improve things for biodiversity. Currently, the need for tidiness is often prioritised over the need to enhance biodiversity e.g. cutting of road verges when they are flowering and removing trees from railway line corridors. We suggest a modification to Para 4.51 to reflect the opportunities to improve bio-diversity through the careful management of these transport corridors. | Comments noted. Opportunities for Biodiversity Net Gain and Government's intention to increase the role of Net Gain have been recognised through the appraisal, including the appraisal of reasonable alternatives and the draft plan. Additional elements with regard to biodiversity enhancements have also been considered through the assessment. |
| Water and Soil Resources: Para 5.20 – Actions to improve bio-diversity through the careful management of the transport corridors (roads and rail) would also contribute to slowing water run-off. | Comment noted and considered through ISA process. |
| There is no recognition that the National Park Authority is an independent Local Authority (single-purpose). See our comments on Para 3.25 | Comment noted. |
| Para 6.6 - Threats to Hadrian's Wall identifies "visitors and tourism". However, we also recognise that tourism brings opportunities, so there is a need for balance here. As Hadrian's Wall is a linear monument that passes through urban, peri-urban and rural areas, there are a number of concerns facing the monument from inappropriate development, agriculture and forestry. | Comment noted and considered through ISA process. |
| We suggest the ISA makes a more formal reference to the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site Management Plan. | Reference included. |

| Consultation response | How the response was considered and addressed |
|---|---|
| Para 6.14 –We suggest that you list the 71 Conservation Areas in Northumberland. | Conservation areas have been mapped. Conservation area will be considered as appropriate through the appraisal. |
| Para 6.25 - Heritage at Risk – Only Listed Buildings are mentioned. Why aren't Scheduled Monuments and historic places such as Registered Parks or Battlefields broken down by each Authority? | Updates to information recognise that Heritage at Risk incorporates a wider range of designations. |
| After Para 6.25 - The plan needs to take account of undesignated heritage assets as a material consideration in the planning process and vulnerable to harm from inappropriate development including harm to their settings. This undesignated heritage accounts for some 90% of the heritage resource. Greater attention to Grade II buildings also needs to be made, including local heritage assets. | The importance of the fabric and setting of undesignated heritage assets has been recognised throughout the ISA process. |
| Para 6.33 – We welcome the inclusion of the positive contribution of careful and well planned transport infrastructure can have on the historic environment, would like to see how the historic environment makes a positive contribution to carefully planned transport infrastructure which avoids harm and contributes to making more attractive places to live and work. | Comment noted. Contribution of transport to the fabric and setting of the historic environment (and vice versa) has been considered throughout the ISA process. |
| Key Sustainability Issues - A key question for inclusion should be "do the options/proposals take full account of the historic environment, enabling informed, constructive conservation grounded upon sound principles and values, including the contribution the historic environment makes to society, economy and people's health and wellbeing?" | These elements have been considered throughout the ISA process. |
| Para 7.1 – Summary of Current Baseline. We are pleased to see the National Park's purposes and duty are explained here. | Comment noted. |
| Para 7.4 – We suggest a modification to list the National Park's special qualities, as outlined in its Management Plan (2016 – 2021). | Section discussing the special qualities has been updated as suggested. |
| A special quality associated with the sense of tranquillity here in Northumberland National Park is its pristine dark skies, due to the lack of light-pollution. The CPRE Night Blight Report (2016), stated that "Northumberland comes out top with 72% of its skies in the darkest category " Other than a brief mention in Para 7.69 and Para 7.73, there is no indication of their significance, both to the quality of life and wellbeing of residents, and to wildlife, as well as the fact that they contribute to the region's economy with the resultant development of astro-tourism in the last 12 years; all of which could be threatened by the proliferation of badly designed and installed lighting infrastructure associated with transport developments such as street lighting and illuminated highway signs. In 2013, an area of 1400 Km$^2$ comprising the whole of Northumberland National Park and 70% of the adjacent Kielder Water | Elements highlighted by comment noted. Potential impacts on tranquillity and light pollution have been assessed through the ISA process. |

| Consultation response | How the response was considered and addressed |
|---|---|
| & Forest Park was designated England's first (and at the time) Europe's largest International Dark Sky Park (aka Northumberland International Dark Sky Park), obliging both the Northumberland County Council and the National Park Authority respectively to monitor and implement measures to minimise light pollution by adhering to the joint Exterior Lighting Master Plan. Government Guidance in the form of Planning Practice Guidance has recently been updated (November 2019) on lighting and advises how the planning system should consider light pollution. Government planning policy is set out in the NPPF (para 180). | |
| Para 7.17 - Areas of Tranquillity: We suggest you either amend this or add another paragraph to specifically reference the impact of large vehicles such as timber haulage upon the fabric of our rural roads, many of which were not constructed to a specification suited to modern timber haulage vehicles, and the tranquillity of associated villages and hamlets. There is no reference to the Forestry and Timber Industry's North East Timber Transport Forum and their Agreed Routes map. | Additional key issue included.<br><br>Comment fed back to NETP development team |
| After Para 10.14: Northumberland National Park has an identified need of 160 dwellings over their 20-year planning period 2017-2037, an average of 8 per annum. The National Park's need is not discounted from the figures for the whole of Northumberland (see Para 10.14), used by Northumberland County Council. | Information for Northumberland National Park has been included alongside housing needs for other Local Planning Authorities in the region. |
| 13.29 You have missed the Off-grid electricity issue. - It may well be worth mentioning here that rural Northumberland has the largest off-grid electricity community anywhere in the Country. On site electricity generation can cost up to 3 times as much as that obtained by the local distribution network so contributes towards fuel poverty. Additionally, off-grid communities are likely to miss out on initiatives focused on decarbonising transportation. | Issue now acknowledged in key issues. |

# Consultation on the draft NETP and ISA Report

3.4 Following scoping consultation, the ISA Report was subsequently prepared and released for consultation alongside the draft NETP in November 2020. This sought the views of the statutory consultees, stakeholders, interested parties and the public.

3.5 Around 3,400 responses were received during consultation on the draft NETP and accompanying ISA Report. These have been analysed in the NETP Consultation Feedback Document, which is available on the NETP website.[5] This report describes the key consultation processes undertaken for the NETP and ISA and summarises the key insights raised by responses and how they have been addressed.

3.6 In addition, whilst no comments were received on the ISA from groups with protected characteristics, a number of comments were received on the NETP itself from stakeholders representing these groups. These comments were considered when making updates to the NETP following consultation on the draft plan.

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[5] The Consultation Feedback Document can be accessed here: https://www.transportnortheast.gov.uk/transportplan/

# 4. Monitoring

## Measures concerning monitoring

4.1    Working within the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004), there is a requirement for the 'responsible authority' to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan, "*with the purpose of identifying unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and being able to undertake appropriate remedial action*".  To address this, the Regulations state that the ISA Adoption Statement should set out the "*measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan*".

4.2    The purpose of monitoring is to measure the significant sustainability effects of a plan, as well as to measure success against the plan's objectives. This will enable appropriate interventions to be undertaken if monitoring highlights negative trends relating to the relevant elements.

4.3    It is therefore beneficial if the monitoring strategy builds on monitoring systems which are already in place. To this end, many of the indicators of progress chosen for the ISA reflects data that is already being routinely collected by the partner authorities of Transport North East.

4.4    Transport North East intends to monitor and evaluate the performance of their Key Performance Indicators and use the data to enable them to adjust their approach if necessary.  The indicators proposed for the ISA will therefore be integrated into the plan monitoring approach and will apply to schemes delivered through this programme.  Performance will be reported to the Joint Transport Committee at key points and reported on the Transport North east website

4.5    **Table 4.1** therefore outlines a monitoring programme for measuring the NETP's implementation.  It builds upon Table 2.1, paying particular attention to the areas where the ISA has identified potential significant effects and also suggesting where monitoring is required to help ensure that the benefits of the NETP are achieved through implementation.

## Table 4.1: Proposed ISA monitoring programme for the NETP

| Area to be monitored | Indicator | Data source | Frequency of monitoring |
|---|---|---|---|
| Loss of Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat | Hectares of land supporting Priority Habitat lost through new transport infrastructure. | Partner local authorities calculated through individual scheme business cases | Annual |
| Impacts on landscape character and historic environment | Number of transport infrastructure proposals which are informed by detailed assessment and/or characterisation studies (including EIAs). | Partner local authorities through individual scheme business cases | Annual |
| Effect of NETP proposals on air quality | Change in median roadside nitrogen dioxide levels, | DEFRA | Annual |
| Effect of transport infrastructure on greenhouse gas emissions | Carbon footprint of the North East region in relation to transport. | National Statistics: UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions[6] | Annual |
| Electric vehicle use | Percentage of new cars in the North East registered with electric plug-in capabilities. | DVLA | Annual |
| Realisation of opportunities to increase resilience to the effects of climate change. | Number of transport infrastructure proposals incorporating new green infrastructure provision. | Partner local authorities through individual scheme business cases | Annual |
| Road safety | Number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) on roads in the North East. | North East Traffic & Accident Data Unit | Annual |
| Car use in rural areas | Proportion of people travelling to work from rural areas by public transport or walking and cycling. | National Travel Survey statistics | Annual |

[6] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2018

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