Dartmoor Local Plan Review: Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Appendix IV: SA of Spatial Strategy Options

Options for Spatial Strategy	
1	Current Two-Tier approach with 8 Local Centres; 34 Rural Settlements; everywhere else defined as Open Countryside – based on current services & facilities
2	Two-Tier approach based more upon size, overall role, & capacity/sensitivity to growth, as well as an element of settlement services & facilities
3	As Option 2 but splitting into Three Tiers – Local Centres, Rural Settlements, and Villages & Hamlets, plus the remaining Open Countryside
4	A Spatial or Clustered approach recognising 10 clusters: East Dartmoor 1 & 2; South East Dartmoor; South West Dartmoor; Teign Valley; Bovey Valley; Upper Teign; North East Dartmoor; West Dartmoor; High Moor

Key: Categories of Significance		
Symbol	**Meaning**	**Sustainability Effect**
- -	Major Negative	Problematical and improbable because of known sustainability issues; mitigation likely to be difficult and/or expensive
-	Minor negative	Potential sustainability issues: mitigation and/or negotiation possible
+	Minor positive	No sustainability constraints and development acceptable
++	Major Positive	Development encouraged as would resolve existing sustainability problem
?	Uncertain	Uncertain or Unknown Effects
0	Neutral	Neutral effect
N/A	Not Applicable	
Some SA Objectives will have split symbol boxes: SA 1: First symbol relates to landscape, second symbol relates to settlement character; SA 3 first symbol relates to biodiversity, second to Green Infrastructure; SA 5: First symbol relates to soil, second symbol relates to minerals; SA 6 first water resources, second water quality; SA 11: First symbol relates to open space, second symbol relates to green infrastructure.		

		Options for Spatial Strategy			
Sustainability Objective	**Assessment of Effects** **Nature of the likely sustainability effect (including positive/negative, short - medium term (5-10 years)/long term (10 - 20 years plus), permanent/temporary, secondary, cumulative and synergistic); Uncertainty**	**1. Current Two Tier**	**2. Size, Character with Two Tiers**	**3. Size, Character with Three Tiers**	**4. Spatial or Clustered**
1. To conserve and enhance the **landscape and settlement character** of Dartmoor National Park	The character, quality and protection of the landscape of the Dartmoor National Park(DNP) is fundamental to its designation and statutory purposes; it is designated for its natural landscape, wildlife and historical features[1]. Dartmoor NP is almost entirely located within the Dartmoor National Character Area[2] (NCA), with some of the periphery of the National Park located in adjacent NCAs, including the South Devon NCA and The Culm NCA. It is characterised by extensive upland moorland, which is overlaid with peat deposits and supports internationally important blanket bogs. The peat and bogs are important for carbon storage, and for absorbing and releasing large amounts of water. The National Park is considered to have a high level of tranquillity, and dark night skies[3], although the area is not currently designated as a Dark Sky Reserve. Option 1 the current Two-Tier approach focuses development in the largest settlements and protects open countryside from unchecked growth indicating minor positive effects for landscape and settlement character that are likely to be cumulative.	+	++?	++	+?

1 http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk/
2 Natural England (2014) Dartmoor National Character Area Profile
3 Ibid.

	Options 2 & 3 build upon the approach in Option 1 by also considering the relative size and sensitivity of different settlements thus better recognising needs and constraints. These options still focus development in the largest settlements and protect open countryside from unchecked growth but seek to more accurately reflect capacity and sensitivity of settlements such that there could be the potential for more positive effects on landscape and settlement character, but uncertain. Options 2 & 3 both include consideration of relative landscape sensitivity and designations on surrounding land, providing mitigation measures, thus indicating major positive effects – more certainty for Option 3 that recognises 3 levels of settlement in a more refined analysis. Option 4 offers a different approach to the other 3 options by grouping settlements geographically rather than considering them individually. It suggests 10 clusters, based mostly around the larger settlements, together with the surrounding villages and rural hinterland. This approach should still protect the open countryside from unchecked growth indicating minor positive effects for landscape and settlement character but with some uncertainty as the consideration of needs and constraints of different settlements is not clearly addressed (as in Options 2 & 3).								
2. To conserve & enhance the character, safety & sustainability, of the **built environment** by raising the **quality** of design and construction	All four options have the potential to support sustainable high-quality design and energy efficiency in accordance with emerging draft DNPA Policies and the Design Guidance – with minor positive effects.	+		+		+		+	
3. To protect, enhance and manage	Within Dartmoor National Park there are three European designated Special Areas of Conservation (SACs); Dartmoor SAC, South Dartmoor Woods SAC and South Hams SAC[4]. There are several national biodiversity designations, with around 28 % of the	0?	?	0	+?	0	+?	0?	?

[4] Defra Magic Map (accessed 2017)

biodiversity & geodiversity for net gain	area as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)s[5] (small number designated for geological features) and four National Nature Reserves (NNRs)[6]. The area is also important for locally designated biodiversity sites, including 232 County Wildlife Sites (CWS)[7]. Moorland and woodland is the predominant habitat[8] with Priority Habitats including lowland heath, hay meadows and species rich grasslands, wet woodland and grass moor. There are also traditional orchards that still provide an important habitat in the local ecosystem[9]. Strategic Nature Areas (SNAs) identify areas for maintenance and potential expansion of Priority Habitat[10]. Key Wildlife Areas (KWAs) have been identified on Dartmoor to improve the accuracy of SNAs by combining local knowledge[11]. All four options protect open countryside from unchecked development growth indicating at least neutral effects for biodiversity and geodiversity. Option 1 with the focusing of development in the largest settlements indicates that any contributions to green infrastructure (GI) are likely to be focused on the larger settlements with potential positive effects – but there may then be less opportunities to promote GI through new development in the smaller settlements and throughout the wider area of the National Park, with some uncertainty of effects. A number of the larger settlements are located on the periphery of the National Park and are thus further away from the more sensitive biodiversity areas in the central areas of Dartmoor. Option 1 is therefore less likely to result in significant negative effects on biodiversity overall, although there is still the potential for negative effects, especially relating to the South Hams SAC which is in close proximity to several large settlements. Options 2 & 3 focuses development in the larger settlements with most capacity and directs development to settlements recognising capacity and sensitivity, thus				

[5] DNPA (2017) State of the Park Report
[6] Defra Magic Map (accessed 2017)
[7] DNPA (2017) State of the Park Report
[8] Ibid.
[9] ibid
[10] http://www.biodiversitysouthwest.org.uk/nmap.html

[11] DNPA (2017) Natural Environment

	providing mitigation measures by better recognising biodiversity constraints – with at least neutral effects confirmed. There may be more opportunity to contribute to enhancement of GI throughout the area of the National Park with potential minor positive effects that would be synergistic and cumulative over the longer term, but uncertain at this stage of the assessment. It is assumed that Options 2 & 3 will avoid any significant effects on internationally protected biodiversity – by considering the sensitivity – and thus likely neutral effects. The HRA Screening Report (July 2017)[12] determined that seven European sites should be scoped into the HRA to be undertaken of the emerging Local Plan, including the South Hams SAC where there may be particular issues for individual and in-combination effects. Option 4 proposes 10 clusters based around the larger settlements. This could offer a strategic approach to GI, particularly if the clusters aligned with SNAs and KWAs, and providing linkages to reduce habitat fragmentation. However, the complexity of identifying and working with such clusters has been indicated by the Spatial Strategy Paper (October 2017) such that this option is unlikely to be deliverable and therefore, considerable uncertainty for any likely positive effects.				
4. To ensure the protection, conservation, and enhancement of the **historic environment** and its setting	One of the statutory purposes of the National Park is to conserve and enhance cultural heritage. Dartmoor has a very rich variety of designated heritage assets, including many Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Registered Parks/Gardens, Conservation Areas, & Premier Archaeological Landscapes[13]. The various communities that have lived and farmed on Dartmoor have not only shaped the physical landscape, but have imposed their cultural practises and traditions into the important cultural heritage for the National Park. All four options protect open countryside from unchecked development growth indicating at least neutral effects for the historic environment. Option 1 focusing development in the larger settlements is likely to have at least neutral effects, particularly as development management policies are prepared to ensure protection and enhancement of the historic environment.	**0**	**+?**	**+**	**0**

[12] http://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/996303/170814_DNPA-HRA-Initial-Screening-Report_Final.pdf
[13] DNPA (2017) State of the Park Report

	Options 2 & 3 propose more consideration of capacity and sensitivity of settlements to development, indicating confirmation of at least neutral effects and perhaps the potential for enhancement of the historic environment with positive effects, but uncertainty at this stage of strategic assessment. Options 2 & 3 both include consideration of the extent of the Conservation Area, Listed Buildings/Scheduled Monuments, and designations on surrounding land, providing mitigation measures, thus confirming the positive effects – more certainty for Option 3 that recognises 3 levels of settlement in a more refined analysis. It is uncertain how the approach in Option 4 based on 10 clusters of settlements would affect the historic environment but it is considered that at least neutral effects are likely through likely emerging development management policies.							
5. To protect and conserve **soil, land and minerals**	Although farming is prevalent in the National Park with 86% of Dartmoor declared as utilisable agricultural area[14], the poor soil type means there is no Grade 1/2 designated best and most versatile agricultural land. Most of the land is designated as Grade 5, least fertile, with some Grade 3 (sub-grade not known) on the edges of the National Park[15]. However, the soil resources are still important, and non-intensive grazing of sheep, ponies and cattle rely on soil for grazing; loss of soil resources can affect farming and also biodiversity. There are only few quarries within the Park and some Mineral Safeguarded Areas (MSAs), designated to prevent development from sterilising potentially economically viable mineral resources, near Ashburton, Trusham, Okehampton and Drewsteignton. All four options are likely to take land with loss of the soils resources, considered to be minor negative (Grade 3b-5) and permanent. All four options are likely to respect MSAs and minerals will be protected through Plan Policies such that at least neutral effects are indicated.	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0
6. To promote efficient **water**	Dartmoor is considered to be a major water catchment in the south west, with a network of streams and mires on the high moor feeding into fast flowing rivers. Much	+	0	+	0	+	0	0	0

[14] DNPA (2017) State of the Park Report
[15] Natural England (2014) Dartmoor National Character Area Profile

use and improve water quality	of Devon including the city of Plymouth[16], has its water supplied from Dartmoor. The SW Water Resources Plan[17] asserts a surplus of water in the supply zone up to 2040 indicating no sensitivity with regard to water resources for supply. The peat and bogs are important for carbon storage, and for absorbing and releasing large amounts of water – contributing strongly to sustainable water management, climate change resilience, and helping support the objectives for good ecological status for water bodies. All options can demonstrate efficiency of water use through the requirements of emerging development management policies and positive effects indicated through promotion of the vision for exemplar development. Options 2 & 3 acknowledge the potential constraints/sensitivity and capacity of settlements; this could have included consideration of the capacity of foul water systems/ wastewater treatment works and condition of receiving water qualities. However, South West Water has not indicated any capacity issues for wastewater treatment and water quality in their response to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, and therefore, the SA indicates neutral for all strategic options.				
7. To reduce the risk of flooding from all sources and manage **flood risk** more sustainably	The main flood risks in the Park are from fluvial and surfacewater run-off flooding. The effect of climate change on future Flood Zone extents are likely to be limited due to the relatively steep sided valleys that form confined floodplains[18]. Most of the historic flood incidents reported are in the Local Centres of Ashburton, Buckfastleigh, Horrabridge and South Brent, where there are areas of Flood Zone 2 & 3; also in some of the smaller settlements. Critical Drainage Areas (CDAs)[19] have been identified in the Park at Ashburton & Tavistock; also bordering the Park in Okehampton to the north and at Ivybridge to the south. All options will have to comply with national policy requirements with regard to avoiding flood risk – with at least neutral effects – and confirmed through emerging development management policy requirements.	**0**	**+?**	**+?**	**0**

[16] Natural England (2014) Dartmoor National Character Area Profile
[17] South West Water (2014) Water Resources Management Plan
[18] South West Water (2014) Water Resources Management Plan
[19] https://new.devon.gov.uk/floodriskmanagement/planning-and-development/

	Options 2 & 3 that also consider the sensitivity and capacity of settlements are likely to offer opportunities resolve existing problems with positive effects, although uncertainty remains at this strategic level of assessment.				
8. To maintain and enhance **community and settlement identities** distinctive to Dartmoor	Each settlement on Dartmoor has its unique features and identity, and therefore each settlement has its own set of issues that are important to that specific community. Compared to Option 1, Options 2 & 3 are more likely to recognise the needs and constraints of different settlements and communities with the potential for major positive effects, although the precise significance has some uncertainty at this stage. These Options 2 & 3 specifically seek to protect the more sensitive settlements. Option 3 may offer more certain positive effects by recognising 3 tiers of settlements with a refinement of analysis and indicating a possible stronger resilience to change. Option 4 with the 10 clusters is uncertain at this stage as effects depend upon the clustering and support of communities – it is unclear whether communities would commit to the levels of discussion to inform decision-making and whether conflicts could be resolved. The Spatial Strategy (October 2017) concluded that this option is unlikely to be feasible or deliverable – overall uncertain effects.	**+**	**++?**	**++**	**?**
9. To support the provision & accessibility of **services & facilities**	Common issues across communities include access to local services/facilities, employment in settlements and rural areas, public transport and traffic. The fewer employment opportunities has resulted in people out-commuting for employment, a lack of opportunity for young people, and weaker economies for local settlements. Options 1, 2 & 3 have the potential for positive effects through the approach of focusing development on the larger settlements that have existing services and facilities and will therefore support the vitality of these settlements. Option 1, compared with Options 2 &3, does not take into account the specific needs and constraints of settlements with less positive effects for accessibility to services and facilities. Whilst both Option 2 & 3 could have major positive effects, this is more likely with Option 3 that recognises 3 tiers of settlements with a refinement of analysis.	**+**	**++?**	**++**	**?**

	Option 4 with the 10 clusters is uncertain at this stage as effects depend upon the clustering and support of communities – it is unclear whether communities would commit to the levels of discussion to inform decision-making and whether conflicts could be resolved. The Spatial Strategy (October 2017) concluded that this option is unlikely to be feasible or deliverable – overall uncertain effects.				
10. To ensure that the **housing** needs of all National Park residents are met	House prices in the National Park largely exceed average earnings. Young people, seasonal staff & part time workers, and other key workers cannot afford accommodation. Traditional farming and woodland management have helped to create the distinctive landscape of Dartmoor, such that special circumstances may be justified when accommodation is required to enable the essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work[20]. There may also be some need for the provision of succession farm dwellings on farmsteads. Enabling people to continue to farm whilst providing the highest status of protection to the landscape is a key issue for the review of the Local Plan Review. All options can provide sufficient quality housing to meet needs, an appropriate mix of types, including affordable & adaptable – with minor positive effects that will be cumulative in the longer term. Options 1, 2 & 3 include an approach for development in the open countryside necessary to meet with the proven needs of farming & forestry, small scale growth of existing businesses, and other householder development – positive effects. The Spatial Strategy Topic Paper (October 2017) recorded that the farming community were concerned that the existing approach, as set out in Option 1, is too restrictive and with limited opportunities for farm-based housing. The evidence appears unclear but this does introduce some uncertainty and retains Option 1 with only minor positive effects compared with Options 2 & 3. Whilst both Option 2 & 3 could have major positive effects, this is more likely with Option 3 that recognises three tiers of settlements with a refinement of analysis that will better identify needs, constraints and sensitivities.	**+**	**++?**	**++**	**+**

[20] DCLG (2012) NPPF paragrpah14 footnote 9

11. To improve the **health and wellbeing** of communities and reduce inequalities	All options have the potential to contribute positive effects for health and well-being through provision of identified housing needs (as assessed in SA No 11 previously). All options are unlikely to result in the loss of open space/GI, as this will be management through emerging policies – with at least neutral effects. Opportunities for enhancing open space/ GI are more likely with larger developments and associated with focusing on larger settlements but some uncertainty for Option 1. The additional analysis proposed for Options 2 & 3 might indicate clearer possibilities for enhancing GI. Access to Public Open Spaces is likely to be more prevalent in the larger settlements, with positive effects on healthier lifestyles associated, and therefore positive effects for Options 1, 2 & 3, although many of the smaller settlements could have these positive effects if Public Rights of Way and open access is also taken into account. For all options, the effects on access to the National Park is not known at this stage of plan-making and assessment – uncertainty and depends upon other policy.	**+?**	**?**	**+**	**?**	**+**	**?**	**?**	**?**
12. To promote & support the **economy**, especially key business sectors of tourism, agriculture, leisure/recreation & small businesses	The population of the National Park has remained stable over the last decade[21], but as in other National Parks the population is ageing and higher than the national average. The local economy is remaining resilient and benefitting from a diverse economic base[22]. The number working in agriculture is particularly high and above the average for England as a whole (5%)[23]. Options 1, 2 & 3 include an approach for development in the open countryside necessary to meet with the proven needs of farming & forestry, small scale growth of existing businesses, and other householder development – positive effects that are likely to be major for Options 2 & 3 with the additional analysis of capacity and sensitivity, and more certainty for Option 3 with the three tiers. Option 4 with the 10 clusters is uncertain at this stage as effects depend upon the clustering and support of communities – it is unclear whether communities would commit to the levels of discussion to inform decision-making and whether conflicts	**+?**		**++?**		**++**		**?**	

[21] ONS (2013) 2011 Census: Characteristics of National Parks
[22] Dartmoor State of the Park Report (2017) Draft
[23] Valuing England's National Parks – Final Report (2013)

	could be resolved. The Spatial Strategy (October 2017) concluded that this option is unlikely to be feasible or deliverable – overall uncertain effects.				
13. To help **reduce congestion**, particularly on outskirts of the National Park, and reduce associated indirect impacts on **air quality** and **greenhouse gas emissions**	The main A roads suffer from congestion as commuters travel to destinations such as Plymouth and Exeter. The main mode of transport for locals is private vehicles such as cars and vans[24], with public transport being a much less used form of transport in rural areas. There is the potential for development on the outskirts of Dartmoor to result in an increase in traffic on the local road network, due to an increase in traffic as residents use the moors for recreational purposes. Any increase in homeworking to reduce travel is largely reliable on houses having connection to fast internet speeds. Options 1, 2 & 3 are likely to have similar effects as development is allocated proportionately to settlements that are largest (Option 1) or have the most capacity/least sensitivity (Options 2 & 3) with the potential for neutral effects by seeking to direct development to where there most services & facilities, thus reducing the need to travel. However, the larger settlements are more likely to have identified parking issues and potentially higher traffic levels. Mitigation of potential negative effects on movement & transport is more certain with Options 2 & 3, where connectivity is one of the factors that is considered with regard to capacity and sensitivity. Option 4 with 10 clusters is uncertain at this stage of plan-making and assessment.	**0?**	**0**	**0**	**?**
14. To encourage a change to **sustainable transport** modes and to reduce the need to travel	As above for No 13 - Options 1, 2 & 3 are likely to have similar effects as development is allocated proportionately to settlements that are largest (Option 1) or have the most capacity/least sensitivity (Options 2 & 3) with the potential for neutral effects by seeking to direct development to where there most services & facilities, thus reducing the need to travel. Encouragement for sustainable transport is more certain with Options 2 & 3, where connectivity is one of the factors that is considered with regard to capacity and sensitivity. Option 4 with the 10 clusters is uncertain at this stage as effects depend upon the clustering and support of communities – it is unclear whether communities would	**0?**	**0**	**0**	**?**

[24] Office for National Statistics (2017) 2011 census data

	commit to the levels of discussion to inform decision-making and whether conflicts could be resolved. The Spatial Strategy (October 2017) concluded that this option is unlikely to be feasible or deliverable – overall uncertain effects.				
15. To reduce **waste** & promote reuse & recycling	All four options have the potential to promote sustainable design and waste management – as guided by other core policies.	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**