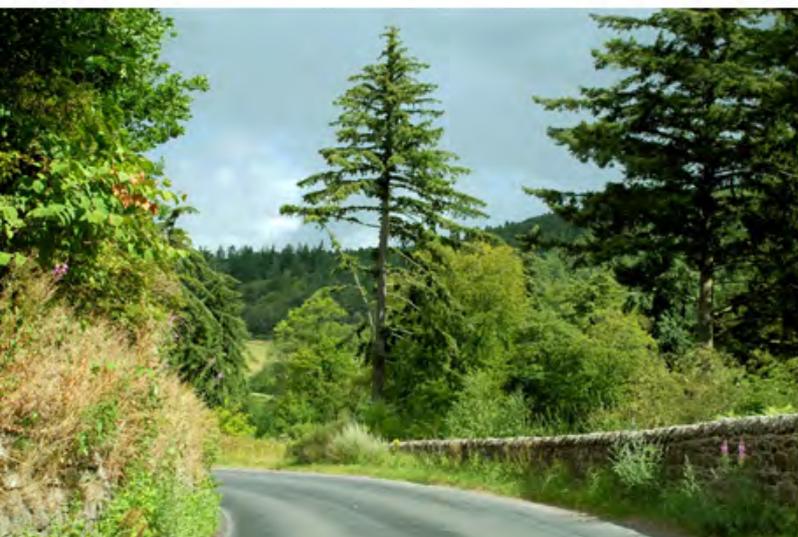


# Northumberland Local Plan

**Core Strategy Pre-Submission Draft**

October 2015



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### Foreword

As Cabinet Member for Economic Growth in Northumberland, I am pleased to have overseen recent stages in the preparation of the Northumberland Local Plan 'Core Strategy' – the Council's strategic plan for the development of the County over the next decade and a half.

We are now reaching the most crucial stage in the process. Soon we will be sending the Core Strategy to the Government and they will appoint an inspector to decide whether it is a sound plan. But before that, you have one final chance to shape what is in the document.

Since 2012, about 5,000 people have taken the opportunity to comment on stages of the Core Strategy and 4,500 have attended drop-in sessions, meetings or workshops. We are extremely grateful to everyone who has participated and helped make this a plan for a sustainable Northumberland – a plan for communities and businesses throughout the County, urban and rural.

Of course we haven't been able to change everything that people want us to change. Sometimes the facts and figures and the expert advice have kept us to a particular path. It is essential that the Core Strategy supports sustainable growth in the economy, sufficient affordable homes and choice in the housing market, while conserving our superb environmental assets.

We are now fully confident that we are publishing a sound plan, influenced by your views and based on the best evidence available.

The introduction to this document explains how you can comment on whether the Core Strategy is 'sound'. Our officers will be pleased to help you understand this important stage in the process.

As always, the Council really values your participation.

**Councillor Allan Hepple**  
**Cabinet Member for Economic Growth**



# 1. Introduction

## 1. Introduction

### What is a Local Plan?

**1.1** All local planning authorities are required to have an up to date Local Plan<sup>(1)</sup>. Local Plans should:

- Set out a vision for growth and identify the quantity, broad location and key sites for new housing, employment, shops and community facilities;
- Identify how through the planning process the environment will be protected and enhanced;
- Be in line with national planning policy principles as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG); and
- Reflect the needs and priorities of local communities.

**1.2** Policies within the Local Plan are the starting point for the assessment of all planning applications. A Local Plan can be made up of a number of different documents, see Figure 1.1. Neighbourhood Plans, prepared by Town and Parish Councils, will also form part of the Development Plan once they are adopted.

**Figure 1.1 The Local Plan**



### What is the Northumberland Local Plan?

**1.3** The Core Strategy is the first step in replacing the existing Local Plan with a new one. In Northumberland, the Local Plan is currently the adopted Core Strategies and saved policies of the Local Plans of the former local planning authorities that made up Northumberland prior to Local Government reorganisation in 2009. These are increasingly becoming out of date.

1 'Local Plan' is a clear term that people understand. We have previously called it the 'Local Development Plan' or the 'Local Development Framework'.

**1.4** The Council will make sure that more detailed plans are also prepared to accompany the Core Strategy. In some parts of the County, this will be through Neighbourhood Plans, prepared by Town and Parish Councils. Elsewhere, the forthcoming 'Delivery Document' will add detail to the Core Strategy. Taken together, these documents will eventually replace all of the previously adopted and Local Plan saved policies.

**1.5 The Northumberland Core Strategy – this document:**

- Sets out the strategic planning policies of the Council;
- Provides the planning principles to guide future development and planning decisions in Northumberland<sup>(2)</sup> from 2011 to 2031;
- Sets out the general scale and distribution of new development which is required to meet Northumberland's needs to 2031; and
- Includes strategic allocations for housing and employment.

**1.6 The Core Strategy will supersede:**

- All strategic policies in the Core Strategies adopted in 2007 for the former Alnwick, Blyth Valley and Tynedale Districts, and some policies in the former Blyth Valley Development Control Development Plan Document (2007);
- Some saved policies from the Local Plans of former planning authorities; and
- Policy S5 of the Northumberland County and National Park Joint Structure Plan (2005).

**1.7 The Northumberland Delivery Document will include:**

- Detailed land allocations and designations, as well as site-specific proposals for the necessary infrastructure, buildings and services to deliver the proposals in the Core Strategy;
- Detailed development management policies; and
- A policies map identifying land allocations and designations.

**What is the relationship with Neighbourhood Plans?**

**1.8** A number of Town and Parish Councils across the County are preparing Neighbourhood Plans. Provided they conform generally to the Core Strategy's strategic policies, pass independent examination and are agreed by the community following a referendum, these plans will become part of the Development Plan.

**1.9** The scope of Neighbourhood Plans will be determined by the Town and Parish Councils in consultation with their communities. Sometimes, they will decide that their Neighbourhood Plans should cover a wide range of topic areas and land allocations; in other cases they will prefer to limit it to selective topics or sites. There are matters for which Neighbourhood Plans may not set policy or make proposals, such as mineral extraction.

**1.10** The Council is supporting an increasing number of Neighbourhood Plans across Northumberland. As a result the future Delivery Document will only need to set detailed policies and allocate sites in areas not covered by up-to-date Neighbourhood Plans.

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<sup>2</sup> Excluding Northumberland National Park which is a separate Local Planning Authority and has separate adopted planning policies.

# 1. Introduction

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## Core Strategy - what have we done so far?

### Issues and Options

- This was the first significant period of public engagement on the Core Strategy;
- Consultation took place between May and August 2012 over a 12 week period;
- There were substantial levels of participation and response during the consultation period – over 12,600 responses were received, all of which are available on the Council's website<sup>(3)</sup>.

### Preferred Options – Stage 1

- Responses to the Issues and Options consultation highlighted that there was a requirement for a significant amount of work on the housing and employment evidence base before housing numbers and employment land requirements could be accurately defined;
- Consultation took place during February and March 2013, over a 6 week period. This was limited to 6 weeks because of a requirement to be completed before the start of the purdah period associated with the local elections;
- During the consultation 24 drop in sessions and workshops were held and officers attended 7 other awareness raising sessions;
- This document proposed 57 draft policies covering: affordable housing, rural economy, tourism, town centres, minerals waste, renewable energy, sustainable construction, transport, community facilities and the environment;
- As additional detailed work was still being undertaken, it did not include draft policies covering:
  - Proposed level and location of housing land;
  - Proposed level and location of employment land; or
  - Approach to Green Belt.
- Over 4,500 responses were received, and are all available on the Council's website<sup>(4)</sup>.

### Preferred Options – Stage 2

- Consultation took place between October 2013 and January 2014 over a 9 week period; during which 12 drop-in events and workshops were held. In addition a wider stakeholder workshop was held and there was on-going engagement with Town and Parish Councils and a number of other stakeholders;
- This consultation document proposed 8 policies, which;
  - Defined the preferred level of housing and economic growth;
  - Defined the preferred broad distribution of development to deliver the strategy for Northumberland;
  - Proposed the preferred policy approach to Green Belt:

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3 Comments received in response to the Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation are available to view at: [http://northumberland.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/core\\_strategy/csio](http://northumberland.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/core_strategy/csio).

4 Comments received in response to the Core Strategy Preferred Options (Stage 1) consultation are available to view at: [http://northumberland.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/core\\_strategy/cspo](http://northumberland.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/core_strategy/cspo).

- identified the locations where land will be required to be deleted from the Green Belt, in order to deliver the preferred strategy;
- defined the Council's preferred detailed boundary for the Green Belt extension around Morpeth; and
- Set out the reasonable alternatives that the Council had considered as part of developing the preferred policy approach and the potential impact of alternative options.
- Over 12,000 responses were received, all of which are available on the Council's website<sup>(5)</sup>.

### Full Draft Plan

- Consultation took place between December 2014 and February 2015 over an 8½ week period; during which 28 drop-in events were held. In addition three topic-based stakeholder workshops were held and there was on-going engagement with Town and Parish Councils and a number of other stakeholders;
- This consultation document brought together the previous two Preferred Options documents, updated to reflect new information as well as the results of the consultations undertaken at those two stages;
- The Full Draft Plan proposed 65 policies covering overarching matters such as spatial distribution and sustainable development, followed by the full range of planning topics, under the general headings of: the economy; homes; Green Belt; the natural, historic and built environment; connectivity; community well-being; and natural resources;
- Over 9,000 responses were received, all of which are available on the Council's website<sup>(6)</sup>.

### What is the purpose and scope of this consultation document?

**1.11** This document represents the '**Pre-Submission**' stage of the Core Strategy. It is an updated version of the Full Draft Plan, taking account of comments received, including advice on policy wording received from statutory bodies, as well as updated national policy and guidance. It has also been necessary to update some aspects of the evidence base, and changes have been made to policies where required.

**1.12** This is the final stage of consultation before the Core Strategy is submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for Independent Examination. It is a formal, statutory stage in the production of the Core Strategy, as set out in Regulations<sup>(7)</sup>. For this stage responses must be based around the 'Tests of Soundness' that require the Core Strategy to be 'Positively Prepared', 'Justified', 'Effective' and consistent with national policy:

- To be 'Positively Prepared', the Core Strategy must be:

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5 Comments received in response to the Core Strategy Preferred Options (Stage 1) consultation are available to view at: [http://northumberland.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/core\\_strategy/cspo2](http://northumberland.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/core_strategy/cspo2)

6 Comments received in response to the Core Strategy Full Draft Plan consultation are available to view at: [http://northumberland.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/core\\_strategy/csfid](http://northumberland.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/core_strategy/csfid).

7 See Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

## 1. Introduction

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- Prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements; and
- Consistent with achieving sustainable development.
- To be 'Justified', the Core Strategy must be:
  - Founded on a robust and credible evidence base; and
  - The most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives.
- To be 'Effective', the Core Strategy must be:
  - Deliverable;
  - Flexible;
  - Based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and
  - Able to be monitored.

**1.13** Following this stage, the document will be modified if the Council considers that legitimate issues of soundness have been raised during the consultation. Once the amended Submission document has been received by the Secretary of State, an Independent Examination will be arranged, to be chaired by an independent Inspector, during which outstanding issues and topics will be discussed. The Inspector will then suggest further modifications to the Core Strategy that may be required, following which the Council will seek to adopt the Core Strategy and it will become part of the Development Plan.

### How has the document been prepared?

**1.14** In response to feedback from previous consultations and in view of the need for the evidence base to be up-to-date, a number of further pieces of evidence base work have been undertaken. The evidence base work<sup>(8)</sup>, which accompanies the Pre-Submission Core Strategy includes:

- Long Term Employment and Land Use Projections;
- Commercial Premises and Land Demand Study;
- Economy Evidence Base Technical Paper;
- On-going Retail and Town Centre study update;
- Population and Household Scenario Modelling;
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment;
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment;
- Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Assessment;
- Strategic Land Review;
- Green Belt Review;
- On-going Countywide Transport Assessment;
- Analysis of the impact of operational wind farms on landscape character study;
- Wind farms and tourism impact study;
- A Detailed Water Cycle Study;

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8 The evidence base work is available to view on the Council's website at:  
<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=3458>

- A 'Level 2' Strategic Flood Risk Assessment;
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan; and
- Whole Plan Viability Assessment.

### Legal compliance documents

**1.15** In addition to the evidence base work, a number of legal compliance documents<sup>(9)</sup> also accompany the Pre-Submission Core Strategy:

- Duty to Cooperate Statement;
- Sustainability Appraisal;
- Habitats Regulations Assessment;
- Equality Impact Assessment;
- Health Impact Assessment; and
- Consultation Statement.

### Duty to Cooperate

**1.16** The Duty to Cooperate was introduced through the 2011 Localism Act and it is incorporated into the NPPF. It places a legal duty on local planning authorities and public bodies to cooperate on issues that cross administrative boundaries. Local planning authorities must demonstrate how they have complied with the duty at the Independent Examination of their Local Plans.

**1.17** The Duty requires the Council to:

- Work with neighbouring authorities on a joint approach to sustainable development or use of land, where there would be a significant impact on both / all the local planning areas concerned;
- Set out planning policies to address such issues;
- Work with a range of public bodies to set out agreements on how strategic issues will be dealt with through the plans of each; and
- Consider joint approaches to plan making.

**1.18** A memorandum of understanding was agreed in October 2012 between the seven local authorities of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP).

**1.19** Since then, the Council has continued to work closely with neighbouring planning authorities within the NELEP area of North Tyneside, Newcastle, Northumberland National Park, Gateshead and County Durham. In addition, the Council has worked with those outside the NELEP area - the Cumbria authorities, the Scottish Borders Council, Dumfries and Galloway<sup>(10)</sup> and the South East Scotland Strategic Development Planning Authority ('SESPlan').

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9 The legal compliance documents can be viewed on the Council's website at:

[http://northumberland-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/core\\_strategy/cpspd](http://northumberland-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/core_strategy/cpspd)

10 The Borderlands initiative seeks closer cooperation between Northumberland, Cumbria, the Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway Councils on matters such as broadband, tourism and rural growth.

## 1. Introduction

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**1.20** Full details are set out within the Duty to Cooperate statement which demonstrates how the Council is complying with the requirements of the duty<sup>(11)</sup>

### How to get involved

**1.21** The Statement of Community Involvement<sup>(12)</sup> highlights that the Council is committed to engage with as many residents, local groups and interested parties as possible. All previous stages of the Northumberland Core Strategy have been informed by wide community engagement. It is essential that this continues at this final (formal) stage, prior to the independent examination of the plan.

**1.22** Consultation on the Pre-Submission Core Strategy is taking place over a 6 week period between **14 October 2015 and 25 November 2015**.

**1.23** A number of drop-in sessions have been arranged to allow people to come and find out more about the Core Strategy. Details of these sessions are available on the Council's website at: [corestrategy.northumberland.gov.uk](http://corestrategy.northumberland.gov.uk).

**1.24** As explained above, at this stage representations must be in response to the 'Tests of Soundness' that require the Core Strategy to be 'Positively Prepared', 'Justified', 'Effective' and consistent with national policy, (see paragraph 1.12 above).

**1.25** The Council is encouraging people to submit comments online at: [http://northumberland-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/core\\_strategy/cspsd](http://northumberland-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/core_strategy/cspsd).

**1.26** Response forms - available from our website, our offices, libraries and drop-in sessions - can also be submitted by email and post and should be directed to:

- Email: [PlanningStrategy@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:PlanningStrategy@northumberland.gov.uk); or
- Post: Planning and Housing Policy Team, Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF.

**As the Pre-Submission stage is a statutory consultation stage, we will not be able to accept responses beyond the six week consultation – i.e. no further responses after midnight on 25 November 2015.**

**1.27** During the current consultation the Council is also seeking feedback on the supporting documents listed earlier in this chapter<sup>(13)</sup>.

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11 The Duty to Cooperate Statement for the Core Strategy can be viewed at: [http://northumberland-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/core\\_strategy/cspsd](http://northumberland-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/core_strategy/cspsd).

12 The Statement of Community Involvement is available to view at: <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=3443>

13 These supporting documents can be viewed alongside this consultation document at: [http://northumberland-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/core\\_strategy/cspsd](http://northumberland-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/core_strategy/cspsd).

## Next steps – timetable

**Table 1.1 Key stages for the preparation of the Core Strategy**

Date	Milestone
October - November 2015	Consultation on Pre-Submission Core Strategy
Winter 2015-2016	Consideration of responses and preparation of Submission document
February 2016	Full Council considers Submission Core Strategy document
March 2016	Submission of Core Strategy
Summer 2016	Examination
Autumn 2016	Adoption

## 2. A Spatial Portrait of Northumberland – opportunities and challenges

### 2. A Spatial Portrait of Northumberland – opportunities and challenges

**2.1** Northumberland is England's northernmost county, stretching from the Scottish Border in the north and west to Tyneside and County Durham in the south. The County is flanked by Cumbria, the Cheviots and North Pennines to the west and by the North Sea to the East.

**2.2** The County, the largest unitary authority by geographic coverage, is also the most sparsely populated in England with only 63 people per square kilometre. Home to around 316,000 people, Northumberland remains largely rural, with its largest settlements having no more than 40,000 residents. Northumberland has the largest area of Green Belt of any Local Planning Authority.

**2.3** The south east of the County is the most densely populated, with the three largest towns, Blyth, Cramlington and Ashington. These act as main employment centres, drawing from a wider area than just south-east Northumberland. They also provide a significant range of services in their respective centres and offer assets such as Northumberland College and large scale leisure facilities that have a wider reach. Beyond the south east, the County's main settlements are located along the Tyne Valley corridor, and on a north-south axis across the lowland coastal strip; both areas incorporate main roads and rail lines. Morpeth, Hexham, Prudhoe, Berwick-upon-Tweed and Alnwick are the main market towns, all of which have large rural hinterlands. The predominantly rural areas of the County are interspersed with smaller towns, some with their own hinterlands, as well as numerous villages, hamlets and isolated farmsteads.

**2.4** Areas in the south of the County have the strongest relationship with the Tyne and Wear conurbation. Tyneside attracts people from Northumberland, who reach into the area for work, education, cultural activity and shopping. To a lesser extent areas in the north and west of the County have relationships with the Scottish Borders, Edinburgh and the Lothians and Carlisle.

**2.5** Northumberland's rural villages are still closely linked to agriculture, which is the lifeblood of much of the County. Many have been sustained by tourism, although the needs of this industry have created development pressures. Part of their attractiveness is the organic way in which they have grown within their landscape settings. The forestry sector is very important to the economy of the North of England and Northumberland. Northumberland has a very large timber industry from harvesting to production. Kielder Forest, for example, is the largest man made forest in Europe and the largest working forest in England.

#### **Natural, historic and built environment**

**2.6** Northumberland's environment is distinctive and valued for its natural beauty and historic significance. The sweeping landscapes and seascapes, important wildlife habitats, iconic landmarks and characteristic towns and villages are hugely valued, not just by local inhabitants, but also by the many visitors from across the region and beyond. There are numerous designated areas and sites, many of which are recognised internationally and nationally, for their nature conservation, geological, landscape or built heritage value. Most notable are:

- Northumberland National Park (a separate local planning authority area);

## 2. A Spatial Portrait of Northumberland – opportunities and challenges

- Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB);
- North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- Historic landscapes;
- Areas of international biodiversity and geo-diversity importance, mostly concentrated along the coast and in more remote upland areas;
- Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site (WHS) now part of the trans-national WHS 'Frontiers of the Roman Empire';
- Northumberland Dark Sky Park;
- Northumberlandia human landform sculpture;
- Historic Parks and Gardens;
- 69 conservation areas; and
- Significant historic buildings and structures - Norman Castles, country houses, fortified farmhouses, and buildings associated with the County's diverse economic, social, religious and cultural legacy.

**2.7** The County's many environmental assets do not all receive statutory protection. It is important to consider the County's biodiversity, historic landscape and ecosystems as a whole in terms of the threats that they face and the opportunities they present. Many assets are vulnerable to development and human activity; these need careful protection or management, including through planning decisions.

**2.8** Northumberland's the natural historic and built environment presents many opportunities to raise people's awareness and understanding of, and attachment to, their environment. This ranges from:

- Outdoor learning for the children and young people;
- Through communities being empowered to protect the environments that are important to them;
- To tourists and day visitors appreciating the Northumberland's unique assets.

### Economy and employment

**2.9** Northumberland makes a major contribution to regional and national prosperity. It is home to major globally competitive and connected companies, niche producers and providers of excellent products and services. Northumberland is at the heart of the northern economy, sitting between the competitive city economies of Newcastle and Edinburgh, with good links to national and international markets via Newcastle Airport, the strategic road and rail network and the region's sea ports. There is increasingly good digital connectivity, which includes rural parts of the County.

**2.10** The Northumberland economy has grown steadily in recent years. Gross Value Added (GVA), which is an economic measure of the value of goods and services in an area, grew at a rate of 3.2% per annum from 1997-2013, with only 2009 experiencing a decline. However, this is lower than both the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) area and national rate of growth and GVA per head is actually declining compared to the England average. This can be explained by low productivity which points to the need to improve the quality of jobs and skills in the Northumberland, and attract new business in higher value sectors.

## 2. A Spatial Portrait of Northumberland – opportunities and challenges

**2.11** This need is illustrated in the difference between average wages of Northumberland residents and that for people working in jobs based in the County, with the latter being 8.3% lower in 2014. However, there has been a steady decline in this gap since 2010, with wages growing slightly faster for residents who work in the County than those who commute out<sup>(14)</sup>. This demonstrates that with support for more and better jobs, Northumberland's economy is increasingly able to provide employment opportunities attractive to residents, as well as people who are able to commute from adjoining areas.

**2.12** The structure of the County's economy has undergone substantial change over the past 30 years. There has been a downsizing of the agricultural workforce and the complete departure of deep coal mining. The economy now has a broader base which incorporates manufacturing and certain service sectors. There is particular reliance on the public sector, which topped 30% of all jobs in the County in 2013, although as elsewhere, this sector of the workforce has been reducing. A significant issue is that there has been a decline in manufacturing employment, including some of the newer sectors that replaced mining and heavy industry, reflecting national trends. Unlike past periods of change, there has not been a parallel growth in high value service sector employment.

**2.13** Northumberland has healthy levels of economic activity and employment with both being greater than the regional and national rates. The Northumberland unemployment rate is also lower than the national average, at 6.6% in 2014, which is the lowest yearly average since 2008, although pre-recession levels were significantly lower. This has continued to fall to 6.4% taking into account the first three months of 2015. However, this varies significantly across the County. Worklessness<sup>(15)</sup> is a major constraint on economic growth for the County, which although low regionally is still high compared to economically successful areas of the country. This includes those classified as unemployed and sections of the economically inactive, which combined account for around 14% of the labour force.

**2.14** The Plan therefore needs to support a quantitative increase in the number of jobs in the County, in order to provide suitable job opportunities for people to move into employment, alongside support for skills initiatives to enable the County's current labour force to meet the requirements of businesses. The spatial distribution of areas of high unemployment and economic inactivity shows that whilst there are rural pockets, the issues are most acute in the South East, pointing to the need to provide opportunities accessible to this population.

**2.15** The proportion of jobs in the County which are part time (36%) is higher than the regional and national average. However there has been a steady reduction in this pattern with a 17.3% decline in the number of part time employee<sup>(16)</sup> positions from 2009-2013, at a time when there has been an increase elsewhere. In the same period there was a 5.2% increase in the number of full time jobs in the County. It is beneficial for the Northumberland economy to have a healthier ratio of part to full time positions in terms of increasing incomes per person and ensuring Northumberland based jobs are more likely to attract in-commuters. However the plan needs to ensure that this is achieved alongside overall growth in job numbers, for both part and full time work.

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14 Resident wages increased 2.6% 2008-2014 whilst wages for Northumberland based jobs increased by 3.5% in the same period.

15 Those that are unemployed (looking for work) and economically in active (not looking for work)

16 People working as an employee of company/organisation as opposed to self-employed, except for agricultural workers, those in Government trainee schemes, and those working for the Armed Forces.

## 2. A Spatial Portrait of Northumberland – opportunities and challenges

**2.16** There are a number of key positive features of the Northumberland economy:

- Small businesses dominate the economy with 89% of enterprises employing fewer than ten people in 2014;
- Many small businesses are leading edge in their sectors and are a vital part of the economy;
- A number of the larger companies are high tech and operate globally;
- New business start-ups are generally resilient, with failure rates below the regional and national average; and
- Although the number of new business ventures established is proportionately lower than elsewhere in the UK, in certain settlements, such as Hexham, Morpeth, and Ponteland, it has been relatively healthy.

**2.17** However, the number of large firms is comparatively low, with only 0.2% of the total number of businesses employing over 250 people, compared to an average of 0.6% across the NELEP area. This is a major economic issue for Northumberland, particularly given the wider benefits large firms bring such as supply chain growth and skills development. It is important therefore that Northumberland is as flexible as possible to accommodate major inward investment and the growth of indigenous businesses.

**2.18** Northumberland's economy, is part of the wider NELEP market, providing 14.2% of its jobs and 12.5% of its total GVA<sup>(17)</sup>. It is intrinsically linked to the economies of neighbouring areas, Tyneside in particular. The latest information available<sup>(18)</sup> shows that:

- Over 45,000 people who live in the County travel to adjoining areas for employment, the majority to Tyneside;
- Over 22,000 people commuting into the County for employment, the majority from Tyneside.

**2.19** There is consequently a net outflow from Northumberland to adjoining areas for employment – amounting to over 23,000 people in 2011. This net outflow did reduce by 19% between 2001 and 2011, but as a result of more people commuting into Northumberland rather than a reduction in Northumberland residents working elsewhere.

**2.20** Northumberland is operating in a global market and has been successful in focussing on sectors in which it has competitive advantages. The County's economy has core strengths and opportunities in key sectors such as energy, low carbon industries, certain manufacturing and process industries such as pharmaceuticals and engineering, ports, and tourism. Expansion of production and research and development operations within these key sectors has the potential to offer higher value, knowledge based jobs to both Northumberland residents, commuters and in-migrants.

**2.21** Evidence suggests that Northumberland's service sector will expand over the plan period. The growth of high quality service jobs can be strongly influenced by lifestyle factors, given the ability to attract highly skilled workers. Improving telecommunications will allow for remote operation of such businesses. Northumberland's beautiful and historic market towns and its attractive rural landscapes provide key opportunities to attract mobile,

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17 North East Economic Growth – GVA Briefing – December 2014 and Job Density Area Comparison, NOMIS Official Labour Market Statistics. Available at: [https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157061/subreports/jd\\_compared/report.aspx](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157061/subreports/jd_compared/report.aspx)

18 2011 Census

## 2. A Spatial Portrait of Northumberland – opportunities and challenges

highly skilled migrants likely to bring or establish such businesses, and to be a focus for business start-ups in creative and knowledge based service industries. Continued improvement in the quality of telecommunications is vital to achieving this.

**2.22** The County offers the scope to attract the higher value service jobs, serving wider markets – those that have led to increased employment and prosperity in other areas. Growth in the service sector is forecast to be strong, and there are key opportunities for certain creative and tourist related industries. The geography of Northumberland means that the locations where sites and infrastructure are available, are not always where businesses want to locate, and in particular where the site characteristics complement growth sectors; but the County offers significant opportunity to improve on this.

### Education and skills

**2.23** The Northumberland labour market in terms of educational attainment, skills, earnings, and forms of employment is geographically and socio-economically split. The average wage of Northumberland residents in 2014 was 9% higher than the average wage in Northumberland based jobs. Resident pay is one of the highest in the NELEP area, and workplace pay nearly the lowest. Illustrating that the County's higher earning and more skilled residents commute out of the County for work. There are also significant differences in wages between economic sectors.

**2.24** Northumberland's residents achieve higher qualifications than the north east average, but this is still low when compared to the national figure. This, combined with the lack of appropriate training, could limit the County's ability to grow and diversify in relation to the national economy<sup>(19)</sup>. However, the proportion of residents with no qualifications is lower than both the regional and national average.

**2.25** In terms of school level attainment:

- There has been a steady increase in the percentage of young people in Northumberland attaining 5 or more GCSEs (at A\* to C or an equivalent) – reaching 85% of 19 year olds by 2013, compared to 84% in the North East; and
- Attainment of 2 or more A levels (or equivalent) by young people aged 19 in Northumberland has also increased steadily since 2005. In 2013 it was 54%, compared to a North East figure of 52%<sup>(20)</sup>.

**2.26** Turning to Higher Education, looking at the adult population as a whole, (aged 16 and over) 26% have one or more high level qualifications<sup>(21)</sup> – higher than both the LEP and regional averages, but lower than the national average. However, there are geographical variations within the County: there is evidence that the proportion of young people in the South East Northumberland Delivery Area entering higher education, equates to only half the proportion doing so from the other three Delivery Areas. The north east's universities were by far the most popular destinations for undergraduate and post graduate

19 This is reaffirmed through the Economic Land Review (ELR) business survey, where 20% of respondents stated that skills shortages were an obstacle to growth.

20 <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/idoc.ashx?docid=27f007e9-2ffa-4745-84a8-0ea444d9c4f3&version=-1>

21 A higher level qualification means a Degree (for example BA, BSc), Higher Degree (for example MA, PhD, PGCE), NVQ Level 4-5, HNC, HND, RSA Higher Diploma, BTEC Higher level, Foundation degree (NI) or professional qualifications (for example teaching, nursing, accountancy)

## 2. A Spatial Portrait of Northumberland – opportunities and challenges

students, aiding the likelihood of retaining local graduates. As Northumberland does not have a university many people in the 15 to 24 age group leave the County, predominantly for further and higher education and do not return at the same rate.

**2.27** Northumberland College, which is the largest training provider in the County, is investing £9.5 million into a campus upgrade at both its Ashington and Kirkley Hall sites. The upgraded Ashington site will create state-of-the-art construction, engineering and motor vehicle facilities, as well as refurbished brickwork, plastering, carpentry and painting and decorating workshops. At the Kirkley Hall campus, near Ponteland, there will be new arboriculture and tractor workshops, a new-build education block with eight classrooms, open learning suite and learning resource centre. The improved facilities will greatly enhance the teaching and learning facilities for students. The College has also built up a strong reputation amongst local and national employers for its travel and tourism training, leading to worldwide opportunities for students to advance their careers in these fields. The School of Catering is among other sections of the College that have courses which are recognised across the UK.

### Health

**2.28** Northumberland has a mixed picture in terms of the health of its citizens and consequent health and social care needs. The County has a higher healthy life expectancy for both males and females than the North Eastern LEP area, (only slightly lower than the England average). However, the ageing population and its dispersed nature, mean that calls on adult social care are greater than for more urban parts of the North-East. There are hotspots of deprivation in older households in the south-east of the County and, here, life expectancy is lower than in the rest of Northumberland.

**2.29** Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust has invested over £200million to significantly enhance healthcare provision across Northumberland and in North Tyneside. This investment includes a new Specialist Emergency Care Hospital (SECH) at Cramlington to serve Northumberland and North Tyneside. This new hospital opened in 2015.

**2.30** The Trust is also improving and refurbishing Hexham and Wansbeck General Hospitals, as certain wards and departments have been relocated to the SECH at Cramlington. In addition, Haltwhistle Memorial Hospital has been replaced with a new purpose-built facility to form an integrated health and social care scheme. A new £25 million state-of-the art hospital for Berwick-upon-Tweed will be built by 2017. The new hospital will bring health and social care together proving better overall care to patients.

**2.31** Despite these improvements in facilities around the County and the presence of a range of more local healthcare facilities in other towns and villages, access to healthcare remains a challenging issue, especially in deprived and more remote rural communities.

### Population of Northumberland

**2.32** The population of Northumberland is ageing and the significance of this demographic change makes it a major policy issue for the prosperity and resilience of Northumberland communities:

- Net inward migration is the only reason the County's population has increased over recent years;

## 2. A Spatial Portrait of Northumberland – opportunities and challenges

- By 2031, 31% of the population of Northumberland is projected to be over 65 (101,769) (compared to 25% in the North East and 22% in England);
- Projections 2012 to 2031 show a significant increase in the over 65 age group, an increase of 52.6% (from 66,691 to 101,769). During the same period the 70 to 79 age group is also predicted to increase by 48.7% (from 27,887 to 41,469), with the 80-89 age group increasing by 90.5% (from 14,363 to 27,363), and the 90+ age group experiencing the most significant increase, 161.4% (2,953 to 7,640);
- Between 2012-2031 the core working age population (20-64 year olds) is projected to decrease from 181,695 to 159,545 (-22,150), -12.2%;
- Northumberland has the lowest percentage of children under 16 in the region (16.9%, 53,455);
- There are high levels of out migration from people aged 25-64, who account for 52.3% (165,450) of the Northumberland population.

**2.33** Due to these demographic patterns it is predicted that without positive policy intervention the County's population will increase by only 2.6% over the plan period (from 316,116 in 2011 to 324,375 in 2031); by comparison over the same period the UK population is forecast to increase by 13%.

**2.34** If this does occur, projections show that it would result in a significant reduction in working age population and a subsequent reduction in the number of working people in Northumberland. As a result, there could be a consequent reduction in the ability of Northumberland to provide a labour force to existing or potential employers who want to locate in the County. In addition, the ageing population profile will place a steadily increasing strain on already stretched healthcare services. All of this has significant potential to impact on the future sustainability and resilience of Northumberland's communities.

### Delivery Areas

**2.35** Northumberland is large and diverse and different parts of the County have distinct characteristics, functions and needs. The strategic approach to the distribution of development is based around four Delivery Areas. The Delivery Area boundaries used in this Plan were initially proposed as part of the Preferred Options (stage 1) consultation, following considerable negative feedback on a three Delivery Area approach that was put forward at the Issues and Options consultation stage. The reasoning behind the definitions is set out in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)<sup>(22)</sup>, although it should be emphasised that these definitions reflect a number of factors – not just housing market areas. The Delivery Areas are shown in Figure 2.1.

**2.36** The four Delivery Areas:

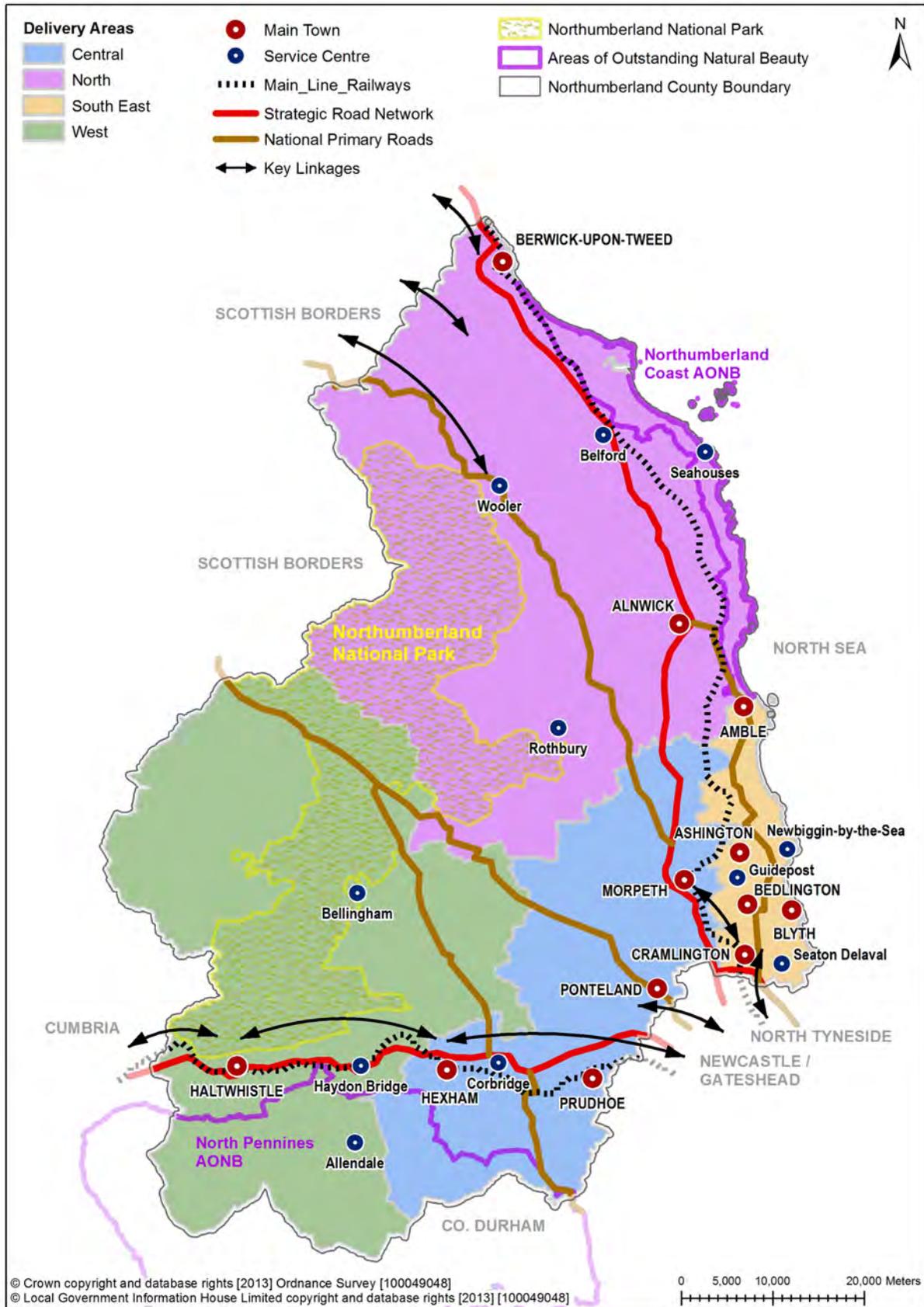
- Are defined in terms of their social, economic, and cultural characteristics – not just housing markets;
- Take account of the roles and relationship between towns and villages across Northumberland; and
- Take account of the interaction of places with adjoining areas, particularly Tyneside and Scotland.

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22 See <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=3458> for the latest SHMA.

## 2. A Spatial Portrait of Northumberland – opportunities and challenges

Figure 2.1 Delivery Areas



## 2. A Spatial Portrait of Northumberland – opportunities and challenges

**2.37** There has been positive feedback on the four Delivery Areas since they were revised<sup>(23)</sup>. Defining Delivery Areas has helped the Council to:

- Better distribute and in future to monitor the delivery of development according to local needs;
- Define the scale and function of individual Main Towns and Service Centres' capacity to accommodate additional development; and
- Explain the functional relationships between settlements and connections with their hinterlands.

**2.38** However, a Countywide policy approach remains appropriate in some instances.

**2.39** The remainder of this section provides some context to each of the areas of Northumberland.

### South East Northumberland Delivery Area

**2.40** The South East Northumberland Delivery Area extends inland from the coast, from its southern boundary with North Tyneside and Newcastle upon Tyne, to Amble in the north. The Area includes:

- The Main Towns of Amble, Ashington, Bedlington, Blyth and Cramlington;
- The Service Centres of Guidepost/Stakeford/Choppington, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea and Seaton Delaval/ New Hartley/ Seghill/ Holywell; and
- Some other sizeable villages including Ellington, Lynemouth, Hadston and Widdrington Station, as well as numerous smaller villages.

**2.41** The Green Belt extends across parts of the area to prevent coalescence with the Tyneside conurbation to the south. There are important green infrastructure links along the coast, many of which are protected by nature conservation designations. The landscape of the area was historically dominated by coal mining. While examples of this mining heritage are retained, notably at Woodhorn, the majority of mining sites in the area have now been restored and provide important ecological and recreational resources. Surface coal mining is still present and makes a valuable contribution to the local economy. There are currently two coal producing sites at Shotton and Potland Burn; Butterwell is currently being restored and workings at Steadsburn and Stobswood are now largely restored.

### Population

- Most densely populated part of Northumberland at 737 people per km<sup>2</sup>, with 163,200 people in 71,600 households;
- Although its towns and villages are large no settlement exceeds 40,000 residents;
- While the population is ageing, the proportion aged over 65 is smaller than in the other Delivery Areas and it has the largest proportion of younger residents.

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23 There was a slight amendment to the South East Delivery Area, following the Preferred Options stage, such that Tritlington and West Chevington Parish now sits wholly within the Central Delivery Area, see Figure 2.1

## 2. A Spatial Portrait of Northumberland – opportunities and challenges

### Roles of the Main Towns and Service Centres

**2.42** Amble, Ashington, Bedlington, Blyth and Cramlington provide the largest concentrations of housing, employment, retailing and services within the area.

**2.43** **Amble** is a key centre in the northern part of the Delivery Area. It is Northumberland's most important fishing centre and has an important tourism role as a result of its location at the southern approach to the Northumberland Coast AONB and the establishment of a marina. It has a small catchment area that stretches across into the North Delivery Area, taking in villages such as Warkworth.

**2.44** **Ashington** was once a centre of the coal mining industry. The town now plays an important strategic employment role in the County and includes the strategically important Ashwood Business Park. Northumberland College and Wansbeck Hospital are also located in the town.

**2.45** **Bedlington**, together with the linked settlement of Bedlington Station provides housing for those working in the neighbouring towns and commuting to Tyneside. Given the close proximity of larger towns, services provided predominantly serve the local market.

**2.46** **Blyth** has a strategically important employment function. There is significant economic growth potential around the Blyth Estuary, which includes sites with Enterprise Zone status. Opportunities exist that build on existing assets including the National Renewable Energy Centre (Narec) and the Port of Blyth which is a sizeable commercial port with a deep-water harbour and warehousing facilities. Specific sectors being targeted include offshore oil and gas, renewables and advanced manufacturing. The town is on the edge of the Green Belt which lies to its south.

**2.47** **Cramlington** has a sub-regional role as a centre for industry and houses the largest concentration of manufacturing businesses in Northumberland, including a cluster of pharmaceuticals companies. It is a prime location for inward investment because of the quality of its environment and road network. The redevelopment of the town centre, including a cinema, and the construction of a new specialist emergency care hospital to the east of Cramlington has strengthened the role of the Town. The town is on the edge of the Green Belt which lies to its south and west.

**2.48** The **Service Centres** of **Guidepost/ Stakeford/ Choppington, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea** and **Seaton Delaval/ New Hartley/ Seghill/ Holywell** provide important services for both residents and communities within neighbouring areas. Given the close proximity of the larger towns, the sphere of influence of these settlements is limited. Other smaller settlements within the area also provide local services to their resident communities. Seaton Delaval, New Hartley, Seghill and Holywell are surrounded by Green Belt.

### Housing – development pressure and delivery

**2.49** The South East of the County has experienced consistent under delivery of housing in recent years compared to the housing allocations in existing Local Plans. Some large housing sites have stalled and sites on previously developed land have proven unviable, as a result of the recession. However, since 2014/15 housing completions have increased significantly. The close proximity, and good road links, mean that the South East housing market area is closely linked with the Tyneside conurbation to the south.

## 2. A Spatial Portrait of Northumberland – opportunities and challenges

### Transport

- The A189/A19 corridor provides important sub-regional road links to Tyneside for jobs, learning, shopping and leisure;
- There are some issues with localised traffic congestion in Blyth and at key highway junctions, such as Moor Farm roundabout, at peak times;
- Cramlington benefits from passenger services on the East Coast Main Line;
- There is a Northern Rail service which calls at Widdrington Station Monday to Saturday and links to stations such as Alnmouth and Chathill in North Northumberland and west to Carlisle via Newcastle;
- There are opportunities from the proposed reintroduction of passenger rail services to the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line.

### Employment

**2.50** This area faces particular challenges; social and environmental deprivation arising from unemployment and poverty continue to frustrate the ability of communities to emerge from the post-industrial, coal mining legacy into sustained and sustainable growth. The recent closures of the RioTinto Alcan smelter at Lynemouth, and Northumberland Foods in Amble have also had an impact upon the communities and supply chains locally. However the area has been successful in attracting inward investment, most recently the establishment of a high-tech paint manufacturing plant at Ashington.

**2.51** Key opportunities for future economic growth:

- Blyth estuary area - is being actively promoted to the renewable and low carbon energy, advanced manufacturing and offshore sectors;
- Cramlington continues to be recognised as a prime location for inward investment due to the quality of its environment and road network;
- Development of the visitor economy through major attractors, key examples being the continued development of harbour-related attractions at Amble, a leisure destination based around the former Stobswood, Maidens Hall and Steadsburn surface coal mining sites in the northern part of the Area; the Woodhorn Museum near Ashington; and Seaton Delaval Hall, now a National Trust property in the south of the area.

### Relationship with other areas

**2.52** The close proximity, and good road links, mean that the Delivery Area is closely linked with the Tyneside conurbation to the south. While links are not so strong with the wider Central and North Northumberland Delivery Areas, the market towns of Morpeth and Alnwick both provide employment and housing opportunities and also provide a workforce for major employers in Cramlington and Blyth. The town of Amble, on the northern edge of the Delivery Area, has strong links with Alnwick and intervening villages, such as Warkworth, which lie in the North Northumberland Delivery Area.

### Central Northumberland Delivery Area

**2.53** Central Northumberland Delivery Area extends north and west from the boundary with Tyne and Wear. The area includes:

- The Main Towns of Hexham, Morpeth, Ponteland and Prudhoe;

## 2. A Spatial Portrait of Northumberland – opportunities and challenges

- The Service Centre of Corbridge; and
- Numerous villages of varying sizes and functions, including some sizeable commuter villages, such as Stocksfield and Stannington, as well as many smaller rural settlements.

**2.54** Much of the area is covered by Green Belt to protect the countryside from encroachment from the Tyne and Wear conurbation. The south west of the area includes part of the North Pennines AONB.

### Population

- The population density is 83 per km<sup>2</sup>, with 79,000 people in 33,700 households;
- The proportion of the population aged over 65 is relatively high at 22.1%, as is the proportion aged up to 15 years at 16.8%.

### Roles of the main towns and service centres

**2.55** Morpeth, Hexham, Ponteland and Prudhoe are the key hubs for housing, employment, retailing and services.

**2.56** **Morpeth** is a historic market town, serving a wide rural hinterland that extends into the North Northumberland Delivery Area. It has a commuter housing role due to good transport links and the close proximity of the Tyneside conurbation, although significant numbers also work and use services within Morpeth. It also has a strong relationship with the South East of the County, particularly Cramlington. This will be strengthened through the construction of the Morpeth Northern bypass, which will facilitate development to the North of the town and remove some through traffic from the ancient market town centre.

**2.57** **Hexham** is located in the Tyne Valley and serves a wide rural hinterland that extends into the West Northumberland Delivery Area. Its auction mart is regionally and nationally significant. It also has an important role as a gateway to Northumberland National Park and Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site. The town accommodates commuters to the Tyneside conurbation. Future growth of the town is currently limited by the Green Belt.

**2.58** **Ponteland** is a town that provides services to a wider rural area, although not to the same extent as Morpeth and Hexham. Ponteland looks to Newcastle upon Tyne for its main employment, retailing and services and provides an executive housing offer for those commuting to Tyneside and the wider region. While the vacating of the Police Headquarters complex has provided some expansion opportunity on brownfield land, the settlement's further growth is currently limited by the Green Belt.

**2.59** **Prudhoe** is located on a hillside, overlooking the Tyne Valley, close to the Tyneside conurbation. Within the influence of Tyneside, it has a commuter housing role but also has a longstanding local employment, housing and service centre role. Future growth of the town is currently limited by the Green Belt.

**2.60** **Corbridge** is a village of great historic and architectural significance. It has a commuter housing role but also is an important service centre, which provides services to a wider rural area. It looks to Hexham for its higher services. The village is surrounded by the Green Belt.

## 2. A Spatial Portrait of Northumberland – opportunities and challenges

### Housing – development pressure and past delivery

**2.61** Much of the Central area of the County is covered by Green Belt; this has sought to protect the countryside from encroachment from the Tyne and Wear conurbation and maintain the separation of settlements. This area has some of the highest levels of development pressure within Northumberland, largely due to the ease of commuting into Tyneside. House prices are high, resulting in affordability pressures across the area. Past planning policies, including the former Regional Spatial Strategy, have constrained development across the Central area, through Green Belt designations, low housing targets and policies to restrict development in the countryside. In the former Castle Morpeth area, despite Morpeth and Ponteland being identified as the focus for new housing development in the Castle Morpeth Local Plan, in accordance with regional planning policy at that time, the majority of housing development has taken place in the Morpeth hinterland and former coalfield areas and not the main settlements.

### Transport

**2.62** The area is crossed by the A1 and East Coast Main Line (ECML) corridor, and the A69 and Newcastle to Carlisle rail line. These routes link with north-south routes on the east and west coasts respectively, as well as further west to the port of Stranraer. While Hexham, Prudhoe and Corbridge and other villages are served by regular train services on the Tyne Valley line, only Morpeth benefits from relatively regular services to Tyneside on the ECML. The Main Towns and Service Centres, and settlements along the main transport corridors are well served by buses while, in the wider rural hinterlands, services are less frequent. Newcastle International Airport is located on the southern edge of the Delivery Area.

### Employment

**2.63** Within the Delivery Area, many jobs are in the public sector, particularly within Local Government and health services. In the Tyne Valley, at Hexham and Prudhoe wood processing industries are major employers. The towns of Hexham, Morpeth, Prudhoe and Ponteland contain successful industrial estates, many of which have limited land for new businesses. The area is increasingly a focus for knowledge based and creative businesses. Much of the area encompasses productive agricultural land, while tourism makes a significant contribution to the economy particularly in the west.

### Relationships with other areas

- The close proximity of the Main Towns and Service Centres to Tyneside means they have a strong relationship with the conurbation and they provide popular locations for commuters;
- The influence of Hexham and Morpeth extends into the West and North Northumberland Delivery Areas respectively, with the towns providing employment and services for wide hinterlands;
- Morpeth also has a strong relationship with Cramlington and the South East Northumberland Delivery Area, which will be further strengthened following completion of the Morpeth Northern Bypass.

## 2. A Spatial Portrait of Northumberland – opportunities and challenges

### North Northumberland Delivery Area

**2.64** The North Northumberland Delivery Area is bounded to the north by the Scottish Border, to the west by the Cheviot Hills of the Northumberland National Park and to the south by the Simonside Hills and the Coquet Valley. The coast, which is designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty forms the eastern boundary. The delivery area includes:

- The Main Towns of Alnwick and Berwick-upon-Tweed;
- The Service Centres of Belford, Rothbury, Seahouses and Wooler; and
- Numerous villages along the coastal strip including large villages such as Warkworth and Longhoughton, as well as settlements lying further inland.

### Population

- Much of the Area is sparsely populated, with an overall density of 26.3 people per km<sup>2</sup>, and a population of 53,600 in 24,250 households;
- With almost 24% of its resident population aged over 65 it has the largest proportion of older residents, and the lowest proportion of younger residents, up to 15 years (15.4% of the population), in Northumberland;
- The numbers of children in rural schools are falling.

### Roles of main towns and service centres

**2.65** The towns of Berwick-upon-Tweed and Alnwick are the key locations for housing, employment, retailing and services within the area.

**2.66** **Berwick-upon-Tweed** is the northernmost market town in Northumberland, one of England's outstanding historic towns and a key hub between the conurbations of Edinburgh and Tyneside. Its history and geography give the town a unique sense of place and it is a popular tourist destination.

**2.67** **Alnwick** is another of Northumberland's important historic market towns, providing services for a wide rural hinterland; the centre is dominated by the 11th century castle. The castle and its gardens are popular tourist attractions.

**2.68** **Belford and Seahouses** provide a range of services to support the local communities and the tourism industry. Seahouses is a key hub for visitors to the North Northumberland coast and the Farne Islands.

**2.69** **Rothbury** is the largest settlement in western Coquetdale with its services supporting its resident population and those people who live in the more remote villages, including those in the Northumberland National Park. The village acts as a gateway to the Park for visitors and has important relationships with Alnwick and Morpeth.

**2.70** **Wooler** has an important relationship with both Berwick and Alnwick and is a local hub for services for its satellite communities. It is also a gateway for visitors to the northern part of the National Park. It has a working mart and is also the location for an important cluster of agricultural engineering and construction companies.

## 2. A Spatial Portrait of Northumberland – opportunities and challenges

### Housing – development pressure and past delivery

**2.71** Large parts of the North of the County are subject to high house prices; by contrast the area has the lowest average gross incomes across the County primarily because of a higher than average reliance on employment in the agriculture and tourism sectors. Access to affordable housing, particularly within the rented sector, is an issue across the area but is particularly acute in the Northumberland Coast AONB and its coastal villages, where there are especially high levels of second home and holiday accommodation. Development pressure in the AONB poses a threat to the conservation of its natural beauty but the sustainability of local communities by providing housing and employment opportunities is also considered to be integral to its protection and enhancement.

**2.72** In terms of past housing delivery across the North of the County, the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed has under provided in recent years despite an abundance of housing sites with planning permission. Delivery elsewhere in the former Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough has exceeded past policy, particularly in the coastal zone. Delivery in Alnwick reflects the current planning policy but Rothbury has experienced higher levels of delivery.

### Transport

- The A1/East Coast road and rail corridor connects the Area with the Tyneside conurbation and Edinburgh, with the A697 providing an additional link between these locations; much of the A1 remains as single carriageway, although, in late 2014, the Government announced proposals to dual part of this (as far north as Ellingham);
- The A698 provides a route south-west to Hawick, the A7 and, eventually, the M6 and routes west to Stranraer and Ireland;
- Berwick-upon-Tweed is well served by the East Coast Main Line, while the station at Alnmouth (for Alnwick) provides more limited but important access to the strategic rail network;
- There are limited bus services operating outside the A1 corridor, the Northumberland coastal route and the axes of the A697, A698.

### Employment

- The towns of Berwick-upon-Tweed and Alnwick have large industrial estates, with smaller ones in settlements such as Wooler, Rothbury and Belford;
- The port of Berwick-upon-Tweed is important to the wider area; it is capable of handling larger freight vessels and is considered to have an important role in increasing exports and catering to the visitor industry;
- There are a number of small harbours in the area, at Beadnell, Craster, Holy Island and Seahouses, which primarily support the local fishing industry. Seahouses provides access by boat for visitors to the Farne Islands, and this function is important to the visitor economy;
- Further inland, there remains a reliance on the traditional rural industries but tourism is becoming increasingly important.

### Relationship with other areas

- The Area is influenced by the Tyne and Wear conurbation in terms of travel to work, but not to the same extent as the Central and South East Areas;

## 2. A Spatial Portrait of Northumberland – opportunities and challenges

- The north of the Area, in particular Berwick-upon-Tweed, is influenced by the Edinburgh City-Region, which extends across the Scottish Borders and which is the focus of a strategic growth strategy. Proposals for expansion in the central Scottish Borders and the re-opening of the Waverley line could also have implications for the social and economic well-being of the north section of the Area.
- There are strong links with the town of Amble in the South East Northumberland Delivery Area, especially from Alnwick and intervening villages such as Warkworth.

### West Northumberland Delivery Area

**2.73** The West Northumberland Delivery Area straddles the southern part of the Northumberland National Park. It includes the Kielder area to the north-west of the National Park, the North Tyne Valley, the South Tyne Valley and parts of the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site and the North Pennines AONB. The Delivery Area includes:

- The Main Town of Haltwhistle; and
- The Service Centres of Haydon Bridge, Allendale and Bellingham; and
- Numerous small settlements, which are scattered throughout the Delivery Area.

### Population

- The West Northumberland Delivery Area is the most sparsely populated in the county, with 11.2 people per km<sup>2</sup>;
- It has the lowest population of the four areas with approximately 20,200 people in 8,950 households;
- The proportion of population aged up to 15 years is small at 15.5%, while 21.5% are aged 65 years or older.

### Roles of main towns and service centres

**2.74** **Haltwhistle** is the largest settlement in the Area; it is located in the South Tyne Valley. It grew as an industrial town when the Newcastle to Carlisle railway opened in the 1830s. It is a hub for housing, employment, retailing and other services, and is one of the key gateways to Hadrian's Wall. Haltwhistle has good links with Hexham, Carlisle and Cumbria, and is served by the high school at Haydon Bridge.

**2.75** **Bellingham** is the largest settlement in the North Tyne Valley and provides services to a wide rural hinterland. It grew as an agricultural market town during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For a time the village had industries associated with surrounding coal and iron working and it was linked by railway to the rest of the North East, as well as Scotland. Bellingham acts as a gateway for people visiting the National Park and Kielder Water and Forest Park. It looks to Hexham for many higher level services. An increasing number of residents commute to Tyneside.

**2.76** **Allendale** is located within the North Pennines AONB in the East Allen Valley. Its main role is as a local centre for housing and services, supporting the agricultural sector and tourism. The village is within commuting distance of Tyneside.

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**2.77 Haydon Bridge** is located in the South Tyne Valley, west of Hexham. While it is within the commuting influence of Tyneside, its main role is as a local housing and service centre for its immediate surroundings. The main high school in the south-west of the County is located in Haydon Bridge.

### Housing – development pressure and delivery

**2.78** Development across the West of the County generally serves local markets and pressure for development is relatively low. However, the reaction to historic development pressure in the extreme south east of the area is reflected in Green Belt designation. The housing delivery strategy of adopted planning policy sought to stabilise the population in this area. This has largely been achieved with the exception of Haltwhistle which has seen an unintended decrease.

### Transport

**2.79** The east-west Tyne Gap corridor runs through the area, with the Tyne Valley rail line, relatively frequent bus services and the A69 Trunk Road connecting the settlements of Haltwhistle, Haydon Bridge and Bardon Mill with Hexham. The route also provides links to Carlisle and, from there, north-south, as well as west to the port of Stranraer. The route also connects the area with the Tyneside conurbation and its links north-south. Within the Delivery Area, the North Tyne Valley and, to the south, the Allen Valleys and the upstream part of the South Tyne are more poorly connected by road or public transport.

### Economy

**2.80** The economy of the area is dominated by agriculture, forestry and tourism. Although the area has a high percentage of people of working age (63%), the population is ageing.

### Relationships with other areas

- There are strong social, economic and cultural relationships with Hexham in the Central Northumberland Delivery Area, with residents looking to the town for key services;
- The eastern part of the Delivery Area is on the periphery of the main Tyneside commuter zone;
- Links with Carlisle and Cumbria are stronger here than elsewhere in the County.

### 3. Spatial vision, objectives and outcomes

#### Vision

**3.1** The vision sets out what the Core Strategy intends to achieve, the vision informs all of the policies within the plan. It also reflects the Northumberland Sustainable Community Strategy (2011), Corporate Priorities set out within the Corporate Plan and the Northumberland Economic Strategy (2015) which seeks to deliver a prosperous Northumberland, founded on quality local jobs and connected communities.

#### **Spatial vision**

Northumberland's physical and cultural identity will be conserved and nurtured; its resources will be utilised in a sustainable way. The breadth, scale and quality of its special, varied landscapes and biodiversity will be conserved, enhanced and increased. The quality of its buildings and spaces will be conserved and improved. New development will minimise environmental harm and reduce the effects on climate change.

By 2031 the County's communities will be healthier, more resilient, sustainable and competitive; the balance between young and older people living across Northumberland will be more even. Communities will have access to a decent home that they can afford. The Northumberland economy will be thriving and competitive, diversified by continuous investment in ICT, green industries and physical links with the Tyneside and Edinburgh conurbations. Its visitor economy in particular will have matured and grown, supported by continuous investment in the protection of its heritage and other environmental assets.

#### **Strategic objectives**

**3.2** Strategic Objectives, shown in Figure 3.1, have been developed to deliver the vision for Northumberland. They clearly relate to the issues identified within the spatial portrait section. Given the importance of Northumberland's environment, the overarching aim is to deliver sustainable economic growth whilst conserving and enhancing Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic and built environment. The strategic objectives are all interlinked and not shown in priority order.

### 3. Spatial vision, objectives and outcomes

Figure 3.1 Strategic objectives



#### Strategic outcomes

**3.3** The text that follows highlights the strategic outcomes of the Core Strategy by strategic objective, i.e. what Northumberland will look like in 2031.

#### Delivering a thriving and competitive economy

**3.4** The Economic Strategy sets out a vision for growing Northumberland's economy to 2020. It seeks to deliver a prosperous Northumberland founded on quality local jobs and connected communities. The Core Strategy provides positive planning policies to enable development to take place, encourage economic vitality and to allow Northumberland residents to be able to access facilities, education and training and retail choice in convenient locations across the County.

### 3. Spatial vision, objectives and outcomes

#### 3.5 Key outcomes:

- Land will have been identified in sustainable locations to meet demand, allow for choice and to provide for an additional 10,000 new jobs<sup>(24)</sup>;
- Close cooperation across boundaries will ensure that locations in the South East and Central Delivery Areas of Northumberland will be seen regionally, as attractive alternatives to the Tyneside market;
- Existing employment sites will have been protected relative to need and demand;
- A diverse range of interconnected sites around the Blyth Estuary will have been provided and will have supported growth of strategically important sectors;
- High quality office accommodation will have been developed at Northumberland Business Park and in the other Main Towns;
- Northumberland's market towns will be key drivers of economic activity;
- The creation and expansion of hubs for business services and creative industries in the County's historic market towns, rural business developments, and more home run enterprises will have been realised;
- The tourism sector will have grown in a sustainable way benefiting rural areas, communities and visitors. The potential for Northumberland's environmental and historic assets to make a substantial contribution to the County's economy will have been realised, while ensuring their full protection, and where possible their enhancement. Tourist and visitor facilities will be located in appropriate locations;
- The economic benefits of the extraction of minerals will be given the appropriate weight in the determination of planning applications;
- A range of accessible opportunities for adults and young people to support them into education, employment and training will have been provided;
- Businesses will have benefited from the economic opportunities presented by an ageing population to offer goods and services to older people as consumers as well as using their skills and experience as part of the County's workforce;
- Forest management and processing and agriculture industries will have been supported and their economic growth facilitated;
- Appropriate retail, leisure and employment opportunities will have been located within town centres, with the existing vitality and viability protected;
- Transport and communications networks and the County's gateways to international growth – the Ports of Blyth and Berwick, and links to Newcastle International Airport and the East Coast Main Line - will have been supported and improved.

#### **Providing existing and future communities with a choice of decent, affordable homes**

**3.6** To assist in the delivery of economic growth the Core Strategy makes provision for at least 24,320 new homes in Northumberland over the plan period 2011-2031. It sets out a plan for an appropriate mix of types, sizes and tenures, to address both market and affordable housing needs. It will ensure a continuous supply of housing over the plan period that is aligned to job growth and infrastructure capacity.

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24 10,000 new headcount jobs not FTE jobs

### 3. Spatial vision, objectives and outcomes

#### 3.7 Key outcomes:

- The focus of new housing development will have been in the Main Towns and Service Centres across Northumberland. Areas of new homes will have been planned and designed to respect local character and safeguard the significance of heritage assets;
- In smaller settlements a level of housing development that is proportionate to the size of the settlement, and appropriate to its character, will have been delivered, meeting local needs wherever possible;
- Significant progress will have been made towards addressing the shortfall in affordable homes across Northumberland;
- Housing will have been provided by a variety of methods including, by community land trusts and through self-build;
- A range of housing tenures, types, prices and sizes will have been provided in order to help meet local needs for different groups of the population, including meeting the needs of an ageing population;
- Housing design and location will allow older people and vulnerable groups to live as independent lives as possible;
- Lifetime neighbourhoods will have been developed in locations which have the greatest potential to support older people to remain independent as they age;
- New sites will have been provided for any additional identified need for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

#### **Conserving and enhancing Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, water, historic and built environments**

**3.8** Northumberland's natural, water and historic environment is distinctive and valued. It is a significant asset to both people that live in the County and the wider region. It makes an important contribution to the character, quality of life, and sense of place and the economy of Northumberland. It is a valuable resource for communities, businesses and visitors.

#### 3.9 Key outcomes:

- Northumberland's natural, water, historic and built environments will continue to be experienced and valued by residents and visitors, within the scope that is possible to maintain their full conservation and allow for their enhancement where appropriate;
- Wherever possible, development will have been directed away from our most sensitive and valuable natural assets, habitats and species, towards less sensitive locations;
- New development will have contributed to the delivery of priorities set out by the Local Nature Partnerships or other strategic biodiversity initiatives;
- Northumberland's Green Infrastructure networks will have been maintained and enhanced;
- The landscape character of Northumberland will have been protected and enhanced;
- Tranquillity and Northumberland's dark skies will have been protected;
- Development will have been avoided that would have an adverse impact on water quality;
- Satisfactory provision will have been made as part of development proposals for water supply and sewerage infrastructure to ensure sustainable water management and drainage;
- The character of the historic settlements will have been conserved and enhanced;

### 3. Spatial vision, objectives and outcomes

- Features and areas of historical and cultural value will have been conserved and where possible enhanced in accordance with their significance, including the sensitive re-use of historical buildings and a reduction in buildings at risk;
- Northumberland's distinctive heritage will have been used as the inspiration for new developments;
- Archaeological sites and features will have been protected in accordance with their significance;
- The outstanding universal value of the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage site will have been protected from inappropriate development;
- Opportunities will have been taken to better reveal the significance of heritage assets;
- The design and management of public spaces is suitable for all.

#### Ensuring connectivity and infrastructure delivery

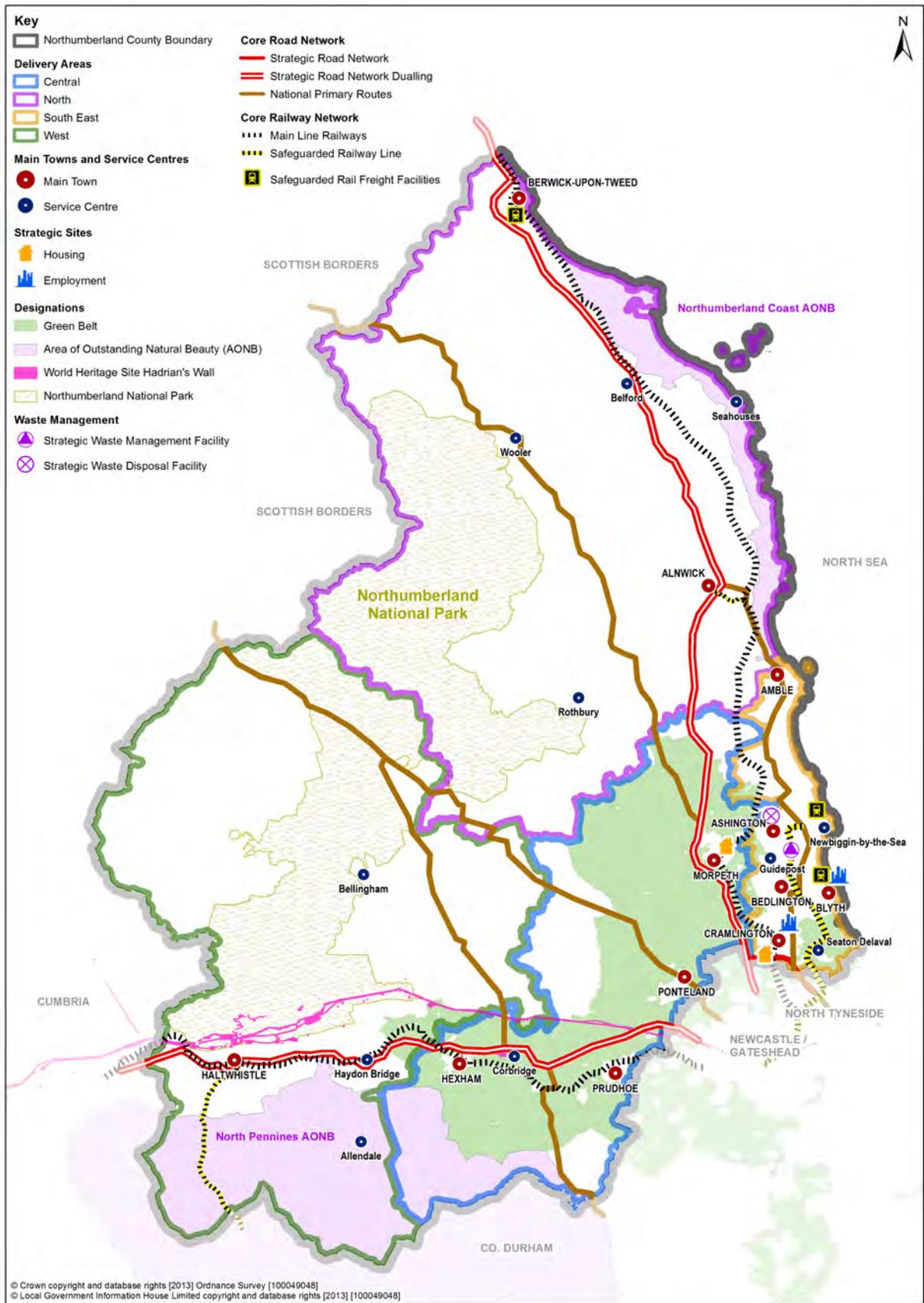
**3.10** The required level of growth across Northumberland will increase demand on local infrastructure services and facilities. The Core Strategy ensures that infrastructure requirements are appropriately planned, secured and implemented to ensure the timely delivery of development proposals.

#### 3.11 Key outcomes:

- Provision of essential infrastructure e.g. transport, water supply, sewerage, energy, flood alleviation, telecommunication, education, and health care, will have been coordinated and positively planned for;
- There will have been effective partnership working between the Council, other infrastructure providers and developers to facilitate infrastructure delivery and opportunities for the co-location and multi-functional use of existing and new infrastructure services, amenities and facilities;
- Existing infrastructure services and facilities will have been protected, unless they are no longer needed or there is alternative provision elsewhere;
- The provision of new or improved infrastructure, where need is demonstrated, will have been positively supported, provided there is no detrimental environmental impact;
- A range of viable, efficient sustainable transport alternatives will have been provided to reduce reliance on the private motor vehicle, although it is recognised that in rural areas reliance on the private car will remain extensive;
- Improvements to transport and communications infrastructure and the County's gateways to international growth – Dualling of the A1 and A69, the East Coast Main Line and Tyne Valley Railways, the Ports of Blyth and Berwick, passenger services on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line, and links to Newcastle International Airport will have been supported;
- County highways and Highways Agency roads will have been improved to incorporate safe, comfortable and convenient standards for cycling, facilitating increased travel by cycle and reduced car dependence.

### 3. Spatial vision, objectives and outcomes

Figure 3.2 Key diagram



## 3. Spatial vision, objectives and outcomes

### Community well-being

**3.12** The Core Strategy will set out the strategic policies required to maintain and create sustainable communities throughout Northumberland.

**3.13** Key outcomes:

- Accessible local services and community facilities will have been protected and where possible, enhanced;
- State of the art hospitals will provide improved healthcare;
- Communities will have access to high quality education facilities;
- Neighbourhood Plans will have been produced by communities that wish to promote particular development in their areas, adding detail to the overarching policies within the Core Strategy;
- Strategic growth will have been matched by the delivery of improved and new community infrastructure.

### Addressing climate change

**3.14** Tackling climate change is a key role for the planning system by contributing to the delivery of the most sustainable development and by shaping communities that are resilient to the unavoidable consequences of a changing climate. Climate change poses a long term threat to preserving the special landscapes and cultural heritage of the County.

**3.15** Key outcomes:

- A sustainable pattern of development will have been delivered, including the focusing of the provision of housing, employment, education, healthcare and retail particularly within Main Towns and Service Centres resulting in a reduction in the need to travel;
- The supply of energy and heat from renewable and low carbon sources will have contributed towards meeting national targets and helped to address fuel poverty;
- New development will have incorporated sustainable building practices and where possible will have contributed to improving the existing building stock;
- High energy efficiency will have been incorporated into new development;
- New developments will have been effectively assessed for the risk of flooding and if appropriate will have been sited elsewhere.

### Managing natural resources

**3.16** Northumberland is rich in energy resources. Its minerals provide the raw materials that are necessary to deliver the infrastructure, buildings, goods and energy that both society and the economy needs. There is also potential for further renewable energy development, however it is recognised that there is a limit to the scale of wind energy development that can be accommodated in Northumberland without significantly adversely affecting the special landscapes and cultural heritage of the County, or impacting on residential amenity. Alternatives to wind energy are increasing in prominence as technology advances.

### 3. Spatial vision, objectives and outcomes

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**3.17** The efficient use of land and buildings is important when planning for housing and economic development. Sustainable design and construction seeks to create high quality developments that are cheaper to run, consume less energy and minimise their environmental impact.

**3.18** Key outcomes:

- Finite mineral resources across the County have not been unnecessarily sterilised and land has been made available to meet defined needs;
- Minerals extraction, transport and processing does not have unacceptable adverse impacts on natural resources (air, water, soil), the environment or local communities;
- There has been no net loss of biodiversity, with the creation of new priority habitats and green infrastructure in minerals reclamation schemes;
- The minerals industry remains an important source of employment;
- Northumberland continues to have a well-established and spatially distributed network of waste management facilities, with sufficient capacity. Recycling and recovery rates are maximised;
- The need to generate energy is effectively balanced with the need to protect Northumberland's environment and communities from any significant adverse impacts associated with it;
- Efficient use is made of land and existing buildings, with priority given to the development of previously developed land, wherever possible.

### 4. Delivering the vision for Northumberland

**4.1** The Core Strategy needs to define the level and distribution of development and specific policies that are required to deliver the spatial vision. The vision and objectives highlight the importance of protecting and enhancing the physical and cultural identity of Northumberland, but also the need to allow development to grow and diversify the economy to support the resilience of local communities.

**4.2** Throughout the preparation of the Core Strategy the Council has identified, considered and sought feedback on a number of potential strategic development options, setting out the potential level and location of new housing and economic development.

**4.3** The most significant challenge to the delivery of the vision of the Core Strategy is the profile of the Northumberland population. Without positive policy intervention, projections show that there is likely to be a significant accelerating ageing of Northumberland's population. Between 2012 and 2031 there is projected to be a significant increase in those over 65:

- 52.6% increase in the over 65 age group (from 66,691 to 101,769);
- 48.7% increase in the 70 to 79 age group (from 27,887 to 41,469);
- 90.5% increase in the 80 to 89 age group (from 14,363 to 27,363); and
- 161.4% increase in the 90+ age group (from 2,953 to 7,640).

**4.4** Alongside this, the core working age population of 20 to 64 year olds is projected to decrease from 181,695 to 159,545, a reduction of 22,150 (-12.2%). The impact of this is a significantly shrinking labour force, with fewer working age people within the County. This change in the age profile has substantial potential to have a significant negative impact on the long term diversity and resilience of communities across Northumberland.

**4.5 The Council considers that it is not an appropriate option to plan a level of development to meet population projections.** This will not provide the working age population to allow the economy to grow to deliver 10,000 additional jobs as identified in the Council's Economic Strategy. It is considered that this approach would unacceptably impact on the vitality and resilience of Northumberland Communities. Some of the potential impacts include:

- Reduction in the level of wealth created and retained within the County;
- Further pressure imposed on spending in the public sector on social care and welfare;
- Impact of reduced local expenditure - reducing income to local businesses and threatening further job losses;
- The appetite for innovation and creativity may be suppressed - with those who have marketable or transferable skills moving elsewhere to find employment or further, higher education or training;
- The County as a whole could become less competitive in increasingly competitive markets;
- There is a risk of lower aspirations in education and learning; and
- The reduction in wealth creation may be accompanied by reduced investment in the buildings and spaces which make up the fabric of the County's towns and villages, together with its natural and historic environments. This in turn may impact on the

## 4. Delivering the vision for Northumberland

ability to attract new investment in the new economy; most notably digital, media, telecommunications and software.

**4.6** The Council considers there is a high level of risk of limited benefits and potentially high costs to the social and economic well-being of the wider community from the adoption of a policy of no, or limited growth, because the County will not have the labour force to sustain economic growth.

### Delivering a prosperous Northumberland economy

**4.7** In order to deliver the Economic Strategy which seeks to deliver a prosperous Northumberland founded on quality local jobs and connected communities, with 10,000 additional jobs to 2031, the Core Strategy needs to:

- Provide a portfolio of high quality sites in the right locations which are attractive to the market – planning for the provision of 381ha of available land for economic development to 2031;
- Support locations in the South East and Central Delivery Areas as cost effective alternatives to the Tyneside market for industrial development;
- Provide a diverse range of interconnected sites around the Blyth Estuary to provide for growth of the strategically important sectors – low carbon and environmental goods, energy generation, and offshore engineering;
- Support the development of high quality office accommodation at Northumberland Business Park, and key locations in the other Main Towns;
- Support the creation and expansion of hubs for business services and creative industries in the County's historic market towns, rural business developments, and through more home run enterprises;
- Support spatially initiatives to improve skills levels in Northumberland's resident work force in accordance with the Northumberland Skills Strategy;
- Support the growth of tourism facilities and accommodation;
- Support improvements to transport and telecommunications infrastructure, and the County's gateways to international growth – The Ports of Blyth and Berwick, links to Newcastle International Airport and the East Coast Main Line;
- Support the objectives of partners including the North East Local Enterprise Partnership to support business investment.

### Extending choice in the housing market

**4.8** In order to increase the level of the working age population within Northumberland to support the delivery of the Economic Strategy, the Core Strategy must significantly boost the housing supply, to extend choice in the housing market, including the provision of affordable housing. The objectively assessed housing need is for the provision of at least 24,320 new dwellings (average of 1,216 dwellings per annum) over the plan period. This will help to:

- Increase household formation;
- Increase the numbers of skilled workers moving into the County;
- Reduce those moving away;
- Help to rebalance and re-energise the resident population;
- Assist in the provision of housing for older people and vulnerable groups;

## 4. Delivering the vision for Northumberland

- Maintain and enhance local services; and
- Strengthen the labour force.

### Delivering sustainable development

**4.9** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and the Core Strategy seeks to encourage sustainable development through growing the economy, supporting healthy and vibrant communities and contributing to protecting and enhancing the natural, built, water and historic environment of Northumberland.

**4.10** The presumption in favour of sustainable development means that unless specific policies in the NPPF indicate otherwise or adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, the Core Strategy is required to:

- Take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development;
- Positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of Northumberland; and
- Meet objectively assessed development needs, with flexibility to adapt to rapid change.

**4.11** The NPPF also advises that the planning system should adopt a proactive approach to address the potential social, economic and environmental impacts of climate change and support the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy.

**4.12** The overarching sustainable development policy seeks to ensure that all development reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This approach has been fully supported through previous consultations on the Core Strategy and in the Sustainability Appraisal.

### Policy 1

#### Sustainable development

In plan-making and assessing development proposals the Council will take a positive approach which reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development and delivers across the range of the economic, social and environmental factors. Consideration will be given to how the plan or proposal, where appropriate:

- a. Contributes to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy across Northumberland, including the protection and enhancement of the vitality and viability of Northumberland's town centres and other important economic sectors;
- b. Provides a type and mix of housing to meet objectively assessed needs, including meeting the needs of an ageing population;
- c. Supports and improves pathways for all to health, social and cultural wellbeing and provides the infrastructure which is required to enhance the quality of life of individuals and communities;
- d. Impacts on and contributes to the conservation and enhancement of Northumberland's natural, historic, water and built environment assets;

## 4. Delivering the vision for Northumberland

- e. Impacts on ecosystems and how it can contribute to net gains for biodiversity and establishing a coherent and resilient ecological network;
- f. Prevents or minimises waste and makes prudent and effective use of Northumberland's available finite and renewable resources, including water, minerals, soil, land and buildings, particularly through the re-use of brownfield sites;
- g. Demonstrates high quality sustainable design that respects and enhances: the local distinctiveness of the natural, historic and built environment, helps promote a sense of place, reduces the need for energy and facilitates flexible and adaptable buildings and environments; and
- h. Is resilient to economic, social, and environmental change by:
  - i. Focusing significant development in locations which are accessible by, or can be made accessible by public transport, walking or cycling, thereby reducing the need to travel for both people and goods;
  - ii. Recognising the intrinsic rural nature of the County where there are different opportunities to achieve sustainable development;
  - iii. Promoting opportunities to reduce dependence on travel by private car;
  - iv. Promoting opportunities to maximise: renewable and low carbon energy capacity; decentralised energy supply systems (based upon renewable or low carbon energy); and carbon storage;
  - v. Locating development in areas which are least vulnerable to climatic impacts such as risk from all sources of flooding and rising sea levels; and
  - vi. Mitigating anticipated impacts, including those from climate change, on the natural environment, including landscape, biodiversity, ecosystems and water resources. If mitigation is not appropriate or suitable, then development should be sited elsewhere.

### High quality sustainable design

**4.13** Design is an integral aspect of sustainable development and as a result is fundamental to the successful delivery of the Core Strategy. The NPPF attaches great importance to achieving high quality, inclusive design through the planning process and recognises that good design is 'indivisible from good planning'<sup>(25)</sup>.

**4.14** Northumberland is rich in natural beauty and built heritage. It is important that the character of Northumberland, the essence of what makes it unique and distinctive, is not only conserved but enhanced and enriched by new development. Innovative design which reflects changing architectural styles and construction can make a valuable contribution towards this objective. Appropriate consideration should be given by developers, designers and assessors to the reality that the buildings and places created now will become part of Northumberland's heritage and legacy in the future.

**4.15** Delivering high quality design is not only about creating an aesthetically pleasing built environment. Design can have a significant impact upon how people experience buildings and places. Successful, inclusive places respond to the needs of all potential

25 National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012, paragraph 56.

## 4. Delivering the vision for Northumberland

users and enable people with different physical requirements to interact positively with the environment. A well designed place is legible and permeable and therefore the user can intuitively understand the layout and move through the area with ease. For example, the design of a site could include points of reference such as public spaces to aid navigation and provide alternative pedestrian routes to improve circulation. A well designed, inclusive building or place is valued because of the many qualities that contribute to how it is experienced by the user. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Functionality and fitness for purpose;
- Layout, form, orientation, scale, materials and detailing in relation to context;
- Construction, operation and maintenance;
- Legibility of spaces and ease of movement;
- Vitality and distinctiveness;
- Resilience and adaptability to changing circumstances and demands; and
- Safety and security.

**4.16** The design process should grow from a robust analysis of both the immediate context and the wider locality. How a design evolves and the way in which the designer has responded to the key considerations listed above should be demonstrated within a Design and Access Statement<sup>(26)</sup> as part of a planning application. Clarification of the design process, whether through sketches or written description, is vital to the assessment of a development proposal as it demonstrates how key design principles have been considered.

**4.17** The Council recognises that new development which responds to the principles of good design has the potential to maintain, enhance and enrich existing environments, in addition to creating vibrant new places. The social, environmental and economic benefits of good design to both the user and the wider community are well documented. Among the many benefits, a well-designed building or place can increase value and reduce whole life operating and maintenance costs to the user. General wellbeing of individuals and communities can also be enhanced by high quality public spaces and buildings by encouraging healthier lifestyles and improving general amenity. In terms of the environment, good design can contribute towards lessening the effects of climate change and promoting efficient use of finite natural resources.

### Sustainable design and the environment

**4.18** The sustainable design and construction of new development has an important role to play in reducing running costs and improving energy efficiency. Improving the energy efficiency of buildings is also an essential part of achieving targets for a reduction in carbon emissions as over half of the UK's current carbon emission comes from the residential (25%) and business sector (31%)<sup>(27)</sup>.

**4.19** The Government's Housing Standards Review concluded that requirements for housing standards, in particular energy and carbon emission performance should be integrated into the Building Regulations and planning policies should not set out additional

26 Design and Access Statements are not required to accompany all planning applications. Requirements are set out in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment) Order 2013.

27 Based upon Department of Climate and Energy Change 2014 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Provisional Figures for end-user MtCO<sub>2</sub> emissions by sector.

## 4. Delivering the vision for Northumberland

requirements for developers. However, the NPPF recognises that there is a role within the planning system for promoting environmental sustainability and states that a core principle of planning is to support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate<sup>(28)</sup>.

**4.20** Improving the sustainability of building construction and use, and supporting small scale renewable and low carbon energy generation provides an opportunity to deliver the Core Strategy strategic objectives of addressing climate change and managing natural resources.

**4.21** Whilst Building Regulations address the standard of energy efficiency in buildings, the Core Strategy seeks to ensure that development is environmentally sustainable and as such applications will need to demonstrate that energy efficiency considerations have guided the design process. This includes consideration of opportunities to incorporate passive design measures, for example maximising the potential for solar gain and natural ventilation through the siting, orientation and layout of a development. Other key considerations include potential to connect to or incorporate district energy systems, renewable energy, water recycling and waste reduction.

**4.22** The Council recognises that improving sustainability may produce innovative designs which could be considered to be out of keeping with Northumberland's architectural character. Proposals for innovative design, which may include construction materials and techniques, will be supported, provided that they do not conflict with other policies in the plan, particularly where it can be demonstrated that the building will be compatible with its setting and will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment.

### Design guidance and accreditation schemes

**4.23** National design guidance and recognised design literature should be consulted in order to inform the design of proposed development. Over the plan period advice may evolve and therefore it will be important for developers, designers and assessors to consider changing guidance for high quality and sustainable design. There are also a number of internationally and nationally recognised voluntary accreditation schemes which can be used to guide sustainable design and demonstrate exemplary or innovative sustainable design standards. Particular support will be given to development proposals which are built to and certified by such accredited sustainability standards.

### **Policy 2**

#### **High quality sustainable design**

Development will be supported where it demonstrates high quality, sustainable and inclusive design. Design must contribute positively to place-making and be developed in response to a robust analysis of the character of the site and the surrounding area, in addition to the functional requirements of the intended use.

Proposals will be supported where development:

28 National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012, paragraph 17.

## 4. Delivering the vision for Northumberland

- a. Responds to the character of the wider setting, creating a distinctive environment which takes advantage of opportunities to preserve, enhance or enrich existing land forms, nature and heritage assets, local built vernacular and street patterns;
- b. Achieves a high standard of accessibility, permeability and legibility for all users with a clear and intuitive distinction between public and private space;
- c. Creates a safe environment by reducing opportunity for crime;
- d. Creates vibrant places which contribute positively to quality of life and wellbeing by inclusion of mixed use and tenure, high quality public spaces, landscaping and public art where appropriate;
- e. Responds positively to context and local character with regard to: orientation, form, layout, height and scale, density, materials and architectural detailing;
- f. Demonstrates adaptability and resilience to changing circumstances and demands of the user, the wider community and the environment;
- g. Incorporates a high standard of materials with a view to providing durable, high quality buildings and places;
- h. Protects the general amenity of both direct and indirect users; and
- i. Demonstrates a commitment to sustainable design and strives to achieve high energy efficiency and low or zero carbon energy generation by:
  - i. Incorporating passive design measures to improve the efficiency of heating, cooling, ventilation and lighting. Therefore lessening the reliance on artificial alternatives through: siting, design, layout and building orientation that maximises sunlight and daylight, passive ventilation and avoids overshadowing;
  - ii. Incorporating waste reduction and recycling measures during both the construction phase and in the design of the development, to ensure there is appropriate storage space and segregation facilities for recyclable and non-recyclable waste;
  - iii. Incorporating small-scale renewable and low carbon energy generation into the design of new developments where appropriate and viable and where there would be no unacceptable adverse effects on landscape, ecology, heritage assets and amenity;
  - iv. Incorporating measures to reduce both the external and internal use of potable water, including the use of water recycling systems; and
  - v. Connecting to an existing or approved district energy scheme where available and viable and in the case of major development proposals consider opportunities to incorporate a district energy network.

Particular support in decision making will be afforded to proposals which incorporate exemplary or innovative design and sustainability standards.

Where a Design and Access Statement is required as part of a planning application, there must be a clear demonstration of how the proposal has responded to the above principles as an integral part of the design development process.

## 4. Delivering the vision for Northumberland

### Spatial distribution

**4.24** The development strategies of the former District Councils across Northumberland sought to concentrate development in existing settlements and limit new development in the open countryside, making more efficient use of existing infrastructure and services and reducing the need to travel by private car. This has generally been successful in directing new development to sustainable locations and supporting the regeneration of south east Northumberland and the County's market towns.

**4.25** This approach was generally supported through previous consultations on the Core Strategy, subject to an amended approach which would allow for an increase of development across the County including supporting appropriate development in rural areas to sustain communities.

**4.26** In accordance with NPPF, the Core Strategy takes a positive view of development that improves the sustainability of existing settlements and rural communities. Where a proposal is being justified under Policy 3 f. vii, applicants will be expected to have made use of a design review panel or equivalent.

**4.27** The Sustainability Appraisal highlights that this approach has a major positive effect on social and economic objectives.

### Policy 3

#### Spatial distribution

To deliver sustainable development and sustain the vitality of local communities across Northumberland the following strategic planning principles apply in both plan-making and assessing development proposals:

- a. The Main Towns of: Alwick, Amble, Ashington, Bedlington, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Blyth, Cramlington, Haltwhistle, Hexham, Morpeth, Ponteland and Prudhoe, as key hubs for housing, employment, education, healthcare, retail, transport and tourism, will be the main focus for development to underpin their social, economic, environmental and cultural regeneration;
- b. Additional large-scale development and growth will be focused on key locations in Blyth, Cramlington and Morpeth to support the rejuvenation and revitalisation of communities, by identifying and supporting targeted levels of development;
- c. The regeneration of Ashington will be supported by utilising the wider town centre regeneration proposals as a catalyst for creating the conditions for social growth and resilience within the town. New housing development will be required to support the existing housing market by helping to extend choice to achieve a balanced housing market;
- d. Allendale, Belford, Bellingham, Corbridge, Guidepost/Stakeford/Choppington, Haydon Bridge, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Rothbury, Seahouses, Seaton Delaval/New Hartley/Seghill/Holywell/Seaton Sluice and Wooler will continue to be supported as Service Centres with critical masses of services, accessible to their resident communities and those within other settlements clustered in their hinterlands. Development will be supported that maintains and strengthens this role;

## 4. Delivering the vision for Northumberland

- e. Recognising the need to take a positive view of development that improves the sustainability of smaller settlements and the communities within them, in other settlements development will be allowed which demonstrates that it:
  - i. Meets the identified and defined social, economic and/or cultural needs of the local community;
  - ii. Can be accommodated within or if necessary next to the settlement without adversely impacting on its character;
  - iii. Is of an appropriate scale for the size of the settlement;
  - iv. Maintains or enhances local services and facilities, including those located outside the particular settlement in which the proposed development will be located;
  - v. Provides appropriate mitigation to minimise harm to the countryside; and
  - vi. Protects the countryside from widespread new development.
  
- f. Isolated development in the open countryside will only be supported where it:
  - i. Is directly related to the needs of primary activity in agriculture, forestry, other land based industries, rural businesses, or the sustainable diversification of such activities;
  - ii. Supports the sustainable growth and expansion of an existing business;
  - iii. Supports a newly forming business which requires a location in a rural setting;
  - iv. Supports or adds to the range of sustainable visitor attractions and facilities appropriate to the character of the area;
  - v. Would support existing sustainable clusters of services and community facilities including those outside the settlement in which the development is located;
  - vi. Reuses redundant or disused buildings and leads to an enhancement of the immediate setting; and/ or
  - vii. Is a house, the architecture of which is innovative and of the highest standard, it significantly enhances its immediate setting, and is sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

## 5. Delivering a thriving and competitive economy

### 5. Delivering a thriving and competitive economy

**5.1** One of the strategic objectives of the Core Strategy is to deliver a thriving and competitive economy. The Core Strategy seeks to grow and diversify the Northumberland economy by making Northumberland an attractive and competitive place to start, grow and invest in a broad range of businesses. This is essential if the number and quality of jobs available increases to lower the rate of unemployment of Northumberland residents and attract and retain working age people. Decreased net out commuting can and will only happen if the number of Northumberland based jobs increases. The role of Northumberland as a commuter belt for Tyneside is important to the Northumberland economy and cannot be denied, but it is also essential that the Core Strategy also supports growth in the number and quality of Northumberland based jobs, and allocates employment land that will make them accessible to workers across the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) area.

#### Economic policy and strategy framework

**5.2** The NPPF sets out that the planning system should do everything it can to support economic growth and have a clear economic vision and strategy for the area. Central to this is providing the right sites in the right locations based on needs of business, including providing for new sectors and business clusters. However, NPPF also stresses that planning policy needs to be adaptable to change and able to accommodate unanticipated need and so should be flexible to other uses on poorly performing allocated land. This underpins the Council's strategic policy approach.

**5.3** The NELEP in their Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) for the North East (2014) set out a vision that by 2024 the economy of the NELEP area<sup>(29)</sup> will provide over one million jobs, which is equivalent to an 11% increase in employment or about 100,000 new jobs. The SEP identifies key strengths and opportunities, and it sets out a structured investment plan to facilitate growth. To achieve this aim three key targets are proposed which aim to halve the gap between the national average (excluding London) and that of the NELEP. These are to increase the: density of private sector jobs; economic activity rate; and the value of each full-time job. The SEP also proposes to fully close the gap in terms of the level of employment.

**5.4** Northumberland has around 13% of the current jobs in the NELEP area. When the 100,000 SEP job growth target is applied to Northumberland this would suggest the need to provide between 6,000 to 13,000<sup>(30)</sup> additional Northumberland based jobs to 2024, the timescale of the SEP. The SEP specifically identifies the Cramlington Industrial Estates, Northumberland Business Park and land around Narec, the 'Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult', at Blyth as locations which can accommodate this growth.

**5.5** The Northumberland Economic Strategy (2015-2020) seeks to support the SEP with a long term plan for the creation 10,000 additional jobs to 2031. Its vision by 2020 is for a "prosperous Northumberland founded on quality jobs and connected communities". The Economic Strategy identifies how key growth priorities will be supported through an 'Investment Zone' in the South East Northumberland and Central Northumberland areas,

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29 Covering the local authority areas of Northumberland, Durham, Newcastle, Gateshead, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland.

30 Depending on the interpretation of the SEPs plan to fully close the gap between the employment rate of the NELEP area and the national average.

## 5. Delivering a thriving and competitive economy

where spending will help deliver industrial development and better connectivity with the Tyneside market; and a 'Growth Network beyond', centred on the network of Market Towns. In particular the Economic Strategy emphasises the economic benefits of:

- The reopening of the Ashington Blyth Tyne Line to passenger transport;
- The construction of the Morpeth Northern Bypass; and
- The potential for economic growth around the Blyth Estuary.

**5.6** The Full Draft Plan presented the proposed overall supply of employment land but due to ongoing evidence work the distribution was not presented. Consequently many of those who responded declined to make comments until this was made clear. There was support from many, including statutory consultees. However others questioned whether the proposed allocation and job growth target was justified and suggested that evidence needed to be more clearly presented. There were several comments relating to particular settlements such as the need for additional land in Alnwick, and further land space for employment development in Morpeth to complement proposed housing development. It was also suggested that the plan should give clarity to how large strategic sites such as County Hall and the former Alcan site would be redeveloped. The proposed distribution of employment land in the Preferred Options stage 2 resulted in a number of site specific comments which have been closely considered.

### Forecasting employment growth

**5.7** It is vital that the Council allocates the right amount of land in the right locations through the Core Strategy to support the delivery of the Economic Strategy and meet the identified needs of businesses over the plan period. Allocating too much land could:

- Make employment sites more vulnerable to pressure for their release for housing or other development; and
- Spread investment too thinly to stimulate any development, with little chance of the development of industry clusters.

**5.8** Allocating too little employment land could limit the growth of indigenous firms and could possibly deter inward investment.

**5.9** Long-term employment forecasts inform the assessment of objectively assessed need for economic development land.

**5.10** Initial long-term employment forecasts were undertaken in 2010. These forecasts informed the Northumberland Employment Land Review (2011). The forecasts were revised in 2014 to give a post-recession forecast of economic growth in the County between 2011 and 2031. The forecasts factored in GVA growth from 1.51% to 1.95% per annum, which was slightly lower than the 2010 forecasts. Four scenarios were tested, as summarised below<sup>(31)</sup>, these illustrate the predicted impact on new full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs over the plan period. The 'policy' scenario included assumptions around increased growth in certain sectors owing to national, regional and local policy and investment plans.

- Lower growth scenario: 1,600 additional jobs (2%), but a 6% decline (5,100) in FTE jobs;

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31 Long Term Employment Forecasts - [www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3458](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3458)

## 5. Delivering a thriving and competitive economy

- Baseline scenario: 4,600 additional jobs (5%), but 3% decline in FTEs;
- Higher scenario: 9,500 additional jobs (9%), but only 2% (1,500) additional FTEs;
- Policy intervention scenario: – 10,200 additional jobs (10%), with 2% (2,100) growth in FTEs.

**5.11** The forecasts are a robust foundation for the objectively assessed economic development needs and they were undertaken independently from the LEP's Strategic Economic Plan.

**5.12** The baseline or lower scenarios are not appropriate forecasts to plan for in the Core Strategy. Both scenarios would result in a decline in the level of full time employment, which would impact on prosperity and social well-being. The levels of job growth forecast to be achieved in either scenario would fall far short of the growth targets in the SEP and the Northumberland Economic Strategy.

**5.13** A positive but realistic growth scenario is required for Northumberland if it is to help to support the delivery of the ambitious growth and investment targets set out in the SEP. The higher growth scenario is considered ambitious yet achievable and will support the provision of a level of jobs required to keep the County's communities and businesses sustainable and enable it to maintain its role in the wider functional economic area. This level of job creation is considered to be deliverable as it is consistent with past performance in Northumberland. Between 2000 and 2010 8,000 jobs were created in the County, giving a total of 124,000<sup>(32)</sup> Northumberland based jobs at the beginning of the plan period. After slight decline in 2011-2012, 2013 saw a return to growth.

**5.14** Therefore the **Core Strategy will plan for the creation of 10,000 additional jobs in Northumberland to 2031.**

**5.15** For this strategy to be successful, policy intervention will be required to:

- Increase the working age population;
- Increase the inflow of people moving to Northumberland;
- Reduce the outflow of people moving away from Northumberland;
- Continue the recent decrease in the net outflow of commuters; and
- Return levels of unemployment to pre-recession levels.

**5.16** As a result of the demographic changes forecast for Northumberland over the plan period, and specifically the projected decline in the labour force, the delivery of the Economic Strategy is dependent on a continuation of the recent decline in the commuting<sup>(33)</sup> of people from Northumberland, and unemployment levels returning to pre-recession levels. It is not realistic to expect commuting to be influenced to the point that there would be a net inflow of workers to Northumberland, as Tyneside is undoubtedly the driver of the NELEP economy. However, a continued reduction of the net outflow to a realistic point is considered to be achievable, both through more Northumberland residents living and working in the County, and more people commuting into the County. The planned reduction

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32 The target to add 10,000 jobs to 2031 is additional Northumberland based jobs beyond this figure.

33 The balance between the numbers of Northumberland based jobs and the number of Northumberland residents in employment. Commuting flows are the relationship between residents commuting to work outside the County, and workers from other areas commuting into Northumberland. A net outflow is when more residents commute out than people commuting in.

## 5. Delivering a thriving and competitive economy

in out-commuting is also in line with the Joint Core Strategy of Newcastle/Gateshead, the main destination for Northumberland's out commuters, which is seeking to grow its residential workforce and reduce the proportion of jobs occupied by commuters.

**5.17** The Higher employment scenario was tested to see to what degree these factors would need to be realistically influenced to deliver the preferred level of job growth and a sustainable level of housing development. The following assumptions were applied, which are considered appropriate, realistic and achievable:

- The commuting ratio to decline steadily, and at a rate consistent with recent change, over the plan period, so that by 2031 the ratio will be slightly below the lowest level experienced for 2004-2013. The average over the plan period would be slightly lower than the average over this 9 year period; and
- The unemployment rate to decline steadily to 4.4% by 2031, which is the lowest annual average experienced during the pre-recession growth years of economic growth. The projected average over the plan period would be lower than for 2004-2013, which includes years of severe recession, and which employment projections do not forecast a repetition of during the plan period.

### Forecasting employment land need

**5.18** The Employment Land Review (2011) (ELR) converted 2010 to 2030 employment forecasts into employment land requirements for the plan period<sup>(34)</sup>; it suggested that 293 to 317 hectares would be required.

**5.19** Employment land need projections have been rerun using the ELR methodology<sup>(35)</sup> and have incorporated:

- The 2014 employment projections;
- Updated data on land take-up and employment land lost to other uses (average for the period 1999-2014);and
- National guidance on the conversion of the density of job numbers into employment land requirements.

**5.20** Using the ELR methodology recalculation identifies that the following land is needed over the plan period:

**Table 5.1 Overall land need for the period 2011 to 2031 (hectares)**

Lower	Baseline	Higher	Policy	Past take-up
95	104	119	121	299

34 ELR assessed different scenarios and considered projections against past levels of employment land take-up, and other economic and demographic considerations to indicate the likely amount of land needed over the plan period.

35 Total employment land need derived from - Net land demand from projected growth in employment + annual average development of employment land for other uses projected for each year of the plan period + flexibility margin for developers based on annual average take-up.

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**5.21** The 'past take-up' scenario is not based on employment forecasts, it uses actual employment land take-up data for the 1999-2014 period<sup>(36)</sup> and then projects average annual take-up forward to 2031. This shows that if past levels of development are followed the amount of land required is well in excess of the most optimistic employment growth forecast.

**5.22** A number of other factors need to be considered when determining land need for the plan period:

- There is a degree of uncertainty when projecting employment growth over an extended time period, therefore consideration of past rates of development is needed;
- When sites are developed, a proportion is developed for supporting uses such as roads, substations and public landscaping. On current sites the average land use of such ancillary uses is about 18% of the site;
- The development of employment land does not always result in an increase in jobs. Manufacturers in particular may expand to accommodate automated systems meaning labour does not increase;
- There is a need to provide reasonable choice of sites in the market for businesses to move to as they expand. This is especially critical given the size of the County, as having available land and premises in other settlements may not provide any additional choice to the distinct commercial market of another town;
- As there is borderline viability in employment development schemes in the recovering regional economy the lead in time for new developments to move from application to the delivery of new floorspace is likely to have extended beyond 2 years; and
- Large scale inward investment can result in sudden up takes of land, suggesting the need for a high degree of flexibility to avoid a settlement exhausting its supply of land through a small number of land hungry developments; It is not desirable or prudent to plan for exhaustion of the supply of land at the end of the plan period.

**5.23** As a result, a flexibility margin of five years average take-up, rather than the modest two years used previously in the ELR, has been applied to the projections to account for these uncertainties.

**5.24** In addition, the employment forecast work shows a significant difference in the projected need for land to provide for the higher scenario (119 hectares), and that which would be needed if employment land was developed at the same rate as past trends (299 hectares). It is therefore appropriate to retain or allocate new land in addition to the requirement identified through employment forecasting to account for past rates and patterns of development.

**5.25** To provide for forecasted land need and accounting for past rates of development the **Core Strategy will plan for the supply of around 150 hectares of land for general employment development**, excluding the allocation of land around the Blyth Estuary to attract new industry sectors, and a prestige inward investment site at West Hartford.

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36 Northumberland Employment Land Historic Take-up Study (2015). Available at: <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3458>

## 5. Delivering a thriving and competitive economy

### Employment land supply and distribution

**5.26** The current employment land portfolio has nearly 1,200 hectares of developed employment land and 265 hectares of available land (excluding current 'expansion land' which will form most of the Blyth Estuary Strategic Employment Area). This suggests that there is currently an oversupply of land and that changes to the portfolio are required. Across the County a lot of the existing land is poor quality and in the wrong locations to meet market demand.

**5.27** To address the oversupply of land and give flexibility to allow for changing needs and unanticipated demand, the Core Strategy land portfolio:

- Provides a range of interconnected sites around the Blyth Estuary to provide for anticipated growth in strategically important sectors, utilising land currently held for expansion and new allocations;
- Protects sites most likely to attract B-class development for that use;
- Allocates new land for B-class development in areas where the supply of land is restricted and where there is market demand to develop employment opportunities;
- Takes a flexible approach to non B-class economic development, which will be supported on a range of other employment sites where there is already encroachment of other uses;
- De-allocates available land which is unlikely to attract future employment uses, is undeliverable due to unsurmountable constraints or costs, and areas of current employment sites which have been developed for housing, retail, leisure and other uses which exclude employment use over the plan period;
- Includes a windfall employment policy, which identifies the policy approach to unanticipated large scale B-class inward investment which the land portfolio cannot address.

**5.28** Industry engagement and analysis of land supply, demand and take up suggest that there is an imbalance between the location of available land across Northumberland and where businesses want to locate. There is insufficient land in the Central Delivery Area, with settlements such as Hexham, Prudhoe and Ponteland having little or none available. Other settlements have an oversupply of land in relation to past levels of development and identified market demand, or certain sites which have particular constraints may be undeliverable for employment development.

**5.29** The ELR suggested a number of changes to the employment land portfolio to provide a portfolio of sites more attractive to investment and address the issue of oversupply. A post-recession market view on these recommendations was provided through an analysis of the demand for employment land and premises<sup>(37)</sup> which included close consultation with the business community and commercial development industry. Table 5.2 shows the recommendations for the allocation of new, available employment land in the evidence base and the proposed approach in the plan.

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37 Northumberland Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015). Available at: <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3458>

## 5. Delivering a thriving and competitive economy

**Table 5.2 Employment land evidence recommendations and Core Strategy allocations**

Settlement	Evidence base recommendation	Allocation
Alnwick	Around 10 hectares of further industrial land if demand is proven in the long term.	Support for at least 10 hectares of new land to be allocated for B-class uses. There are a number of options for the location of this additional land, therefore the location and allocation will be determined in the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan.
Blyth	Intensification of existing employment sites or a new allocation to provide about 10 hectares.	No further employment allocations required given the overall supply in the Delivery Area. Available land on Riverside estates will continue to be allocated for employment use.
Corbridge	Allocate land to the north west of the town close to the A69 junction for small office development to serve the service centre and the surrounding market.	New allocation would require Green Belt deletion, and the North West of the town is constrained by heritage designations. No allocation proposed as new small scale developments can be delivered through further rural diversification schemes, and on new allocated land in nearby settlements, including Hexham.
Cramlington	Use land at West Hartford for general employment use, as well as single user inward investment. Remaining land at Northumberland Business Park should be opened up for non-office development.	West Hartford currently remains as a proposed allocation for general and strategic employment use – this allocation is subject to further site assessment/ delivery work.  Northumberland Business Park will be allocated for all B-class uses beyond office use.
East Sleekburn	New Greenfield site to provide specifically for investment in renewables.	36 hectares of greenfield land to be allocated as part of the Blyth Strategic Employment Area to the north of Brock Lane.
Hexham	10 to 15 hectares of new employment space needed due to constrained supply.	10 hectares of additional employment land to be allocated to the East of Egger, this requires Green Belt deletion.
Morpeth	5 hectares of land of office and industrial assuming the delivery of sites at Fairmoor. There may be demand for additional office accommodation, with the high quality environment of the town centre being the best location.	Any further additional employment allocation will require changes to the proposed inner Green Belt boundary for Morpeth due to a lack of available and deliverable sites. It is not proposed to allocate additional land in the Core Strategy but to monitor the take up of the sites at Fairmoor following the completion of the Morpeth Northern bypass and undertake a further assessment of need given the improved links with the South East of the County.
Rothbury	The existing employment site in the town should be extended to provide for an identified business	No additional land allocation. Employment policies within the plan would support the future use of land adjoining the existing estate to provide for a specific business need.

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Settlement	Evidence base recommendation	Allocation
	need, given that the current site is built out.	
Ponteland	The allocation of an additional 5 hectares of land for industrial and office use should be a priority, as there is no available land and identified market demand.	The emerging Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan identifies a long term aspiration to relocate businesses on the Meadowfield Industrial Estate to a site away from residential areas. The Neighbourhood Plan Group is undertaking further work to clarify the viability of this approach. To facilitate this in the long term around 5 hectares of land will be safeguarded outside of the Green Belt to the west of the Airport roundabout on the A696. It is of a size sufficient to accommodate existing employment development in Ponteland, and some additional growth. In addition, an allocation for a small office development as part of the redevelopment of the existing education and leisure facilities will be made to provide for market need in the town.
Prudhoe	Additional 10 hectares need for office and industrial use, given good levels of recent take-up.	An additional 4 hectares of land will be provided adjacent to the existing Low Prudhoe Industrial Estate, split between two plots: one of 1 hectare to the south west of the former Hammerite factory, and one of 3 hectares to the north east. The land to the south west will require the deletion of Green Belt land.

**5.30** The Core Strategy will continue to support employment development on 1,061 hectares of developed employment land and allocate 381 hectares of available land for employment use. This includes 179 hectares of available land for general employment use to facilitate the delivery of at least 10,000 additional jobs in the plan period. The proposal is beyond the 150 hectares suggested in the evidence base, but the deliverability of some land is still being reviewed, particularly at West Hartford and this total may change in the submission draft of the plan.

**5.31** The proposed Blyth Estuary Strategic Employment Area will provide 189 hectares of available land. This will increase the land supply significantly in excess of need identified in the evidence base. However, this is a strategic allocation intended to provide for specific emerging sectors which were not factored into land need projections, as they are based on the current structure of the County's economy. The prioritised sectors can require large amounts of land, and in particular, if RWE Npower realised their long term plans to build a clean coal fired power station on the site, this would use most of the land. Most of the Port of Blyth's land is also included. Therefore, the strategic allocation does not form part of the 150 hectares supply the evidence base suggests is required.

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**5.32** The West Hartford site in North Cramlington is proposed to accommodate some general employment use but also 13 hectares to retain its previous role as a prestige inward investment site. Development on the site should be occupied by a regionally or nationally significant employer, providing high quality employment opportunities. Work is on-going to identify whether the site is deliverable within the plan period.

**5.33** The above gives an overall land supply of 381 hectares of available land, distributed as shown in Table 5.3.

**Table 5.3 Employment land portfolio**

Delivery Area	South East	Central	North	West	Total
Strategic employment land (hectares)	202	0	0	0	202
Land protected for B-class use (hectares)	72	30	24	2	128
Newly allocated land for B-class use (hectares) <sup>(i)</sup>	0	15	10	0	25
Flexible employment use (hectares)	42	3	5	1	51
Total available land (hectares)	316	33	29	3	381

i. Figure included in land protected for B – class use

**5.34** Changes to the employment site portfolio will result in the de-allocation of 103 hectares of employment land which has been developed for uses which permanently exclude employment use and 153 hectares of available land which is considered to have poor market demand or unsurmountable deliverability issues.

**5.35** The majority of the available land supply (86%) will be provided by land vacant on existing employment sites, with only 25 hectares of newly allocated general employment land, plus an additional 36 hectares of new land at East Sleekburn as part of the Blyth Estuary Strategic Employment Area.

**5.36** De-allocated available land is spread across the County but most is in the South East, with employment policy protection to be removed from 124 hectares, but the area will still provide the majority of the County's available land supply (82%). Evidence shows that the South East is the County's best market for industrial development, given that sites generally have good strategic road access and are close to the Tyneside market. The area is also readily accessible by the labour force of Tyneside, which alongside infrastructure investment such as the Ashington Blyth Tyne Line, supports the objective to change patterns of commuting. Evidence indicates that the Central Delivery Area has good market demand, with healthy levels of business start-up and market demand for both for industrial and office premises. The proposed new employment land in Hexham, Prudhoe and Ponteland, and the potentially heightened market demand in Morpeth as a result of improved access to sites at Fairmoor, will provide the opportunity for strong markets to grow and deliver the plan's job growth objective.

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**5.37** No sites are proposed for specific uses, other than the specific allocation around the Blyth Estuary. All types of B-class use will be supported on allocated sites, including at Northumberland Business Park, which remains the plan's focus for a large scale office development, but other types of employment development will also be supported. More specific allocations may be proposed in the Northumberland Delivery Document and Neighbourhood Plans to reflect any specific market which emerges over the plan period.

**5.38** Sites allocated for flexible employment use are intended to support non B-class commercial uses to operate alongside the continuing industrial role. This may include *sui generis* uses which typically operate from employment sites such as car garages, home recycling centres and trade counter retail operations, as well as some leisure businesses which may not be suited to town centres. The plan particularly supports, spatially, initiatives to improve skill levels in Northumberland's resident workforce in accordance with the Northumberland Skills Strategy; through for example the development of dedicated technical training centres on employment sites.

**5.39** The development of employment land for non-employment uses such as housing can deplete the supply of land available and make it more challenging to deliver the plans economic growth objectives. The loss of high quality, well connected sites could be especially detrimental. Conversely anticipated market demand may not materialise long term for some sites and it is not beneficial to continue to protect such sites unnecessarily. As such the portfolio of sites will be regularly monitored and reviewed by the Council to assess if they are still likely to attract investment. Policy 4 sets out criteria which would need to be addressed when redevelopment of allocated employment land is proposed, focusing on the feasibility of demand across the plan period as well as recent market signals.

**5.40** The new site portfolio will provide the following in each Delivery Area:

### South East Northumberland Delivery Area

**5.41** All of the County's strategic employment land will be in the South East, split between sites round the Blyth Estuary for new economic sectors and a single user inward investment site at West Hartford, subject to further site assessment.

**5.42** Most of the Main Towns will have sites protected for B-class uses and allocated for flexible employment use. In Ashington, Ashwood and Wansbeck Business Parks currently accommodate no non-B-class development and this role will continue to be protected. To provide for other business needs a flexible policy approach will be applied at North Seaton, Jubilee and Lintonville, recognising their current mixed employment role. Cramlington is Northumberland's strongest industrial market and as such most sites will be protected for B-class. However recognising that available land at Bassington Industrial Estate adjoins housing, non-industrial uses, and fronts onto a main route into the town centre, a flexible employment allocation is appropriate. Bedlington will retain its built out employment land, except for the redundant northern half of the Welwyn Electrics site, but evidence suggests that available employment land is better provided in adjacent Main Towns with better road access.

**5.43** Given the scale of the former Alcan smelter site, policy protection will be rationalised to the developed portion of the site, with greenfield buffer land de-allocated. Large current allocations at Ellington and Fisher Lane, Cramlington are also proposed to be de-allocated,

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as are some sites in smaller settlements such as Seghill, Linton and Hadston, where market demand is poor. Amble has ample serviced land that can provide for businesses in the local area of Hadston.

### Central Northumberland Delivery Area

**5.44** The area has good market demand for employment premises, but a relatively restrictive land supply. In Hexham sites closer to the town centre accommodate a mix of businesses and are allocated for a flexible employment role, with allocated land to the north of the River Tyne protected for B-class uses, recognising the better strategic road access. The Low Prudhoe Industrial Estate is a successful location for manufacturing and this role will continue to be protected. Coopies Lane in Morpeth provides premises for a mix of businesses and the Core Strategy supports the continuation of this role and in addition identifies land to be safeguarded to enable the long term expansion of Coopies Lane for employment development beyond the plan period. Land at Fairmoor has frontage onto the A1 and will have excellent strategic road access and will therefore be protected for B-class uses. Allocated employment sites at Fairmoor with planning permission for housing will be de-allocated. Additional land will be allocated in Ponteland for B-class employment use comprising a small site for office development as part of the Education, Leisure and Housing redevelopment proposals, and land close to the airport (currently within the Green Belt) will be safeguarded for future employment development, recognising the long term ambition of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan to relocate the Meadowfield Industrial Estate.

**5.45** A number of allocated sites in other settlements and the open countryside will be de-allocated as the uses do not require employment policy protection or there is no market demand, such as the former Marley Tiles site at Newlands. The development of most of the St Mary's Hospital at Stannington site for its intended mixed use role means that the allocation can be significantly reduced.

### North Northumberland Delivery Area

**5.46** The Market Towns in the North are key drivers for the industrial and office markets and accommodate the majority of allocated employment land. However the rural character and the size of businesses in these areas mean that many operate from smaller premises provided through farm diversification as well as home working.

**5.47** Berwick-upon-Tweed has a relatively large supply of land in relation to indicators of market demand, and this is reflected in the de-allocation of land at Spittal, north of Tweedside Industrial Estate, and an area developed at Tweedmouth for retail. Available land is concentrated at Ramparts Business Park which will be protected for B-class uses, along with Tweedside Estate, accounting for its strong manufacturing base. Alnwick has had quite a healthy take-up in recent years, albeit mainly for leisure and retail development. The Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan intends to allocate additional land for employment use and the Core Strategy supports the provision of at least an additional 10 hectares, the location of which will be confirmed by the Neighbourhood Plan. Areas of employment sites developed for retail use do not require policy protection and will be de-allocated.

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**5.48** In other settlements, remaining land at North Sunderland will continue to be protected for B-class uses recognising that it is the only allocated employment land along the North Northumberland Coast. Belford Industrial Estate will be modestly extended to take-in developed areas beyond the current allocation, but the site to the south of the settlement will be de-allocated owing to poor access to available land. Wooler Industrial Estate will be protected for B-class use, and allocated land to the north of Berwick Road will provide for a range of businesses uses. The current allocation at Rothbury will be protected for B-class use and an extension could be supported at this site and others by Policy 4 to provide for new businesses or company expansion plans.

### West Northumberland Delivery Area

**5.49** The West Delivery Area has the lowest current supply of land, but also limited market demand. Hadrian Industrial Estate in Haltwhistle is the main employment site and the remaining land and premises there will be protected for B-class use, with a flexible approach applying to other sites in the town. The current allocation west of Park Road has poor market demand and access and will be de-allocated.

**5.50** In smaller settlements, a flexible policy will apply to sites in Allendale, Haydon Bridge and Bellingham, and some small sites where there is no market demand, such as that at Colwell, will be de-allocated.

**5.51** Maps showing all proposed changes to the existing portfolio and new employment land allocations portfolio are shown in Appendix A. The maps show which land is available for development, areas currently developed, and proposed de-allocations of existing employment land. Whether a site is protected for B-class use or allocated for a flexible economic use is also illustrated.

### **Policy 4**

#### **Employment land supply and distribution**

To support the strategic plan for economic development across Northumberland, the Core Strategy will plan for the requirement of 381 hectares of land for economic development, of which:

- a. 189 hectares is allocated as strategic employment land around the Blyth Estuary which will be prioritised for development in the low carbon and environmental goods, offshore engineering and energy generation sectors;
- b. At least 13 hectares at West Hartford Business Park is allocated for a B1 or B2 single user, prestige inward investment development. The development should be a regionally or nationally significant employer, providing high quality employment opportunities;
- c. 128 hectares is protected for B1, B2 and B8 development. Available land and premises at sites identified in Appendix A will be protected for B-class uses. Development of non B-class employment generating activity on these sites will only be permitted if the development:
  - i. Directly supports and is ancillary to the primary functioning of the site as a location for B1, B2, and B8 development;

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- ii. Will not have a detrimental impact on the functioning of existing or future B-class operators on the site;
  - iii. Ensures that B-class uses remain the majority activity on the site; or
  - iv. The proposed development would have significant community and economic benefits which over-ride the need to maintain the site or premises for possible future employment development.
- d. 51 hectares is identified for mixed economic development. Available land and premises at sites identified in Appendix A will be used for B-class businesses and other land uses generating permanent employment, provided that:
- i. The proposed economic activity is compatible with existing businesses on the site and adjoining land uses;
  - ii. Where Town Centre uses are proposed they are appropriate in relation to other relevant policies in this plan.
- e. The development of land on sites identified in Appendix A for non-employment generating uses, such as housing will only be supported where robust evidence shows that:
- i. Re-development of the land or building for an employment generating use is no longer financially and/or technically viable, and there is no demonstrable market demand that it will be developed for an employment generating use over the plan period;
  - ii. Sufficient land of a comparable quality is available and deliverable in the local market to provide for identified need;
  - iii. The development would not result in an unacceptable loss of active businesses and jobs;
  - iv. The development would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the continuing function of nearby existing businesses and/or the development of available employment land;

In considering development under (e), greater support may be afforded if the loss of a small portion of employment land would facilitate the development of a greater part of the site for employment uses which would otherwise be undeliverable for employment generating uses.

- f. 25 hectares of new employment land will be allocated for B-class uses to identify land shortages in the following locations:
- i. Hexham – 10 hectares;
  - ii. Prudhoe – 4 hectares;
  - iii. Ponteland – 1 hectares; and
  - iv. Alnwick – 10 hectares.

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### Blyth Estuary Strategic Employment Area

**5.52** The Blyth Estuary has historically been a focus for economic activity in South East Northumberland, including ship building, port logistics, energy generation, and more recently specialist research and manufacturing.

**5.53** The key areas of recent growth and marketing relate to the low carbon and environmental goods sector. The UK low carbon and environmental goods sector grew by 4.7% in 2011/12 and is valued at over £128 billion. Its value to the North East economy grew by 4.6% over the same period and it employed over 30,000 people. The sector encompasses a range of activities including all aspects of renewable energy activity, alternative fuels, building technology development and alternative fuel production.

**5.54** The North East SEP highlights that the low carbon and renewables sectors have the potential to deliver significant new investment and jobs, with competitive advantages that potentially could make the area Europe's premier location for the sectors. The SEP identifies Blyth as an 'innovation hub' for this sectoral growth. This is supported by the Northumberland Economic Strategy. Specifically the area around the Blyth Estuary is considered to have a number of advantages which put it ahead of other areas targeting this economic activity:

- The National Renewable Energy Centre (Narec), located at the Port of Blyth, is the centre of innovation excellence for the development, testing and commercialisation of renewable technologies;
- Existing deep water port facilities and access to marine engineering skills and training;
- Proximity to sites in the North Sea identified as potential sites for off-shore wind energy production by the Round 3 Programme<sup>(38)</sup>.

**5.55** The appeal of the portfolio of development sites around the Blyth Estuary is wider, attracting interest from a range of offshore and sub-sea companies, be they in a manufacturing, engineering or servicing capacity. Such sectors are attracted by the size and residential separation of the sites available, excellent strategic road links and access to the facilities offered by the Port of Blyth. Promotion of the sites has targeted a range of business sectors with strong interest.

**5.56** Energy generation is also a strategic sector to which the Blyth Estuary offers site characteristics which cannot be readily found elsewhere in the country. RWE Npower own significant areas of land, and although much is available for other employment development, the company still require a large amount of land for planned future investment in a new power station. The exact amount and location has not been identified however it can be accommodated within the strategic employment area, and the Core Strategy through Policy 5 would support a new power station should it come forward in the plan period. The area has also emerged as a focus for alternative forms of energy extraction and processing, which has the potential to deliver significant local job growth.

**5.57** The potential to attract investment in these key areas is supported by a number of business incentives to facilitate investment, which help to distinguish the Blyth Estuary area as a key focus for employment growth. Specifically:

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38 A programme undertaken by the Crown Estate to identify sites for offshore wind farms around the UK. The North East has the shortest access to two of the UK's biggest sites – Dogger Bank and the Firth of Forth.

## 5. Delivering a thriving and competitive economy

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- Over 14 hectares of land at East Sleekburn and Bates Quayside are designated as Enterprise Zones, offering financial assistance to businesses developing within these areas; and
- Land at Bates Colliery and East Sleekburn, totalling around 73 hectares, is covered by 'Local Development Orders' to 2019 which automatically grant planning permission for certain types of industrial development.

**5.58** The sites are also close to the proposed £65 million investment in the Ashington Blyth Tyne Line, with sections being directly linked by the existing freight line. The Council and NELEP priority is to reintroduce passenger services to the route, facilitating new investment and commuting patterns. This will help to widen the labour pool able to sustainably access and provide for growth around the Blyth Estuary.

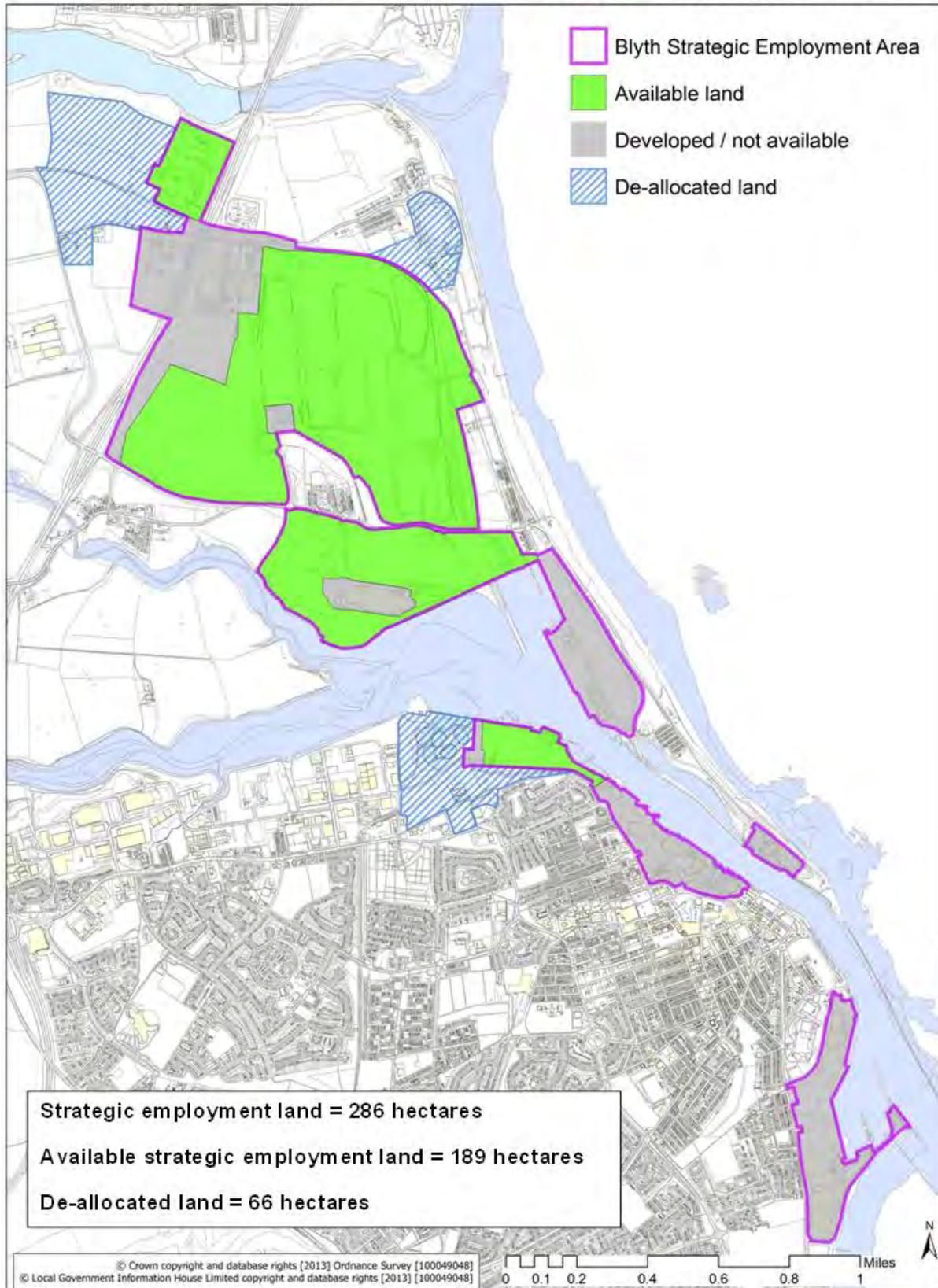
**5.59** Given the level of over-supply of employment land in the County, the Core Strategy proposes to reduce the supply of land currently allocated, as well as allocate new land which is more likely to attract investment, including within the Blyth Strategic Employment Area. As shown on Figure 5.1 it is proposed to:

- De-allocate 32 hectares of land at Bates Colliery which has or is likely to be developed for non-employment uses;
- De-allocate 27 hectares of land to the west of the A189. The land is relatively inaccessible compared to other land around the estuary. The anticipated future use of the sites would not require employment policy protection;
- Deallocate the former Vald Birn site (7 hectares) as a result of the anticipated future development for housing;
- Allocate 36 hectares of land at Sleekburn, which has already attracted development and benefits from an LDO to 2019;
- Distinguish land to the west of Brock Lane and the Blyth Quayside from the strategic allocation and used for general employment use;
- Allow the remaining allocated land currently held for expansion to be available for development.

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Figure 5.1 Blyth Estuary Strategic Employment Area

### Blyth Estuary Strategic Employment Area



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**5.60** The changes will provide a total area of 286 hectares and with 189 hectares of land being available for development. 36 hectares of the available land is greenfield, with the remainder being previously developed industrial land which is available for redevelopment.

**5.61** Feedback from the Full Draft Plan showed strong support for the allocation and the policy. The main issues raised were the lack of mention in the policy of the need to reference the adjacent SSSI, and the potential traffic generation on Tyneside roads from commuters as the area is developed.

**5.62** The Core Strategy prioritises the Blyth Estuary Strategic Area for development in the low carbon and environmental goods sector<sup>(39)</sup>, given the competitive advantages of the area, particularly offshore renewables. The development of businesses in the offshore and sub-sea engineering sectors will also be strongly supported. This type of economic activity cannot readily be accommodated elsewhere in the County, and has the potential to introduce additional high quality employment to Northumberland's economy. In order to provide a flexible approach a range of economic activity will be supported within the priority sectors including manufacturing, offices, storage and distribution, port activity, and supporting services.

**5.63** The strategic policy approach also recognises that the Blyth Estuary is a nationally designated ecological site. Therefore any development would need to closely consider the potential impact on the protected habitat and species. Developers should seek to avoid or mitigate any significant adverse impacts.

**5.64** Renewable and Low Carbon Energy generating uses will also be supported recognising plans to develop such uses within the strategic employment area, and the existing supporting infrastructure to distribute generated electricity. Proposals for energy generating uses on unallocated land around the Blyth Estuary area would be considered against Policy 65 of the plan. Similarly the prioritisation of the Blyth Estuary Area for certain economic sectors would not prevent such development being delivered elsewhere in the County.

### Policy 5

#### Blyth Estuary Strategic Employment Area

In plan-making and assessing development proposals the Blyth Estuary Strategic Employment Area is prioritised for economic development within the low carbon and environmental goods and services, offshore and sub-sea engineering, and renewable and low carbon energy generation sectors. Development which will support and strengthen the economic role of the Port of Blyth will also be supported.

Development proposals will be supported where:

- a. The amenity and functioning of adjacent communities and other land uses is not significantly adversely affected;

39 As defined by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills.

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- b. There is no unacceptable adverse traffic impact on the surrounding highway network and utilities infrastructure, unless it can be suitably mitigated; and
- c. There is no unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, including designated ecological and heritage assets and their settings.

### Home working

**5.65** Allocated employment land and dedicated employment space developed in rural areas will accommodate most new jobs, but a great number of businesses currently operate from home, often in sectors which would traditionally operate from employment sites or in the urban core of Tyneside.

**5.66** Home run businesses are a feature of the economies of the Main Towns and Service Centres but are particularly prevalent in rural Northumberland. In the rural North East 38% of businesses operate from home with many of these remotely operating professional services enterprises made possible by improved telecommunications. It is important to allow these businesses to grow appropriately and for new home enterprises to be established as they play an important role in the County's economy. In addition to supporting businesses wanting to operate from part of an existing home, the Core Strategy also supports the conversion of outbuildings and where appropriate, the construction of new buildings within the dwelling's curtilage to provide for the needs of the enterprise. It is recognised however that home working may generate noise and traffic movement, so maintaining the amenity of neighbouring properties will be a key consideration.

### Policy 6

#### Home run businesses

In plan making and assessing development proposals across the County, the Council will take a positive approach to supporting the creation of workspace for a home run business through the conversion of part of a dwelling, its out-buildings, or the development of appropriately scaled new buildings within the dwelling's curtilage. Applicants will be required to demonstrate that the proposal will not have an unacceptable adverse effect on the amenity of residents in nearby properties.

### Windfall employment development

**5.67** Feedback from early Core Strategy consultations highlighted particular concerns that the suggested employment land supply policy would not provide for an unforeseen, large scale inward investment. The plan provides a supply and distribution of employment land to provide for the creation of 10,000 jobs in Northumberland. The Blyth Estuary Strategic Employment Area and West Hartford Business Park are specifically intended to accommodate large inward investment opportunities in key sectors. However, some significant inward investment opportunities can be unforeseen and emerge quickly. When large firms plan to invest in a new location, their site requirements can be very particular and therefore the search is often national or Europe wide. If Northumberland does not

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have a suitable site to attract this type of investment the Core Strategy needs to be flexible enough to accommodate it, or risk losing opportunities to other areas. Similarly existing businesses may experience growth at greater rates than expected, which could require expansion beyond allocated land. This is especially true of sites occupied by a single company.

**5.68** As a consequence, a policy on windfall employment development was included in the Core Strategy. Feedback from the Full Draft Plan showed widespread support for the policy. Concern was raised that without a definition of 'very special circumstances' a loophole for development of Green Belt land could be exploited, whilst it was also suggested that capacity of local infrastructure and the time required for any improvements would need to be considered.

**5.69** The windfall employment policy allows Northumberland to accommodate large-scale economic development proposals which have specific requirements and which cannot be met by the existing land portfolio. It is important however that Northumberland's allocated employment land remains the focus for business development so that it does not become fragmented, and greenfield land is not unnecessarily built upon. It is also vital that the proposals do not compromise other policies and the overall economic strategy in the plan. This is an exceptions policy, which should be applied where the proposed investment would be significant in terms of job creation, and it can be robustly demonstrated that the needs of the business cannot be met on an existing employment site, both within Northumberland and, within reason, in adjoining authorities which make up the functional economic area of the NELEP. Any proposal in the Green Belt would need to unequivocally demonstrate that there are 'very special' economic circumstances that outweigh any potential harm on the purpose of the Green Belt.

### Policy 7

#### Windfall employment development

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, large-scale business development within the B use classes on non-designated employment land, either as a standalone proposal or an extension of an existing business, will be supported provided that it can be robustly demonstrated that:

- a. The development represents a major inward investment and would provide a significant number of new, permanent jobs;
- b. The needs of the business cannot be reasonably met on allocated employment land within the North East Local Enterprise Partnership area;
- c. The proposal would not compromise the viability or deliverability of sites allocated for development;
- d. The proposed scale, mass and form of the development would be appropriate to its setting and be capable of being integrated into the character of its surroundings, with suitable mitigation measures where necessary;
- e. Where the proposed development is located within the Green Belt that 'very special circumstances' exist to allow the development and the potential harm to the Green Belt is clearly outweighed by other considerations;

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- f. There would be no significant adverse impact on the amenity of adjoining land uses; and
- g. The development can be satisfactorily accommodated, including through suitable mitigation measures, in accordance with other development plan policies regarding highways, public transport, utilities infrastructure, the historic and natural environment, and archaeology. Proposed mitigation measures will be considered in relation to the capacities of critical infrastructure, and timescales associated with investment works.

### Rural economy

**5.70** Although Northumberland's town centres and planned business parks are the main economic drivers in the County a great many businesses operate from small settlements, the countryside, and from home. There is a need for a balanced spatial approach to economic development allowing for growth and diversification of the rural economy, whilst protecting the environment and local communities from inappropriate development.

**5.71** **Supporting a diverse range of investment and job opportunities will grow and strengthen Northumberland's rural economy and make it more resilient to future change, one of the strategic objectives of the Core Strategy.** The plan will support the establishment of new and the growth of existing office, industrial, and distribution based businesses, which in turn will help to deliver another strategic objective, by enabling the County's communities to remain sustainable.

### The structure of Northumberland's rural economy

**5.72** The traditional rural industries (agriculture, fishing and forestry) are still an important form of economic activity in rural Northumberland, with over 1,800 businesses and over 3,000 direct employees, which accounts for nearly 5% of the workforce<sup>(40)</sup>. However, it is projected that the number employed in these sectors is expected to slowly decline to 2031, although their value will steadily increase<sup>(41)</sup>.

**5.73** Farm diversification into activities such as specialist food and drink and leisure activities, such as farm shops, are increasingly important for farms to remain viable. The adding of value to crops through onsite manufacturing is also a feature of some agricultural enterprises, providing jobs and helping to add value to produce within the rural economy. However, there is a limit to the scale of such an onsite operation before there may be adverse impacts on the landscape and the local community.

**5.74** The equine industry also makes a significant contribution through breeding and recreation, adding in 2010, an estimated £23million to Northumberland's economy. Local shows and fairs linked to these sectors have an important economic role, with wide reaching catchments for visitors.

**5.75** Extraction industries and renewable energy operations are also important economic drivers in rural area, employing nearly 750 people. The identification of zinc resources straddling the County and neighbouring authorities presents an opportunity to expand

40 Census 2011 – Census factsheet for rural Northumberland (NCC).

41 GVA is projected to grow by 9%.

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employment levels and wealth generation from direct employment and in the local supply chain, both of which could bring demand for new employment premises. Clearly the economic benefits of such development needs to be considered against the impact on the environment and local communities.

**5.76** The forestry industry is also a key rural sector in Northumberland, having the largest timber resource in England and the County's largest private sector employer being a timber processor. The 'Roots to Prosperity' action plan<sup>(42)</sup> seeks to attract £28 million of investment to the sector by 2024 to create 1,000 jobs across Northumberland and neighbouring counties. The County Council has also identified specific timber transport routes to facilitate safe and efficient movement of timber. These investments could create demand for development across the supply, production, processing and recreation elements of the industry, and the Core Strategy looks to support its sustainable growth.

**5.77** The development of new residential and commercial buildings and the refurbishment of existing properties in rural Northumberland also help to support the construction industry. Over 5,500 residents in rural areas work in the sector. A positive approach to sustainable rural development will help to maintain or grow these levels of employment. Improved telecommunications mean businesses that are not traditionally rural can locate more remotely as they do not necessarily need to be physically close to their customers. The attractiveness and lifestyle of rural Northumberland can be a big pull for businesses, their owners and new entrepreneurs in various sectors, such as: legal and business services, consultancy, research, information technology and certain creative industries like advertising, architecture, and leisure software. 10.1% of the rural North East workforce is now employed in knowledge based service jobs<sup>(43)</sup>. This has led to growth in micro and lifestyle businesses, many of which are established by people moving into rural areas. A great many of these operate from home workspaces, as well as from dedicated commercial developments, and the Core Strategy supports the delivery of new high quality workspace in both contexts. Some rural estates play a key role in delivering commercial premises.

**5.78** However, the rural economy faces a number of distinct challenges such as isolation from larger markets, added transport costs, distance from centres of education and in some areas inadequate broadband and telecommunications<sup>(44)</sup>. Also, in the rural North East economy as a whole, the number of enterprises being established and run by younger people is low, mirroring demographic imbalance.

### Supporting the growth of the rural economy

**5.79** The Government's 'Rural Economy Growth Review' (2011) set out key policy and investment priorities to stimulate sustainable growth in the rural economy. Its key recommendations were:

- Enabling rural business to grow and diversify – supported through funding programmes<sup>(45)</sup>, investment in broadband, and enabling flexible use of farm buildings;

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42 [http://www.confor.org.uk/Upload/Documents/24\\_RootstoProsperitySummaryActionPlan.pdf](http://www.confor.org.uk/Upload/Documents/24_RootstoProsperitySummaryActionPlan.pdf).

43 'Information and communication', 'financial and Insurance' and 'Professional, scientific and technical' - Census 2011 – Census factsheet for rural Northumberland (NCC).

44 The Northumberland Local Broadband plan aims to provide high speed internet to all residents by 2020.

45 'Rural Development Program for England' to February 2014 and 'North East Rural Growth Network' to 2015.

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- Support for rural tourism;
- Expansion of the food and drink sector;
- The delivery of 'green growth';
- Reducing regulations on farms.

**5.80** The North East Rural Growth Network is a £15 million programme for 2012-2015 to help certain rural areas of the North East overcome barriers to growth. In particular it is seeking to address the lack of small and flexible premises for start-up and micro enterprises, through the creation of rural enterprise hubs to provide business and networking space. The programme has delivered 8 enterprise hubs in the County to date, creating 68 jobs and 51 new businesses, highlighting the economic benefits of high quality business space in rural areas. Further funding for the programme is confirmed in the short term and is likely to run to at least 2020, and the Core Strategy supports the development of new enterprise hubs.

**5.81** Feedback from the Full Draft Plan showed widespread support for a positive approach to business development in rural areas. However, many felt the required sequential approach whereby new build development would only be supported where there were no opportunities to reuse buildings and previously developed land, was overly restrictive and not in conformity with national policy. Others felt that more emphasis needs to be placed on the role of renewable energy in the rural economy.

**5.82** The policy approach recognises that market towns are drivers for the rural economy, providing services, a local market and location for larger scale employment activities. It also supports economic growth in the hinterland of these towns and the wider rural area. The rural employment policy will therefore apply to the development of new office, industrial and distribution workspace outside the Main Towns and Service Centres identified in Policy 3<sup>(46)</sup>. It is not considered necessary to allocate new specific employment sites in rural areas given: the high number of microbusinesses and home run enterprises. In addition specific allocations could create a lack of flexibility by directing businesses to develop on land which may be remote from their intended market. The use of existing employment sites that are not proposed for de-allocation will continue to be supported.

**5.83** Recognising the core planning principles of the NPPF the policy approach to providing rural workspace is to encourage re-use of existing buildings and the appropriate redevelopment of previously developed sites. It is recognised that re-use of buildings or previously developed land might not always be possible or appropriate for a number of reasons, including lack of availability, viability issues, or the suitability of the building or site. Therefore new build employment development and the extension of existing businesses will also be supported, either as part of a farm diversification scheme or a stand-alone development, where the proposal is sustainable. The approach will achieve a balance between effectively using existing development and protecting Northumberland's rural landscapes and positively supporting sustainable economic growth and diversification.

**5.84** Farm diversification is important to widen sources of income and sustain agricultural businesses. Typically this provides for tourism and leisure activity, but also new office and workshop space, as well as on site manufacturing, and in some cases sale, of farm produce. The policy approach supports diversification schemes and encourages the re-use of

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46 The Commission for Rural Communities 2004 definition of 'rural' recommends use of population density to define rural areas of England.

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redundant farm buildings where possible, and seeks to ensure that new development is accessible and located as close as possible to existing buildings on the farm. However it is important that the main agricultural function of the farm is maintained to ensure farmland remains productive. To support this, new build development should avoid using best and most versatile agricultural land<sup>(47)</sup>, given its importance to the productivity of the agricultural sector, and the nature of the development should be complementary and compatible in scale with the continuing farm enterprise.

**5.85** To support farm diversification national planning policy was amended in March 2015 to allow for the conversion of some agricultural buildings and the development of new buildings within the farms curtilage for a number of different business uses without the need for a planning application to be made. To be permitted development the proposal needs to adhere to a range of conditions. Policy 8 will apply where development proposals would not conform to the conditions as set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 or subsequent updates.

### Policy 8

#### Rural economy

To support the growth and diversification of the rural economy, in plan-making and assessing development proposals, new office, manufacturing and distribution workspace that support new economic activity and the expansion of existing businesses outside the Main Towns and Service Centres, will be supported where:

- a. The development can be provided through the reuse of existing buildings, as well as appropriately scaled and designed new buildings. Building design should make a positive impact to the locality;
- b. The development does not have an adverse impact on: the amenity of the local community; the local transport and utilities infrastructure, taking into account reasonable mitigation measures;
- c. New buildings are located as close as is practicably possible to existing and accessible development;
- d. Where available, new development utilises viable and suitable previously developed land within the local commercial market, which is within the developers ownership;
- e. The development of workspace which represents the diversification of an active farm would ensure that the main agricultural function of the farm as a whole is retained and the use of the best and most versatile agricultural land is avoided. Particular support will be given to developments on farms which would add value to farm produce on-site; and
- f. To ensure balance between the need to support rural economic development and the protection of the character, diversity and tranquillity of Northumberland's landscape and biodiversity, all development applicable to this policy must be appropriate in scale, character and design to its immediate and wider setting, and should adhere to the plan's landscape, natural and built heritage, or

47 As specified in the DEFRA 'Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales'.

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biodiversity policies, and it should be sited so as to minimise any significant adverse visual impact.

### Tourism and visitor development

**5.86** Tourism is a key economic sector for Northumberland. Employment levels have remained steady from 2012 with over 11,000 direct jobs and a further 2,200 in the supply chain with the number of full time indirect jobs increasing slightly from 2013-2014. The sector also accounts for 11% of the County's businesses with over a 1,000 enterprises in operation. In 2014 9.3m million people visited the County, a 4.6% increase on 2013 figures. The number of days visitors spent in a destination also increased by 3.5% to 14.1 million. These recent changes resulted in a 2.3% increase in value of the sector against 2013 levels to £765 million.

**5.87** Tourism employment is expected to experience high growth over the plan period and could be the growth sector for the County. Employment in 'hotels, restaurants and recreation' alone is forecast to expand by 35%, adding around 4,100 jobs by 2031<sup>(48)</sup>. The value of the sector grouping is also projected to grow substantially with at least a 42% increase in GVA.

**5.88** However, the industry still faces a number of challenges. Employment in the sector continues to be characterised by part-time and seasonal work and, despite recent visitor growth, Northumberland had fewer visitors in 2014 than the peak of 2004. Expenditure and employment are also at lower levels than 2003 despite some recent recovery from the deep recession of 2008-09. Growth has fluctuated and so the strength of this recovery in the short term remains uncertain. The County also suffers from a lack of out of season and wet weather attractions, which exacerbate the above. The economic impact of the accommodation sector fell in 2014 by 1.3% which emphasises the need to expand the number and choice of overnight accommodation. Proposals that help to address these challenges will be beneficial in supporting the plan's strategy of growth for the tourism sector.

**5.89** Northumberland Tourism's 'Destination Management Plan' 2015-2020 sets out a strategy to develop the County's tourism sector. Its vision is for a sustainable visitor economy which supports - not damages - our core values and environment. To achieve this three key targets are proposed to be achieved by 2020:

- Increase visitor numbers by 5%;
- Increase visitor spend for 6%;
- Increase employment in tourism by 10%.

**5.90** Notably it seeks to sustainably develop Northumberland's attractions and activities, ensuring a wide range of authentic experiences for visitors throughout the year, as well as developing opportunities for visitors to appreciate and understand the County's landscapes, natural heritage and wildlife.

48 Northumberland Long Term Employment Forecast. St Chad's College, Durham (2014). This broad sector forecast will include some job growth not linked to the visitor industry.

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**5.91** The Northumberland Economic Strategy (2015-2020) identifies tourism as a key growth sector for Northumberland and supports a strengthened tourism offer focusing on key towns and their hinterlands. The strategy promotes the County Council to be business friendly and create conditions for growth, leading to higher levels of year round visitors and spending.

**5.92** The North East SEP (2014) identifies tourism as a major growth sector with the coast and rural areas underpinning a strong offer. In particular the plan identifies tourism as a route to achieve the strategic objective of increasing the economic benefits from external markets. It sets out a £22 million investment package to 2021 with the aim of adding over 2,000 additional jobs in the NELEP area.

**5.93** Northumberland's key tourist attractions centre on the coastal, river valley, and upland landscapes, as well as key historic assets such Hadrian's Wall, castles and the County's historic market towns. It is important that the Core Strategy supports heritage led regeneration and sustainable tourism growth to create jobs and economic resilience and so help deliver the objectives. The sector has the potential to grow across Northumberland, including in the South East, building on attractions like Northumberlandia and Seaton Delaval Hall.

**5.94** Cycling and walking holidays are an integral part of the outdoor tourism offer and an important reason for visitor loyalty. The County has an extensive public footpath network and renowned long distance walks like the Hadrian's Wall Path. There are also 350 miles of high quality cycle routes and 100 miles of purpose built trails. Such holidays can be cross seasonal, help to disperse the benefits of the industry across the County and can be low impact. The plan supports the development of appropriate new and expanded cycle and walking routes to add to Northumberland's network. Facilities and accommodation which help to support the network of long distance routes, where appropriate, will be strongly supported.

**5.95** There is an identified need to diversify Northumberland's tourism offer both in terms of accommodation and attractions, in particular to encourage an industry that provides high quality jobs year round.

**5.96** **The Core Strategy seeks to support growth and diversification in the tourism economy, whilst balancing this against the requirement to protect and enhance the distinctive and valued environment which attracts tourists in the first place.**

**5.97** Feedback from the Full Draft Plan showed support for a positive policy for new tourism development, but also identified some contradiction between differences in the criteria which may lead to some confusion in decision making. As with the rural development policy it was suggested that it is too restrictive to impose a sequential approach to development. There was also concern that the policy fails to reflect the link between tourism and the dependence of road travel, and that sites of ecological and landscape value, which are closely associated with areas people want to visit, are not given enough protection. Comments also highlighted that avoidance of areas liable to flooding and the need to protect bathing waters are not covered in the policy.

**5.98** Tourism development differs from other forms of economic development in that:

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- Whilst a specific attraction can be accessible by public transport, car travel is often essential as visitors often visit many attractions which would be difficult to achieve on public transport;
- Tourism proposals can be directed to certain locations but allocating specific land can be counterproductive as continuously directing development to a site which the market sees as unsuitable can prevent growth occurring elsewhere; and
- Tourism development can also have a positive association with landscapes and biodiversity, although conversely by its nature it draws visitors and development to environmentally sensitive parts of the County.

**5.99** In relation to this policy tourism development is considered to be any type of visitor accommodation including all development falling within use class C1 (hotels and guest houses) as well as caravan, chalet and camping parks. The policy also relates to leisure developments and their supporting facilities which are primarily intended to provide a destination for visitors, including facilities for business visitors such as conference and exhibition space.

**5.100** The policy approach therefore seeks to balance the development of visitor facilities throughout Northumberland with the protection of the unique qualities of the County's natural and built environment which predominantly attract tourists in the first place. Development will be prioritised in locations which are accessible, have complementary land uses for tourists, can accommodate additional growth without causing significant environmental harm and have strong potential to attract visitors.

**5.101** The County's Main Towns, which include the larger, historic market towns, are best placed to do this. There are also a number of the Service Centres, which whilst not being centres for other economic activity, are key hubs for the tourism industry. In these locations efficient use of existing buildings and previously developed land will be encouraged before development of greenfield sites. To direct serviced accommodation<sup>(49)</sup> to the most sustainable location within these locations a sequential approach is preferred. This will prioritise town centre and edge of town centre sites before accessible locations out of town would be supported.

**5.102** Recognising the dispersed nature of the visitor economy, and to realise fully the benefits of tourism across the County development will also be supported close to smaller settlements and adjacent to existing development. Given the potential sensitivity of such locations the re-use or refurbishment of existing buildings, recognising the value of bringing these buildings back into economic use, and the redevelopment of previously developed land, is considered the most sustainable approach to development, and is encouraged. However it is acknowledged that this is not always viable or suitable for the business and so appropriately scaled and designed new buildings will be supported in accessible locations, where the development would improve and/or diversify Northumberland's offer of tourism accommodation or attractions.

**5.103** It is recognised that in certain circumstances new facilities and attractions, especially those linked to heritage assets and outdoor recreation, can only be accommodated at certain locations, including in the open countryside, and the preferred

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49 Businesses providing overnight accommodation in permanent buildings – hotels, motels, guest houses, B and Bs, Inns.

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approach is to provide for this eventuality. Similarly it will make allowance for unforeseen, large-scale tourism developments when the significant potential economic gain needs to be considered against potential adverse impacts and mitigation measures.

**5.104** It is not proposed to allocate specific land for tourism development in the Core Strategy. The positive policy approach will give confidence for businesses to invest whilst giving assurance that other considerations will be given due weight, without specifying where development should take place. The Delivery Document and Neighbourhood Plans provide an opportunity for firm development proposals to be allocated where appropriate, to give long term certainty.

**5.105** The lack of hotel beds, particularly in larger capacity developments, is a key issue for tourism in Northumberland. Larger hotels often require edge of settlement locations and to be viable may require supporting land uses like a pub or café. In the past sequential tests for these supporting town centre uses has prevented the growth of this key accommodation need. Therefore whilst the preferred policy approach requires the hotel itself to be subject to a sequential test, where an edge of settlement location is justified it will not apply to supporting facilities as part of the scheme.

**5.106** The policy approach also recognises that areas of the County are statutorily designated for their natural, landscape, cultural and historic qualities and have the potential to be catalysts for future growth, whilst conversely being the areas which are most sensitive to development. These are:

- Northumberland National Park;
- Hadrian's Wall Corridor;
- North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB);
- Northumberland Coast AONB and Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast European Marine site; and
- Kielder Water and Forest Park.

**5.107** Although Northumberland National Park has a Management Plan and separate planning strategy to deliver tourism development, the Council has a duty to have regard to the statutory purposes, the first of which is to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the National Park and the second to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities. The influence of the National Park is an important element of the tourism industry outside the Park.

**5.108** Northumberland's two AONBs and the Hadrian's Wall Corridor also have detailed management plans aimed at protecting their special qualities. It is recognised that the coastal AONB in particular faces significant development pressure. The preferred approach supports the sustainable growth of tourism in suitable locations within these areas, but great weight will need to be given to the conservation and enhancement of their special qualities and the reasons for the designation. This will achieve a balance between protecting these unique areas and promoting their potential for tourism growth.

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**5.109** In December 2013 the whole of the Northumberland National Park and most of Kielder Water and Forest Park, an area totalling 572 square miles, was designated Europe's largest 'Dark Sky Park'<sup>(50)</sup>, with 'gold star' status, the highest level of award. This offers the potential for niche night sky interpretation tourism, which could attract visitors year round. It is important that this opportunity to expand the County's tourism offer is supported, but the reasons for the designation are protected. Kielder Water and Forest Park is also a key outdoor activity destination and has strong potential to support tourism growth, building on recent investment. The plan supports the development of tourist facilities and accommodation, including appropriate large scale proposals, but any development in particular would need to preserve the park's dark skies, within and close to its boundaries. Dark skies are also important special qualities of the two AONBs.

**5.110** To support farm diversification national planning policy was amended in March 2015 to allow for the conversion of some agricultural buildings and the development of new buildings within the farms curtilage for a number of different leisure and recreational uses without the need for a planning application to be made. To be permitted development the proposal needs to adhere to a range of conditions. Policy 9 will apply where development proposals would not conform to the conditions as set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, or subsequent updated.

### Policy 9

#### Tourism and visitor development

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the development of new visitor attractions and facilities, accommodation and the expansion of existing tourism businesses will be supported in sustainable locations in accordance with the following principles:

- a. Priority will be given to locating tourism development in the Main Towns and Service Centres;
- b. Where new hotel, guest house or bed and breakfast accommodation is proposed within the Main Towns and Service Centres priority will be given to proposals within the centre, then edge of centre, then those on the edge of towns and villages. Town centre uses supporting visitor accommodation on the edge of towns will not be subject to the sequential test;
- c. In rural locations accommodation and attractions should be located as close as practicable to settlements and existing development. The re-use of buildings and development on previously developed land is encouraged before new build development. Accessible and appropriately scaled new build will be supported where it is appropriate in design and character and would improve and diversify the County's tourist offer;
- d. In the open countryside, new tourist attractions, facilities and permanent tourism accommodation will only be supported where it can be robustly demonstrated that the proposed location is required to meet the needs of the business and it would improve and diversify the County's tourist offer;

50 A protected area of land recognised by the International Dark Sky association as having exceptional quality starry nights and nocturnal environment

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- e. New or extensions to existing sites for camping, caravans, and chalets will be supported in accessible locations provided the development:
  - i. Is adequately screened by existing topography or vegetation or new good quality landscaping compatible with the surrounding landscape;
  - ii. The site layout and scale, and the appearance of the accommodation, would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the character of the surrounding land and townscape, taking into account short and long range views.
- f. Tourism development proposed as part of a farm diversification scheme should ensure that the agricultural function of the farm is retained;
- g. Developments that enhance the environment or bring neglected or underused heritage assets back into appropriate economic use will be strongly supported;
- h. Large-scale, new tourist development will be assessed on the potential economic gain weighed against any possible harmful impacts and other plan policies. Comprehensive master planning should accompany such proposals;
- i. All tourism development should adhere to the policies on landscape, natural, historic and built heritage, transport, and the water environment and should be located and designed to minimise visual impact.
- j. Development within or adjacent to the North Pennines Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Northumberland International Dark Sky Park, and adjacent to Northumberland National Park will only be supported where the landscape, special qualities and statutory purposes of the designations are conserved and/or enhanced.

### Town Centres – hubs for communities and businesses

**5.111** Town centres are an important element of Northumberland life; they are the heart of the communities they serve. The Council considers that they should continue to be the focal points of sustainable communities. Vibrant town centres will play an important role in the delivery of three of the Core Strategy strategic objectives: to deliver a thriving and competitive economy; community well-being; and help mitigate the impacts of climate change through more sustainable patterns of travel. Town centre development should not simply be retail focused. Northumberland's town centres provide the main trading hubs for hinterlands which are often extensive, particularly in rural areas. They are key places for employment and contain most of the shops and leisure facilities in the County. Many are historic and architecturally important, and so are visitor destinations, making a significant contribution to Northumberland's tourism economy. Keeping centres strong will help maintain a resilient economy and support the delivery of Northumberland's objectively assessed development needs.

**5.112** Feedback from the Full Draft Plan showed a good degree of support for the revised policy approach. The main area of concern was that some smaller village centres that provide services for their communities may not be being afforded adequate protection from decline. This issue is addressed below. The view was also expressed that residential

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use in centres should not be promoted to such a level that it could stifle existing business operations. This, along with other minor issues raised, have been addressed in amendments to the policies below.

**5.113** A Town Centre and Retail Study (2011) informed the Core Strategy Issues and Options document. This study identified significant opportunities for growth based on existing spending patterns, as well as opportunities to bring people back to using their nearest centres. An update of the study was undertaken in 2013 to account of the significant impact the recession, and this was more cautious, involving limited expansion of centres but continued consolidation and qualitative improvement.

**5.114** Town centre health checks were undertaken in 2014<sup>(51)</sup> which showed that some centres had healthy levels of spending, footfall, business confidence and comparatively low vacancy levels, whilst other centre were performing less well. The review showed that the 2013 updated Retail and Town Centre Study may have been overly influenced by the spending downturn during the recession. A further update of the Study is currently underway, this study examines town centres as the economy continues to recover and considers the impact of the proposed levels of economic and housing growth proposed.

**5.115** The current evidence illustrates that all of Northumberland's centres need to be made more resilient to pressures which can adversely impact smaller and rural centres much more than larger, urban or regional centres. Recently retail, leisure, and other important town centre activities have been significantly affected by wider economic factors such as higher VAT, unemployment, rising fuel costs, static pay coupled with changes in spending patterns, particularly internet shopping and low investment by retailers.

**5.116** As a result, there has been uncertainty about the strength and durability of future growth opportunities. However, the impact of wider economic factors varies by town, for example Morpeth and Cramlington have seen more investment over the last few years than they did in the boom years.

**5.117** The implications for Northumberland could be serious, for example where retail or leisure chains are contracting, they are likely to close smaller outlets away from regional centres first. Those still investing, who may have chosen to expand their portfolio into smaller centres a few years ago, are now much more likely to seek economies of scale by investing in regional centres.

**5.118** The preferred policy approach for the Core Strategy aims to promote Northumberland's centres as business and community hubs and resist trends that may conspire against this being achieved.

### Hierarchy of centres

**5.119** It is important to consider carefully the role and relationship of centres to ensure, that they are resilient to economic change, are competitive and meet the needs of local people. The Town Centre and Retail Study initially defined a hierarchy of centres, based on the retail potential of centres. The key feature was that the main towns were split between two distinct sizes of commercial centre, therefore forming two levels of the town centre hierarchy.

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51 Town Centre Benchmarking (Action for Market Towns) 2014.

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**5.120** Sustainability appraisal exercises have suggested that focusing new development in central locations should have major positive effects on the local economy, while any adverse effects of development being concentrated in these locations should be mitigated through criteria-based policies on sustainable development elsewhere in the Core Strategy.

**5.121** During the Preferred Options stages, there has been much support for identifying a hierarchy of centres as a way of prioritising investment and scaling future development, while there has been criticism that the proposed hierarchy is not aligned with the main categorisation of settlements as a whole.

**5.122** Based on the original Town Centre and Retail Study findings, an assessment has been undertaken which has considered the wider settlement categorisation, the differences between how settlements operate as foci for housing and employment and how they operate as community hubs and commercial centres.

**5.123** Of the Main Towns, Morpeth, Hexham, Alnwick, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Ashington, Blyth and Cramlington – all have a good level of retail provision along with wide ranging town centre community facilities. These centres are also reasonably well provided for in terms of accessibility by public transport and a good level of off-street car parking. Overall, therefore, they can be regarded as community hubs for large populations and wide hinterlands; the retail and other services that they offer and their relatively good accessibility mean that they can be categorised as **'Main Commercial Centres'**.

**5.124** The remaining Main Towns, i.e. Ponteland, Prudhoe, Amble, Bedlington and Haltwhistle, have good local retail provision along with a reasonable range of town centre community facilities, serving the towns themselves and all except Bedlington also with modest rural hinterlands. These centres are accessible by public transport being on regular bus routes linking them to the main commercial centres and some of their surrounding settlements. The retail and other services that they offer, along with their public transport linkages and some off-street parking provision allows these centres to be categorised as **'Smaller Commercial Centres'**.

**5.125** The remaining Service Centres offer a small range of local facilities, serving the centre concerned and, in some cases, a modest catchment population. This will allow visits to larger centres further afield to be limited in frequency. They tend to be stopping-off places along bus routes linking other places or at the end of circuitous routes. The retail and other services that these centres offer, along with their relatively limited parking spaces and bus services, mean that they can be categorised as **'Larger Village Centres'**<sup>(52)</sup>.

**5.126** It is recognised that outside the hierarchy there are other local centres, which could be roughly equivalent to a large village centre in terms of the services provided. Such facilities can be more convenient for residents than going to the town centres, however, these groupings can be difficult to define, for example:

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52 While Wooler is often regarded a town by local residents, its level of services justify the "larger village centre" categorisation.

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- In some suburban areas, services are spread along radial routes, sometimes interspersed with modern retail warehouses or supermarkets<sup>(53)</sup>; and
- Purpose built suburban parades of shops exist but their function has, in many cases, already changed irreversibly from offering a range of convenience shops such as may still be offered in larger village centres.

**5.127** Including suburban services within the hierarchy is not practicable. However a supplementary part of the policy below, aims to ensure that they are given protection insofar as planning policies can do so. This can be seen as supplementary to the wider policy approach on community facilities – see Chapter 10. The issue of defining local centres will be considered in the emerging Delivery Document and through Neighbourhood Plans.

### Policy 10

#### Hierarchy of centres

The hierarchy of centres is defined as follows:

Delivery Area	Main Commercial Centres	Smaller Commercial Centres	Larger Village Centres
Central Northumberland	Hexham Morpeth	Ponteland Prudhoe	Corbridge
North Northumberland	Alnwick Berwick-upon-Tweed		Belford Rothbury Seahouses Wooler
South East Northumberland	Ashington Blyth Cramlington	Amble Bedlington	Newbiggin-by-the-Sea Seaton Delaval
West Northumberland		Haltwhistle	Allendale Bellingham Haydon Bridge

In plan making and assessing development proposals, growth within centres will be supported and encouraged at a scale which helps to maintain and reinforce their roles within the hierarchy and their relationships with regional centres, such as Newcastle, the Metrocentre, Edinburgh and Carlisle.

#### Shopping patterns and trends

**5.128** Northumberland is reasonably well provided with shops providing **convenience goods**, which are those that serve day to day needs, such as food. The seven Main Commercial Centres all have superstore size supermarkets, although some of these lie

53 Examples would include Cowpen Road in Blyth or the main road through Tweedmouth.

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beyond the defined centres. The Smaller Commercial Centres possess smaller size supermarkets catering for most weekly convenience shopping needs. Elsewhere in the Larger Village Centres and some other villages outside the defined hierarchy, there are smaller stores or mini-markets.

**5.129** In 2009, only three quarters of the convenience spending of Northumberland residents occurred in shops in the County. The subsequent opening of additional stores and the expansion / relocation of existing stores has seen this proportion grow. A small proportion of convenience spending still leaves Northumberland and it remains necessary to continue to make food shopping more convenient for Northumberland residents, particularly in places close to Tyneside.

**5.130** Northumberland's centres provide a range of **comparison goods** shopping, which are goods that are purchased less frequently, such as clothes and electrical goods.

**5.131** Older centres retain some independent stores which add to their local distinctiveness. However, the 2009 data showed that less than half of Northumberland residents' spending on comparison goods stayed within the County, illustrating the dominance of regional centres like Newcastle, the Metrocentre and retail parks such as Silverlink, which continues in spite of the addition of new facilities in Northumberland, such as the Sanderson Arcade in Morpeth and developments at Cramlington. These developments have retained some comparison spending that had previously leaked from the area.

**5.132** Previous consultation stages of the Core Strategy have shown that local communities and local businesses have been concerned in case growth forecasts lead to an unnecessary expansion of centres, further supermarket and retail warehouse space and that this may undermine the vitality and viability of traditional town centres and independent retailing. This, along with significantly reduced growth forecasts, has led to the policy evolving through the different stages of the Core Strategy, so that, at the Full Draft Plan stage, it was considered that any modest growth that may be needed could and should be accommodated in existing defined commercial centres and that the emphasis should be on consolidation and qualitative improvements.

### Maintaining and strengthening Northumberland's centres

**5.133** Maintaining and strengthening the vitality of Northumberland's town centres as multi-functional community hubs is a key part of this strategy. Meeting the needs of the County's residents may, in some instances, mean a more aspirational approach than the raw forecasts suggest – seeking to provide more services locally in centres.

**5.134** This implies that the Council should aim beyond the status quo for centres, especially in relation to Blyth, Cramlington and Morpeth, given their individual and cumulative strategic importance to the social and economic well-being of the County, and also where there are plans and programmes which seek to regenerate town centres. A significant regeneration initiative in Ashington is being led by Arch, the Northumberland Development Company to bring high quality jobs to the heart of Ashington and transform the physical environment of its centre. The Council are also considering opportunities to encourage the revitalisation of Merton Way in Ponteland.

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**5.135** The overall imperative is to support opportunities for development to enable the County's Commercial Centres to keep pace with centres elsewhere for the benefit of residents and visitors alike.

**5.136** The Core Strategy policy has been informed by feedback, particularly the need to continue to focus development within town centres. The accompanying Sustainability Appraisal found that concentrating these types of developments into central places would have positive effects in terms of overall sustainable planning. Even so, consultations revealed a continued perception that supermarkets and retail warehouses were being given preference over existing local traders.

**5.137** Supermarkets have contributed in terms of retaining both convenience and comparison spending within town centres, which would otherwise have leaked elsewhere. Potential also exists for retail park type development, with varying needs across the County. Nevertheless, the potential for such development to detract from the main aim of boosting centres must also be recognised and the preferred policy approach does not promote these types of developments. However, such development can still be appropriate where they pass the town centre first and impact tests. The policy below includes a positive statement on encouraging opportunities for expansions and extensions to existing shops, taking account of the growth forecasts and setting out the roles of Main and Smaller Commercial Centres and Larger Village Centres.

**5.138** In addition feedback at past stages has suggested that more freedom should be given for niche markets to be developed in centres. As the planning system does not currently distinguish these markets from the mainstream retailing or leisure uses, their development will have to rely on the flexible policy approach proposed alongside initiatives being promoted in the various market towns.

**5.139** Residential uses have long been encouraged to locate in town centres, including occupying empty floors above shops. The presence of people within town centres on a 24 hour basis adds to the sense of community and security. Residential uses can also fill voids where buildings or areas within centres have become disused or underused. Housing will therefore continue to be promoted, however it should not dominate those parts of the town centres that are essential to the centre's vitality and viability and should not be introduced in any situations where the operation of existing town centre businesses could be undermined.

### Policy 11

#### Role of centres

In plan making and assessing development proposals for retail, leisure or other service uses, the continuing role, vitality, viability and competitiveness of Northumberland's Commercial Centres and Larger Village Centres, will be supported to maintain or increase both the proportion of local spending retained in the centres and the quality of the offer and visitor footfall.

This assessment will include the following:

## 5. Delivering a thriving and competitive economy

- a. Within Commercial Centres - identifying opportunities and supporting proposals for developments which are physically and functionally integrated with and add choice to the existing retail offer in the Primary Shopping Area and the leisure and other central service offer of the wider Commercial Centres;
- b. Within Larger Village Centres - ensuring that new provision is predominantly aimed at meeting local residents' shopping, leisure or other central service requirements and of a scale appropriate to the centres' respective catchments and visitor levels;
- c. Wherever possible and practicable, taking account of other policies, allowing proposals within defined centres which allow:
  - i. Existing retail businesses to continue to operate within Primary Shopping Areas or Smaller Commercial Centres or Larger Village Centres; or
  - ii. Other existing businesses, including those providing for the leisure requirements and other central service needs of residents and visitors, to continue to operate within all Commercial Centres or Larger Village Centres; and
- d. In other village centres and local shopping parades, additional shops and other services will be supported where they serve the needs of the local area and are in scale with the existing facilities. The loss of essential shops and services will be resisted unless it can be robustly demonstrated that there is no longer a community need for the facility or an alternative has been provided;

Development should be in scale with the size and function of the centre, in keeping with local character and should not unacceptably impact on the surrounding highway network and utilities infrastructure.

Residential use will be encouraged on upper floors on main shopping streets and elsewhere in defined centres, especially if this leads to the reoccupation of disused premises and provided it would not, individually or cumulatively, lead to an unacceptable reduction in vitality and viability or limit the operation of an existing established business or service.

Proposals beyond Primary Shopping Areas, Commercial Centres or other defined centre boundaries (as relevant) should be physically well linked with the existing centre, sequentially tested and assessed for their impact on any existing centre.

### Defining Commercial Centres

**5.140** As well as promoting essential growth in retail and leisure expenditure, the Core Strategy will define the commercial centre boundaries within which town centre uses should be maintained and strengthened, to ensure that centres remain competitive and vibrant. In the case of the seven Main Commercial Centres, the extent of each centre's Primary Shopping Area will also be defined.

**5.141** Boundaries need to be clearly defined and robust to avoid town centre activity becoming spread too thinly thereby diluting vitality and vibrancy. The defined areas should be centred on existing clusters of town centre activity. Most anticipated development needs

## 5. Delivering a thriving and competitive economy

can and should be accommodated within the proposed boundaries. If future expansion is necessary sites can be taken forward in the Delivery Document or through Neighbourhood Plans.

**5.142** Some minor adjustments to boundaries initially proposed have been made at the different stages of the Core Strategy, taking on board comments from town centre stakeholders and to reflect the locally determined boundaries set out in the emerging Neighbourhood Plans. All boundaries conform to the strategic purposes of the definitions. There will be further opportunities for boundaries to be refined during the preparation of the Delivery Document or through further Neighbourhood Plans.

**5.143** As far as boundaries within smaller Commercial Centres are concerned, some are defined in existing local plans and will continue to be used if relevant to assess proposals for town centre uses until superseded by any measures in Neighbourhood Plans and/or the Delivery Document.

### Policy 12

#### Commercial Centres

Commercial Centre and Primary Shopping Area boundaries are defined in Appendix B. These may be subject to review or updating in the Delivery Document or Neighbourhood Plans. Town centre uses should be located within these boundaries, unless there are strong planning reasons to locate them elsewhere.

The following development proposals will be subject to sequential and impact testing:

- a. Proposals for more than 1000m<sup>2</sup> net retail floorspace
  - i. In Main Commercial Centres, those beyond Primary Shopping Area boundaries; or
  - ii. In Smaller Commercial Centres, those beyond Commercial Centre boundaries
- b. Proposals for leisure-related buildings of 2500m<sup>2</sup> gross floorspace, not linked with wider open space activities or hotel use, that are beyond defined Commercial Centre boundaries; and
- c. Proposals for office uses that are either more than 2500m<sup>2</sup> gross floorspace beyond Commercial Centre boundaries or more than 500 metres from a public transport interchange.

All proposals for town centre uses, including those within the defined Commercial Centre boundaries, should be:

- d. In scale with the size and function of the centre;
- e. Designed to reflect and enhance local character and the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any significance deriving from their setting; and
- f. Capable of development without adversely impacting on the surrounding highway network and utilities infrastructure, unless suitable mitigation can be achieved.

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Proposals that are smaller than the above sizes, while not subject to the quantitative tests, should be centrally and accessibly located.

### Office accommodation in town centres

**5.144** Offices are a key element in the mix of uses found in town centres. It is particularly important that offices which rely on frequent public access, such as banks and professional services, should have a town centre location. They are an important part of the community services that make up a thriving centre. Benefits also result from other offices being located in town; the employment which they support often underpins footfall and spend in the retail and leisure sectors. Evidence shows that towns across Northumberland have differing levels of offices within their commercial centres, as compared with other parts of the towns, but that, in general, the County's market town centres play an important role in the overall office market.

**5.145** Purpose built offices should therefore be encouraged to continue to locate in town centres. The economics of developing Northumberland's town centres means that office development may be easier to achieve as part of a mixed use scheme, so this too should be promoted. The preferred approach also recognises the importance of the contribution of rural offices (see Policy 8).

**5.146** The NPPF provides increased flexibility on the definition of 'edge-of-centre' in relation to office development. Northumberland's greatest success in terms of the office market has been in the form of purpose-built business parks, especially in the south east of the County, all of which are located outside centres. The NPPF allows for such development to be located outside town centres as long as they are within 500m of a public transport interchange. At past consultation stages, the majority of responses have supported this degree of flexibility, or sought even more. It is considered that the policy approach set out in the NPPF is the optimum sustainability solution for Northumberland, which was found to be positive in the Sustainability Appraisal.

## Policy 13

### Office accommodation within Commercial and Larger Village Centres

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the supply of modern, well connected office accommodation will be delivered by:

- a. Encouraging the location of purpose-built offices in defined Commercial Centres;
- b. Seeking the inclusion of offices in new development and refurbishment schemes in defined Commercial and Larger Village Centres, where local demand can be demonstrated;
- c. Locating office based business parks within 500 metres of a Commercial Centre or public transport interchange; and
- d. Permitting changes of use to offices within defined Commercial and Larger Village Centres unless this would conflict with any local retail frontage policies.

## 5. Delivering a thriving and competitive economy

### Leisure

**5.147** Leisure, tourism, cultural and community activities are important elements of a vibrant mix particularly within town centres. Many types of leisure-time activity are well catered for within Northumberland's centres, but evidence and opinion shows the need to ensure their retention and encourage further diversification.

### Large-scale leisure facilities

**5.148** Large-scale leisure comprises specialist, resource-intensive types of leisure activities, such as cinemas and ten-pin bowling, occupying buildings similar in scale to a large retail warehouse. Often, this scale of development may serve large populations – more than that of an individual market town. As a result the providers of such facilities tend to seek urban locations. Within the County, this most likely to mean the South-East Delivery Area.

**5.149** Representations received during the earlier stages of the Core Strategy have shown that there is a strong aspiration in many communities to secure improved leisure provision along the lines of facilities found in urban areas.

**5.150** The Council considers that, while it may be more likely that wide-reaching attractions will choose a location near the conurbation, there is no reason, in principle, to prevent their location in other main towns, as long as necessary safeguards are built into the policy. The Sustainability Appraisal supported the development of such facilities within Northumberland. It is considered that this could lead to increased participation, but also recognised that this could counterbalance potential benefits of reduced journey lengths by adding to the overall number of journeys. The Sustainability Appraisal therefore pointed to the need for mitigating measures, such as improved public transport provision. These types of facilities will also attract much sought-after visitor income.

### Local leisure-related services

**5.151** Local leisure-time services, such as restaurants, bars and fitness clubs, are often interspersed with shops, banks and other financial institutions within Northumberland's Primary Shopping Areas and wider Commercial or Larger Village Centres. This integration has been vital to the success of these centres in terms of daytime activity, the evening economy and in catering for visitors. Some centres clearly have scope to increase these types of local provision.

**5.152** Over recent years 'frontage policies' have been applied when considering proposals for changes of use away from retailing. These seek to maintain high percentages of retail use on important sections of high streets. A move away from such rigid policies is supported by the Government following the Portas Review and various changes to the Use Classes Order.

**5.153** During the earlier consultation stages on the Core Strategy there has been support for additional flexibility, especially if this prevents a proliferation of empty shop units and as long as a good representation of shopping facilities and local character are retained. Communities are also keen that the details of such policies be should be locally determined. The opportunity has been identified for this to be done through Neighbourhood Plans. Sustainability Appraisal has found there to be positive benefits to the economy from the increased flexibility whilst also seeing the positive effects of bringing more leisure-related

## 5. Delivering a thriving and competitive economy

uses to the most central, accessible points within towns. To assist this Policy 49 gives support to the shared use of community facilities, including the wider use of educational facilities for leisure use.

**5.154** Notwithstanding the Government's support for additional flexibility on the high street, the NPPF retains the concept of 'Primary Shopping Frontages' as a building block of Primary Shopping Areas.

**5.155** In order to ensure that there continues to be a balance, it is proposed that the current frontage policies in the existing Core Strategies and Local Plans be retained, they will be updated through the Delivery Document and/or Neighbourhood Plans.

### Policy 14

#### Leisure facilities

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the provision of large scale leisure facilities and leisure facilities integrated with the retail offer of Northumberland's Main Town and Service Centres, will be supported, where it can be demonstrated that:

- a. For large-scale facilities:
  - i. They are located in Commercial Centres or would otherwise meet the tests set out in Policy 12;
  - ii. The proposed scale, mass and form of the development would be appropriate to their setting and capable of being integrated into the character of their surroundings;
  - iii. There would be no unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of adjoining land uses;
  - iv. There would be no unacceptable adverse impact on the surrounding highway network and infrastructure capacity, or such impacts can be suitably mitigated through improvement measures; and
  - v. The development can be satisfactorily accommodated in accordance with other development plan policies.
- b. For smaller scale facilities, associated with high streets, it will be sought to provide for residents and visitors, both at daytime and in the evenings, with a range of uses integrated with the retail offer of Northumberland's Main Towns and Service Centres. The Council will support proposals for non-retail uses on primary shopping frontages where it can be demonstrated that:
  - i. Long term vacancy of units within the frontage concerned is adversely affecting the vitality and viability of the centre as a whole and/or the proposed use would maintain or add to the vibrancy of the shopping frontage; and
  - ii. The cumulative impact of the non-retail uses would not lead to an unacceptable reduction in the range of the retail offer of the frontage concerned or the retail role of the centre as a whole.

## 6. Providing existing and future communities with a choice of decent, affordable homes

### 6. Providing existing and future communities with a choice of decent, affordable homes

**6.1** The provision of housing is fundamental to the wellbeing of sustainable communities and businesses in Northumberland. The scale, distribution, phasing and types of homes provided are vital to achieving well balanced communities, in which people want to live and work.

**6.2** The Government is committed to securing sustainable economic growth and ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support this. Local Plans are required to:

- Positively seek opportunities to meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area;
- Respond positively to wider opportunities for growth; and
- Meet objectively assessed housing needs with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change.

**6.3** This underpins the Council's strategic policy approach to housing delivery.

#### Housing policy and strategy framework

**6.4** **The Council is committed to securing the long-term future of towns and villages across the County, with the provision of new housing playing a key role.** The Council's Corporate Plan<sup>(54)</sup> identifies the increased supply of affordable housing in Northumberland as a strategic priority of the Council as well as ensuring that open market housing developments led by the private sector complement the strategic objectives of the Council.

**6.5** Reflecting the Corporate Plan, the Housing Strategy for Northumberland (2013) sets out the Council's approach to housing for the period 2013-2018. It aims to meet the housing needs of Northumberland's residents with particular reference to the provision of affordable housing, whilst also ensuring that the County is a prosperous place for residents and businesses by supporting the provision of new housing. Having a sufficient supply of homes that are affordable for the local population is essential not only to meeting housing need but also in helping to sustain local communities and economies.

**6.6** The Sustainable Community Strategy identifies the importance of delivering housing through its 'Big Partnership Issue' of maintaining and creating sustainable communities. This is embedded within the Core Strategy's vision and objectives. The strategic objective "Providing existing and future communities with a choice of decent, affordable homes" seeks to meet Northumberland's objectively assessed housing needs by extending choice across Northumberland's housing markets, including the provision of housing that people can afford.

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54 Northumberland County Council Corporate Plan 2013 to 2017, November 2013.

## 6. Providing existing and future communities with a choice of decent, affordable homes

### The role of the Core Strategy in providing communities with a choice of decent, affordable housing

**6.7** To deliver the vision and objectives, the Core Strategy sets out a series of strategic policies to ensure that the necessary scale and type of housing is distributed in the right locations over the plan period, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to change in social and economic circumstances. Interventions to improve the existing housing stock and bring empty homes back into use are addressed in other strategies including the Northumberland Private Sector Housing Strategy<sup>(55)</sup>.

**6.8** As has been explained in Chapter 4, given the projected change in the structure of the population of Northumberland, the strategy for housing must complement, and not constrain the economic growth aspirations for the County. Specifically the policies in the Core Strategy will:

- Seek to boost significantly the supply of housing to attract and retain working age families; this will increase the labour force and support diverse and resilient communities;
- Address the shortfall in affordable homes; and
- Ensure a range of housing types and sizes are provided in order to meet the needs of different groups of the population, including those of the older population.

### Scale and distribution of housing development

**6.9** The Core Strategy is required to identify an appropriate scale of housing to meet housing needs and support the sustainable growth of the economy and local communities. **The full objectively assessed housing need, is the level of development required to meet the projected increases of population and household growth, allowing for economic growth (growth in jobs), and adjusted to reflect market signals, impact of past delivery and affordability issues. It is this level of development that the Council is required to plan for delivery over the plan period.** It is therefore vital that the Core Strategy plans for the provision of the right scale of housing in the right locations.

**6.10** The Council received significant feedback to the approach to defining the scale and distribution of housing development that was presented in the Full Draft Plan. There was significant objection from some local communities, who considered the level of growth to be excessive, and based on inappropriate assumptions. While the development industry considered the level of growth proposed was not high enough to support economic growth, nor was it distributed in the most appropriate way to reflect market signals and viability issues.

**6.11** The Council has taken account of feedback from the Full Draft Plan and previous consultations and has undertaken significant additional work since the last consultation. This work includes:

- A review and update of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)<sup>(56)</sup> which objectively assesses the need for housing, and provides evidence regarding the need for affordable housing;

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55 Private Sector Housing Strategy for Northumberland (2005-2020)

56 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2015) is available to view on the Council's website at: <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3458>

## 6. Providing existing and future communities with a choice of decent, affordable homes

- An update of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)<sup>(57)</sup> which identifies the potential of sites to accommodate housing. This includes further assessment of viability issues relating to sites, and the market capacity of settlements to accommodate development, and the capacity of the development industry to deliver housing across a number of sites across Northumberland;
- An update to the Strategic Land Review (SLR)<sup>(58)</sup> which considers the capacity of individual settlements to accommodate housing growth with regard to findings from the Green Belt review and constraints to development; and
- An update of the draft whole plan viability assessment.

### Housing requirement

**6.12** In order to define the objectively assessed need for housing in Northumberland over the plan period, the Council has considered how the population of Northumberland will change and grow. In accordance with national guidance a range of different economic, population and dwelling scenarios have been tested<sup>(59)</sup>. Chapter 4 explains that in order to increase the level of working age population within Northumberland to support the delivery of the Economic Strategy<sup>(60)</sup>, the Core Strategy must significantly boost the housing supply, to extend choice in the housing market, including the provision of affordable housing. The objectively assessed housing need is for the provision of 24,320 new dwellings (an average of 1,216 dwellings per annum) over the plan period.

**6.13** The Countywide figure has been distributed between the Delivery Areas, this has been informed by:

- The population, and the number of households and dwellings in each area;
- The need to support the delivery of the economic objectives as identified in the Council's Economic Strategy;
- The level of past delivery of housing and market demand;
- Areas of preference as identified by the 2012 Countywide Housing Need Survey;
- The capacity of each Delivery Area to accommodate development in accordance with sustainable development principles; and
- Minimising the need for Green Belt deletion whilst ensuring the delivery of sustainable development.

**6.14** For each Delivery Area the housing is to be distributed as shown in Table 6.1.

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57 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2015) is available to view on the Council's website at: <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3458>

58 The Northumberland Strategic Land Review (2015) is available on the Council's website at: <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3458>

59 The Northumberland County Level Demographic Analysis and Forecasts Report (July 2015) is available to view on the Council's website at: <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3458>

60 The Northumberland Economic Strategy (2015-2020) is available to view on the Council's website at: <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=5712>

## 6. Providing existing and future communities with a choice of decent, affordable homes

**Table 6.1 Housing scale and distribution by Delivery Area**

Delivery Area	Number of dwellings (2011-2031)	Average dwellings per year
South East Northumberland	12,840	642
Central Northumberland	5,940	297
North Northumberland	4,190	210
West Northumberland	1,350	68

**6.15** In accordance with Policy 3, the strategic approach to the distribution of housing development is to:

- Focus population and housing growth in Main Towns and Service Centres, supporting their role and function, while allowing an appropriate level of development elsewhere in the County to meet local need, and to help support local services and facilities;
- Focus large scale housing development in Blyth, Cramlington and Morpeth to support the rejuvenation and revitalisation of communities;
- Support the regeneration of Ashington by allowing an appropriate level of development to help extend choice to achieve a balanced housing market.

**6.16** This strategic approach has informed the scale and distribution of housing across each Delivery Area. It has also been informed by a range of local factors including:

- The scale of housing delivery in the past, and the impact of past policy on the delivery of new homes;
- The demographic and housing profile of an settlement and its projected population change;
- Housing demand;
- The availability of suitable, developable sites of five or more dwellings;
- Green Belt; and
- Physical constraints to development (for example flood risk).

**6.17** Further details are contained within the Strategic Land Review<sup>(61)</sup>.

**6.18** In order to support the delivery of housing growth, in accordance with the strategic approach, the Council identifies two Strategic Delivery Sites in Cramlington and Morpeth, and has identified the need to delete areas of Green Belt around the Main Towns of Hexham, Ponteland and Prudhoe.

**6.19** The indicative scale and distribution of housing across each Delivery Area is set out Table 6.2 below:

61 The Northumberland Strategic Land Review (2015) is available on the Council's website at: <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3458>

## 6. Providing existing and future communities with a choice of decent, affordable homes

Table 6.2 Indicative scale and distribution of housing<sup>(i)</sup>

Location	Number of dwellings over Plan Period (2011-2031)	Average dwellings per year
<b>South East Northumberland Delivery Area:</b>	<b>12,840</b>	<b>642</b>
<b>Main Towns:</b>		
Amble	600	30
Ashington	1,800	90
Bedlington	1,280	64
Blyth	3,100	155
Cramlington	3,820	191
<b>Service Centres:</b>		
Guidepost / Stakeford / Choppington	380	19
Newbiggin-by-the-Sea	300	15
Seaton Delaval / New Hartley / Seghill / Holywell	780	39
<b>Rest of South East Northumberland Delivery Area</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Central Northumberland Delivery Area:</b>	<b>5,940</b>	<b>297</b>
<b>Main Towns:</b>		
Hexham	720	36
Morpeth	2,100	105
Ponteland	900	45
Prudhoe	900	45
<b>Service Centres:</b>		
Corbridge	300	15
<b>Rest of Central Northumberland Delivery Area</b>	<b>1,020</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>North Northumberland Delivery Area</b>	<b>4,190</b>	<b>210</b>
<b>Main Towns:</b>		
Alnwick	1,100	55
Berwick-upon-Tweed	900	45
<b>Service Centres:</b>		

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Location	Number of dwellings over Plan Period (2011-2031)	Average dwellings per year
Belford	230	12
Seahouses	230	12
Rothbury	200	10
Wooler	280	14
<b>Rest of North Northumberland Delivery Area</b>	1,250	63
<b>West Northumberland Delivery Area</b>	<b>1,350</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Main Towns:</b>		
Haltwhistle	400	20
<b>Service Centres:</b>		
Allendale	100	5
Bellingham	280	14
Haydon Bridge	200	10
<b>Rest of West Northumberland Delivery Area</b>	370	19

i. N.B. Numbers may not add due to rounding

### Policy 15

#### Housing provision – scale and distribution

To ensure that housing development helps to support the plan to positively grow and diversify the Northumberland economy and meet housing need, the Core Strategy will:

- a. Provide for the delivery of at least 24,320 additional net dwellings over the plan period (1,216 per annum), distributed as follows:

Delivery Area	Average Annual Net Dwelling Provision	Total Delivery over Plan Period (2011-2031)
South East Northumberland	642	12,840
Central Northumberland	297	5,940
North Northumberland	210	4,190
West Northumberland	68	1,350

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- b. In accordance with Policy 3, the majority of housing development will be focused in Northumberland's Main Towns and Service Centres. Table 6.2 provides a realistic but indicative scale and distribution of housing across each Delivery Area. The Northumberland Delivery Document and Neighbourhood Plans will allocate land in accordance with this distribution.

Progress of the delivery of the scale and distribution of housing will be monitored annually through the plan, monitor, manage approach to plan delivery. Where delivery fails to come forward in accordance with the Northumberland housing trajectory timescales, the mechanism for delivery of alternative suitable sites will trigger a review of the Core Strategy.

### Delivering the scale and distribution

**6.20** In order to deliver the required new homes the Core Strategy:

- Identifies strategic delivery sites to provide a significant role in supporting housing delivery;
- Remove land from the Green Belt
- Provide the strategic policy context to support the delivery of housing across Northumberland;
- Ensure a deliverable and developable supply of land for housing in the right locations that respects and enhances existing settlements and wider built and natural environments;
- Ensure new housing is attractive to the market and addresses local housing needs and demands;
- Support Northumberland as a high quality, attractive place to live and work; and
- Positively plan for the infrastructure that can support existing communities and population growth.

### Strategic delivery sites

**6.21** In order to support housing delivery, two locations of strategic development importance have been identified: North Morpeth (St George's Hospital Site); and South West Cramlington. These sites will provide a significant role in supporting the delivery of the Core Strategy. They are identified as capable of delivering in excess of 1,000 units on each site.

**6.22** The strategic sites will collectively provide for around 4,000 new homes. Both sites are compatible with the principles of sustainable development, as discussed in Chapter 4 and reflect market demand. The approach to the identification of strategic delivery sites was largely supported through the consultation on the Full Draft Plan, with suggestions made to improve the policy wording and non-delivery triggers.

#### North Morpeth - St George's Hospital Site

**6.23** The St George's Hospital site is located on the northern periphery of Morpeth and is well related to the existing built form of Morpeth. The site will be served by the development of the Morpeth Northern bypass which connects to the A1. The bypass will

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unlock the site and create a suitable means of access. Construction of the bypass is underway, with completion expected in Autumn 2016. The site represents a sustainable extension to Morpeth, and is identified in the emerging Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan.

**6.24** St George's Hospital site has the potential capacity to accommodate around 1,000 units. The first phase of development has been master planned by Linden Homes and an application for 375 houses was granted approval in June 2015. Development of phase 1 is anticipated to commence within the next three years. Further master planning work is required for phases 2 and 3 and should consider the development of the existing permission on phase 1 for 375 units. Delivery of the site is forecast throughout the plan period and beyond.

### South West Cramlington

**6.25** The South West Cramlington site has long been identified as having potential for the strategic delivery of housing. Cramlington New Town was planned around the development of four sectors surrounding the town centre. The South West site is the last sector to be developed.

**6.26** Initial master planning has been undertaken for the site<sup>(62)</sup>, which identifies the need to deliver:

- A range of 2 to 5 bedroom houses across four distinct neighbourhood areas;
- A local centre offering: healthcare facilities, local services and a range of small shops to serve the immediate local area of South West Cramlington;
- A new primary school;
- Play areas;
- Pedestrian and cycle links; and
- A network of public green spaces that will continue the development character of Cramlington.

**6.27** Planning permission for 250 units on the northern most part of the site is currently extant. Further planning applications for 706 and 1,600 units are awaiting determination. The remaining capacity of the site has the potential to accommodate around 1,000 additional houses.

**6.28** Both strategic sites are inherently large scale, within Main Towns and have strategic transport connections. Their strategic importance is reinforced by a range of evidence, including the SLR, the SHLAA and the SHMA. They represent critical opportunities for a step change in delivery, and make a significant contribution to the required levels of housing growth needed in the County.

**6.29** Delivery of development on the sites will be monitored annually. Should a strategic site fail to come forward for delivery in accordance with the timescales identified in the Northumberland housing trajectory, the Council will commence a review of the plan in accordance with the provisions of the Monitoring and Implementation Framework.

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62 <http://www.cramlingtonsws.co.uk/index.php>



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### Policy 16

#### Strategic delivery sites

In order to support the delivery of housing growth the following strategic sites, shown in Figure 6.1 and Figure 7.5 are allocated to deliver at least 1,000 houses on each site:

- a. North Morpeth, former St George's Hospital site – to deliver around 1,000 new homes and associated physical community infrastructure; and
- b. South West Cramlington – to deliver at around 3,000 new homes, education provision, community and sports facilities, and a local centre to provide a range of small shops to serve both the development and the immediate local area.

The development of each of these locations will reflect the sustainable development principles and all other relevant policies in this Plan.

In addition, development will be guided by all of the following key principles:

- c. The phasing of development will have regard to the provision and timing of the infrastructure and services necessary to support it;
- d. Master planning work will be required to define a framework in which the strategic site will develop;
- e. Proposals for incremental development will not be supported where they may prejudice the comprehensive development of the site;
- f. Complementary mixed uses which are ancillary to housing development, including shops, services and amenities within Use Classes A1, A2, A3, A4 and D2 will be supported where they do not adversely affect residential amenity and where they can help achieve sustainable and cohesive developments;
- g. Housing development will provide an appropriate mix of house types and tenures to reflect local housing need and market considerations;
- h. Enhanced connectivity to, from and within the strategic locations will be secured through effective transport planning. Development will be supported where there are no significant adverse impacts on the surrounding road network or where impacts can be suitably mitigated;
- i. The need to incorporate an interconnected network of green infrastructure including an adequate supply of different types of open space. An appropriate landscape structure with clearly defined boundaries will also be delivered;
- j. The need to incorporate measures to minimise flood risk and have regard to sustainable water management principles;
- k. The need to have regard to not sterilising mineral resources unnecessarily and where appropriate, consideration should be given to prior extraction of mineral resources;
- l. Development will be supported where they have regard to high quality sustainable design principles;
- m. South West Cramlington will have regard to the adjacent Arcot Hall Grassland and Ponds SSSI. Appropriate mitigation measures will be required to ensure that the site is protected from the impacts of development.

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Progress of the delivery of the sites will be monitored annually through the plan, monitor, manage approach to plan delivery. Where delivery of housing on Strategic Delivery Sites fails to come forward in accordance with the Northumberland housing trajectory timescales, the mechanism for delivery of alternative suitable sites will trigger a review of the Core Strategy.

### Additional housing sites

**6.30** In addition to the Strategic Delivery sites, in order to deliver sustainable development specific housing sites have been identified that require land to be deleted from the Green Belt: in Hexham, Ponteland and Prudhoe (see Figures 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4). Other, smaller housing sites will be identified through either the Delivery Document or Neighbourhood Plans.

### Policy 17

#### Additional housing sites

In order to support the delivery of housing growth the following sites in Hexham, Ponteland and Prudhoe, as shown in Figures 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4 are allocated:

a. Hexham :

- i. Land south of Allendale Road (around 30 units)
- ii. Land north of Eilansgate (around 40 units)
- iii. Land west of Bowman Drive (around 30 units)
- iv. Land north of Corbridge Road (around 70 units)
- v. Land north of Bishopton Way (around 20 units)
- vi. Former garage site, West Road (around 5 units)

b. Ponteland

- i. Land east of Callerton Lane (around 400 units)
- ii. Land west of Callerton Lane (around 180 units)
- iii. Police Headquarters site, North Road (around 300 units)

c. Prudhoe

- i. Land south of Highfield Lane (around 300 units)
- ii. Land at Prudhoe Hospital (around 480 units)

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### Ensuring efficient use of land

#### Previously developed land

**6.31** A core planning principle of the NPPF is to encourage the effective use of land by reusing sites that have been previously developed, providing that they are not of high environmental value. The NPPF does not require previously developed land (PDL) to be developed in advance of Greenfield land. The efficient use of land and buildings is however important when planning for housing delivery to ensure that the core planning principles of national policy and wider sustainable development objectives within the Core Strategy are not compromised.

**6.32** Northumberland is a predominantly rural county and the availability of PDL is less than in many authorities across the UK. Between 1 April 2009 and 31 March 2015 housing completions on PDL in Northumberland have been consistently over 50%. Approximately 60% of existing planning permissions not yet commenced are on PDL sites.

**6.33** This demonstrates the Council's commitment to bringing forward development on PDL and that developers are also bringing forward PDL sites, indicating an improvement in the housing market. The SHLAA demonstrates that there are not enough suitable PDL sites to accommodate the Northumberland housing requirement, therefore alternative suitable Greenfield sites and Green Belt deletions have been identified to meet the requirement set out in Policy 15.

**6.34** Taking account of the need to look to Greenfield sites and Green Belt deletions to accommodate some housing to achieve the Northumberland housing requirement, PDL targets for Northumberland are not considered suitable.

**6.35** **The Council will continue to encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed in accordance with the NPPF and Policy 1 on Sustainable Development.**

#### Density of development

**6.36** Northumberland is diverse; therefore the density of development varies greatly. Higher densities will be more appropriate in urban, more accessible areas and lower densities in rural, less accessible areas. South East Northumberland has historically delivered higher densities on sites due to the above factors and specific site issues influencing higher densities to make sites viable for development to proceed.

**6.37** The appropriate density for a particular development depends on a number of factors that contribute to good design such as: the type of housing provided its siting, layout, massing, scale, overall design and its landscaping in response to its existing environment.

**6.38** Development proposals will be assessed in accordance with their impact on the character and accessibility of the area and the provisions set out in Policy 2.

## 6. Providing existing and future communities with a choice of decent, affordable homes

### Type and mix

**6.39** There is a need for a mix of homes of different types and tenures across Northumberland to meet identified needs. It is also important the Council provides an appropriate choice and mix across the County to create and maintain balanced and sustainable communities.

**6.40** The Council also recognises many people aspire to build their own home. To support self-build and custom build, the Council has set up an online system to enable those wishing to build their own home, to register their interest, and for land owners to register plots of land they wish to be made available for self-build.

**6.41** In order to help meet the housing needs of young first time buyers, many of whom cannot afford to own their own home, national guidance sets out a Starter Home exception policy which allows for the provision of Starter Homes on under-used or unviable industrial and commercial land. The policy requires that Starter Homes are offered for sale at a minimum 20% discount below their open market value, to people who have not previously owned a home, and who are below the age of 40 at the time of purchase.

**6.42** In accordance with national guidance, in order to deliver the minimum 20% discount, the Council will not seek affordable housing contributions on Starter Home exception sites. In order to maintain a portfolio of sites for employment purposes, Starter Homes will not be permitted on allocated employment land unless it can be demonstrated that sites are underused and unviable.

**6.43** **The Core Strategy plans for a mix of housing that will be appropriate to the needs of the community, providing extended choice across a range of types, sizes and tenures to create a better balanced stock to help address the impact of demographic change and the needs of the younger and older population as well as vulnerable groups.**

**6.44** It is not appropriate for the Core Strategy to include a prescriptive policy to specify the proportionate split of house types by bedroom size. It is more appropriate that new residential schemes should always seek to reflect the latest evidence of need, as identified in the current Strategic Housing Market Assessment, and local housing need studies.

### **Policy 18**

#### **Planning for housing**

In plan-making and assessing housing development proposals, the Council will:

- a. Make efficient and effective use of land, by encouraging the re-use of previously developed land where ever possible.
- b. Achieve a density that is appropriate for the area. The precise density will be determined having regard to:
  - i. The site's immediate environment;
  - ii. On-site constraints; and
  - iii. The type of development proposed;

## 6. Providing existing and future communities with a choice of decent, affordable homes

- c. Ensure there is an appropriate mix of permanently occupied housing types, sizes and tenures including the provision of affordable housing to meet identified needs to create and maintain balanced and sustainable communities. The precise mix will be informed by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and local housing needs studies, taking into account the character and density of the local area, site characteristics, and market conditions.
- d. Support the provision of Starter Homes exception sites which are:
  - i. Offered at a minimum discount of 20% below open market value; and
  - ii. Offered to first time buyers under the age of 40 at the time of purchase; and
  - iii. Located on under-used or unviable industrial and commercial land which is not allocated for employment B-class uses. If the site is an allocated employment site, the applicant will be required to demonstrate that the site is underused or unviable for employment development.
- e. Support the inclusion of market housing within a Starter Homes exception sites where:
  - i. The majority of the development is for Starter Homes; and
  - ii. It has been demonstrated that the market housing is essential to the viability and successful delivery of the Starter Home housing scheme.
- f. Support the provision of plots to enable self-build or custom build.

### Housing land supply

**6.45** In accordance with the NPPF, the Council is required to identify, on an annual basis, a continuing supply of specific deliverable<sup>(63)</sup> housing sites to meet its five year housing requirement and also a supply of specific developable<sup>(64)</sup> sites for housing growth for an additional ten years.

**6.46** The Core Strategy plan period covers the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2031. As the early years of the plan have already passed the number of houses which have been completed in the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2015 contribute towards the supply of housing for the plan period.

**6.47** Table 6.3 identifies that there have been 3,185 houses built in the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2015. The Council's Five Year Supply of Deliverable Sites 2015-2020 forecasts the delivery of 8,243 units over the next five years, demonstrating a five year supply of housing in Northumberland.

**6.48** The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) identifies that there is currently a potential supply of 20,572 developable housing units for the period 2020-2031. In the years beyond 2031, there is also a potential supply of 3,591 housing units on developable sites beyond the plan period, on the basis of build out rates continuing on major development sites.

63 The Northumberland Five Year Supply of Deliverable Sites (2015 to 2020) is available to view on the Council's website at: <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3458>

64 The Northumberland Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2015 is available to view on the Council's website at: <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3458>

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**6.49** The scale of housing land identified in Policy 15 is for 24,320 dwellings, equating to 1,216 units per annum, or 19,456 units for the period 2015 to 2031. Therefore, the supply of housing land exceeds that required to accommodate the proposed level of development up to 2031.

**Table 6.3 Northumberland housing land supply position as at 31 March 2015<sup>(i)</sup>.**

Completions 2011-2015	Five year housing land supply  2015-2020	SHLAA 2015 2020-2025	SHLAA 2015 2025-2030	SHLAA 2015 2030-2031	Surplus to meet requirements  2015-2031
3,185	8, 243 <sup>(ii)</sup>	12,883	7,192	497	9,359

- i. Please note: the figures identified in the table above do not take into account other sources of housing supply identified in the following Housing Delivery section.
- ii. In calculating the Council's five year housing land supply position, housing shortfall over the period 2011 to 2015 has been accounted for and redistributed using the Liverpool methodology for distributing housing shortfall. A 20% buffer has been applied to the five year requirement to allow for choice in the market and account for persistent under delivery in the plan period to date.

**6.50** Previous iterations of the Northumberland SHLAA demonstrated that there was an overall sufficient supply of deliverable and developable sites to meet the objectively assessed Northumberland housing requirement over the plan period. However these sites were not located in the correct settlements to deliver the scale and distribution of housing. As a result, in Hexham, Ponteland and Prudhoe, Green Belt deletions are required to ensure delivery of their housing requirements. These Green Belt deletion sites have been accounted for in the current SHLAA and contribute to developable housing land supply position for Northumberland, outlined in Table 6.3.

### Housing delivery

**6.51** The Council is required to plan, monitor and manage housing delivery over the plan period. Housing trajectories are a planning tool designed to monitor and manage the approach to housing delivery by monitoring both past and future completions over the plan period. They demonstrate where past completions have fallen short of the housing requirement and show how future completions can make up any shortfall. If shortfalls continue and forecasts in housing delivery indicate no improvement to the future build rate, it would suggest that the Plan's approach to housing delivery is not working and may trigger a plan review.

**6.52** The Northumberland housing trajectory is composed of a number of sources of supply in addition to sites identified in the SHLAA;

- a. Supply from large sites with existing permission;
  - Existing permissions on large sites of five units or more composes the majority of housing supply in the forthcoming 0-5 year period. These sites will be monitored annually to measure their contribution towards meeting the Delivery Area and Northumberland housing requirement.

## 6. Providing existing and future communities with a choice of decent, affordable homes

- b. Small site windfall delivery trend;
  - Small sites of four units or less are treated as windfall delivery. A trend based projection has been calculated based upon historical delivery rates of small sites<sup>(65)</sup>. Such sites compose an element of supply across the 0-5, 6-10 and 11-15 year periods of the plan. This element of supply will be revised and forecast on an annual basis to ensure that delivery rate projections and the contribution from small sites are accurate.
- c. SHLAA developable sites without permission;
  - SHLAA sites without planning permission have been assessed for their suitability and contribution towards housing supply<sup>(66)</sup>. Such sites compose an element of supply in the 6-10 and 11-15 year periods of the plan and may contribute to delivery of housing beyond the plan period.
- d. South East Northumberland SHLAA site density uplift allowance;
  - A density uplift allowance has been applied to large SHLAA sites without permission in the South East Delivery Area, based upon evidence of previous delivery that indicates higher densities and increased site capacities are achievable on sites in the South East. This uplift provides an element of supply for the 6-10 and 11-15 year periods of the plan and also contributes to supply beyond the plan period.
- e. Green Belt deletion sites for housing; and
  - Specific Green Belt deletion sites are identified in the settlements of Hexham, Ponteland and Prudhoe. A small element of supply from Green Belt deletion sites is expected to deliver in the 0-5 year period in Ponteland and Hexham, with the majority of Green Belt site deletions contributing to supply in the 6-10, 11-15 year periods and beyond the plan period.
- f. Empty homes (long term) forecasted to be brought back into use
  - One of the Council's priorities is to bring back into use long term empty properties<sup>(67)</sup>. Based upon historical net delivery of empty homes, a supply of empty properties has been accounted for in the housing trajectory. Empty homes contribute to supply across the 0-5, 6-10 and 11-15 year periods of the plan.

**6.53** Table 6.4 identifies the contribution of the above sources of supply to housing delivery in the plan period.

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65 Refer to the Northumberland Five Year Supply of Deliverable Sites (2015-2020) document for a full explanation and calculation of small site delivery forecasts.

66 Refer to the Northumberland Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2015) for individual site suitability assessments.

67 The Northumberland Private Sector Housing Strategy identifies the approach to bringing back into use empty homes.

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**Table 6.4 Sources of housing supply over the plan period**

	Contribution to housing supply 2011-2031 (units)
Past completions (2011-2015)	3,185
Large Sites with planning permission (SHLAA Deliverable and Developable)	7,222
Large Sites without planning permission (SHLAA Deliverable and Developable)	19,123
Green Belt deletion sites (with and without planning permission)	1,675
South East SHLAA site capacity uplift	856
Small site windfall allowance	1,952
Net additional long term empty homes brought back into use	740

**6.54** Northumberland's housing trajectory demonstrates that the authority has sufficient sites to deliver the Northumberland housing requirement over the plan period (Appendix C). A shortfall in housing delivery for the period 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2015 is identified. However, a significant improvement particularly in 2014/15 completion rates indicates that the housing market is improving. The trajectory demonstrates that the shortfall can be delivered in the plan period as latent demand emerges from a period of recession, generating an increased demand for new homes in Northumberland. The trajectory identifies increased output in the mid (6-10 year) to latter (11-15 year) stages of the plan period. This uplift in delivery rates is attributable to the commencement of the Strategic Delivery Sites and major housing development sites with existing permission reaching their onsite peak delivery rates. This uplift in delivery will deliver the housing shortfall experienced in the early years of the plan.

**6.55** The Council will monitor the progress of housing delivery through the plan, monitor, and manage approach to assessing a plans performance. The Monitoring and Implementation Framework identifies indicators to monitor the progress of housing delivery.

## 6. Providing existing and future communities with a choice of decent, affordable homes

### Delivering affordable homes

**6.56** Supporting the delivery of affordable homes is a priority for the Council. The Core Strategy has an important role to set out policies to allow the need for affordable housing to be met through the Development Management process. NPPF<sup>(68)</sup> defines affordable housing as:

#### **Affordable housing:**

Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

Homes that do not meet the above definition of affordable housing, such as "low cost market" housing, may not be considered as affordable housing for planning purposes.

**6.57** In common with the rest of the country, Northumberland experienced significant increases in house prices from 2000 to 2008. An upturn in the national economy, continued low interest rates and stimulus such as the government's Help to Buy initiative have seen increased transactions and house prices since the recession. Northumberland's average house prices remain more favourable than the North East average at £121,857<sup>(69)</sup>. The ability of people to enter the housing market in Northumberland remains a problem with the lower quartile house price to earnings ratio in Northumberland being 5.1:1<sup>(70)</sup>, while the lower quartile house price to income ratio is 7:1<sup>(71)</sup>.

**6.58** NPPF requires local planning authorities to identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations reflecting local demand. It also requires that where a need for affordable housing is identified, policies are set to meet this need on-site, or elsewhere when robustly justified, to create mixed and balanced communities.

**6.59** The Full Draft plan proposed a 30% affordable housing target for Northumberland. There has been concern from the development industry regarding the viability of the target and the approach to dealing with the backlog of affordable housing provision.

**6.60** The Sustainability Appraisal identified that the policy approach to secure affordable housing is likely to have positive social impacts in that it should enable the housing needs of residents, who cannot currently access the housing market to be met, as well as promote health wellbeing and community cohesion.

68 National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012, Annex 2: Glossary, page 50.

69 Land Registry House Price Index for June 2015.

70 Based on data from the latest Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings and Sales and Valuations over the last 12 month. Earnings data relates to a single person in full time employment. Hometrack, August 2015.

71 Based on household disposable income, Hometrack, August 2015.

## 6. Providing existing and future communities with a choice of decent, affordable homes

### Affordable housing targets

**6.61** In order to support the delivery of affordable housing, to meet identified need, the Council considers it appropriate to set a target at the Northumberland level that 30% of all new homes should be affordable, as defined above.

**6.62** Three key factors have been considered when setting an affordable housing target; affordable housing need, viability, the ability of Registered Providers to deliver affordable homes.

**6.63** The SHMA identifies affordable housing need across Northumberland over a five year period, in accordance with the methodology as set out in national guidance. At the County level, a need to provide 401 dwellings per annum is identified, equating to 2,005 dwellings over a five year period. Over this period, the affordable housing requirement equates to approximately 30% of the overall housing delivery target.

**6.64** Over the next five years, 1,047 affordable dwellings are forecast to be delivered on sites with planning consent, leaving a net requirement for 955 affordable units. Therefore in order to meet the identified net need, there is a requirement for 15% of dwellings on new permissions should be affordable. The appropriate level of affordable housing provision on any specific development proposal will be determined on a case by case basis and informed by an understanding of the level of need and viability issues.

**6.65** Affordable housing need varies markedly across the County. These variations in need are localised and are not reflected at the Delivery Area level. Where need is high, a contribution in excess of the 15% target may be required. Where little or no need is identified, a lower contribution may be acceptable.

**6.66** The provision of affordable housing on a site represents a significant cost to a developer, in addition to other contributions which may be required, including the Community Infrastructure Levy. The viability of a site to support affordable housing depends on a range of factors, including market values, remediation costs and other abnormal costs; many of which are very local or even site specific. The form of affordable housing can also affect viability, with differing cost implications between the provision of intermediate housing, such as Discount Market Value homes, and social and affordable rented properties. In areas where affordable need is high, and viability permits, a contribution in excess of the 15% target may be required. Where a developer can demonstrate that it is not viable to deliver the required affordable contribution, a smaller contribution may be acceptable.

**6.67** The ability of Registered Providers to deliver affordable housing needs to be considered when setting an overall target. Recent Government announcements regarding reducing social rents and extending the Right to Buy will reduce income streams of Registered Providers, and limit their ability to invest in new affordable homes. In order to meet identified affordable housing need, any reduction in the ability of Registered Providers or the Council to deliver affordable homes, may put greater emphasis on delivery through private development.

**6.68** The level of need for affordable housing, the amount delivered, and the number of units forecast to be delivered in the future will be monitored and the policy will be subject to periodic review to reflect new evidence about affordable housing from future SHMAs.

## 6. Providing existing and future communities with a choice of decent, affordable homes

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### Site thresholds

**6.69** Given the rural nature of much of Northumberland, small development sites make a valuable contribution to the delivery of housing. Therefore a balance needs to be achieved which maximises the delivery of affordable homes without jeopardising the viability of small developments.

**6.70** Between 1 April 2009 and 31 March 2015, 23% of dwellings completed were on small sites of less than five units, with 13% of completions on single unit sites. Therefore, exempting single dwelling developments from an affordable housing contribution will make them more viable and will not have a significant impact upon affordable housing delivery. To facilitate self and custom build, a threshold of two units will apply before a contribution towards affordable housing provision will be required.

### Low density housing developments

**6.71** A target based affordable housing approach can have an inequitable effect. Most particularly in respect of executive style or high value homes, which are built on large plots and at comparatively low densities. A 30% target for example would equate to a smaller contribution for the developer of a low density scheme, despite such a development often being highly profitable. The Council will therefore seek to address this issue by including a specific policy criterion that can secure an appropriate level of affordable housing contribution.

### Off-site affordable housing contributions

**6.72** In providing affordable housing the presumption is that it will be delivered on the application site and designed as part of the overall scheme, to promote social inclusion and contribute towards creating a mixed and balanced community. Exceptionally, where it can be robustly justified, off-site provision or a financial contribution in lieu of on-site provision may be acceptable, provided it contributes to the creation of mixed communities.

### Second and holiday homes

**6.73** Many properties within Northumberland are used as second or holiday homes, with concentrations evident particularly along the coast and in accessible upland areas. North Northumberland has the greatest number of second and holiday homes and vacant properties, particularly the coastal parishes of Beadnell and North Sunderland<sup>(72)</sup>.

**6.74** It is recognised that concentrations of holiday accommodation can have a negative impact on the social fabric of a community such as diminished support for local facilities and school provision. In North Northumberland the demand for holiday accommodation, along with rises in house prices, has made many of the smaller properties unaffordable to the local population.

**6.75** Properties within the housing stock can generally move into and out of holiday use without planning consent. While the Core Strategy will not specifically restrict the use of new market housing in settlements with a high proportion of second or holiday homes, the Council recognises that it may be appropriate for some Parish Councils to address this issue through Neighbourhood Plans. Alternatively the Council could include a specific

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72 Census 2011.

## 6. Providing existing and future communities with a choice of decent, affordable homes

policy approach within the Delivery Document. A requirement to consider the need for the provision of permanently occupied dwellings is included within Housing Provision Policy 15 and the Rural Exception Sites Policy 20.

**6.76** Where there is acute affordability pressure and an identified need, the Council will seek to address this issue by adopting a positive approach to planning for and delivering affordable housing for local people in areas where there are high concentrations of second or holiday homes.

### Permitted development rights

**6.77** Permitted development rights are a national grant of planning permission which allow, subject to conditions, certain building works and changes of use to be carried out without having to make a planning application. Such changes of use include the conversion of retail and office units, or agricultural buildings to dwellings. National guidance indicates that under permitted development rights, agricultural buildings and land within their curtilage, to a maximum of 450m<sup>2</sup> may convert to dwellings, and that a maximum of three dwellings may be developed.

**6.78** Where permitted development rights exist, the requirement for the provision of affordable homes will not apply. This is likely to impact upon delivery of affordable housing in rural parts of Northumberland.

**6.79** The setting of affordable housing targets is intended to deliver homes to meet the Northumberland's identified need over a five year period; however, there will always be an on-going affordable housing need across the County. Therefore the requirements for affordable housing will be reviewed on a regular basis throughout the lifetime of the plan.

### **Policy 19**

#### **Delivering affordable housing**

The overall plan target is for 30% of new homes across Northumberland to be affordable. Given that part of this need will be met by committed development with planning consent, 15% of homes on new permissions will be expected to be affordable. In order to achieve this target, subject to viability considerations, all open market residential development proposals of two or more units will be expected to contribute towards the provision of affordable housing where there is an identified need.

A contribution in excess of the 15% target will be expected:

- a. If the overall 30% plan target is not being met and / or the level of committed development is reduced; and / or
- b. Where there is an identified local need which justifies a higher contribution and viability permits.

The affordable housing contribution required for a development will be determined taking into account:

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- c. The extent of the housing need, and the appropriate tenure mix and type required, as evidenced by an up to date housing needs study; and local market conditions; and
- d. In low density developments the affordable housing contribution will be identified as a percentage of dwellings or site area, whichever is the greater.

Where the specific circumstances of a scheme mean a developer considers that an affordable housing requirement would make the scheme unviable and/or the affordable housing is not required, the developer will need to robustly demonstrate this by providing a viability assessment. This assessment will need to be verified by the Council in accordance with its Viability Assessment Charter and/or evidence to demonstrate that affordable housing is not required.

In order to create mixed and balanced communities, there will be a presumption that affordable housing will be provided on-site. If off-site provision or a financial contribution can be robustly justified, the following sequential policy approach will be applied:

- i. Provision to be made in the settlement, or grouping of Parishes or Wards which make up the settlement, where the contribution arises;
- ii. Provision to be made in an adjoining Parish or Ward;
- iii. Provision to be made elsewhere in the Delivery Area where the contribution arises;
- iv. Provision to be made to cross-subsidise affordable housing provision where priorities are identified throughout the County.

### Rural exception sites

**6.80** National guidance makes provision for rural exception site policies, whereby local planning authorities may consider allocating and releasing small sites for affordable housing in *perpetuity*, where such sites would not normally be used for housing. The sites should meet the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. The Council can also consider allowing some market housing on rural exception sites where this would facilitate the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs.

**6.81** Where there is a pressing need for affordable housing, which cannot be met in other ways, the provision of homes through exceptions sites is a means of delivering the housing needs of Northumberland's rural communities. Such housing will be required to be affordable in *perpetuity* and have permitted development rights removed to ensure properties remain affordable and continue to meet the needs of the community.

**6.82** In accordance with NPPF, where there are issues with the viability of rural exception housing schemes, some market housing may be acceptable provided the financial need for the market housing can be demonstrated and there is insufficient or no grant funding. Any cross subsidy from the market housing must be used to fund the affordable housing on the site. Limiting the proportion of market housing will ensure that the housing development is principally affordable. There will also be a requirement for the market housing element to be for occupation as a principal residence only.

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**6.83** Applications for agricultural workers dwellings in the open countryside will be considered in accordance with Policy 3 Spatial Distribution.

**6.84** In order to boost the rural economy, the Government has recently announced that it proposes extend the allowing the development of Starter Homes on rural exception sites. Once further details regarding the policy change are announced it may be necessary for the Council to amend the Rural Exception Site policy in the submission document.

**6.85** There was general support expressed for the Rural Exception Sites policy from the Full Draft Plan consultation, with suggestions made to change the policy wording to make it better reflect NPPF and also the need to acknowledge the change in permitted development rights.

**6.86** The Sustainability Appraisal has found that the policy should have positive effects in terms of social objectives, by providing affordable housing in locations where new housing would not normally be allowed, helping to promote social inclusion and keep families and communities together whilst also helping to sustain rural services and the rural economy. However the appraisal found it could have uncertain or potentially negative effects on the environment, as development is likely to be located in areas which are not served by public transport. This impact could be mitigated to a certain extent by criteria based policies to ensure development is directed to the most accessible settlements with some level of service provision.

### Policy 20

#### Rural exception sites

In plan-making and assessing development proposals the development of rural exception sites will be permitted if the proposal provides affordable housing in *perpetuity* and provided that:

- a. There is evidence of identified need in an up to date housing needs study;
- b. The development is available for local people identified as being in local housing need or others who have a family or employment connection with the community in which the development takes place;
- c. The development is within, adjacent or well related to an existing settlement;
- d. The development is well related to local services and facilities including those outside the settlement in which the development is proposed to be located; and
- e. The development is in scale and keeping with the form, character and landscape setting of the community in which the development takes and does not significantly adversely impact on the natural and built environment.

Such developments will have their permitted development rights removed to ensure the properties remain affordable.

The inclusion of market housing within a rural exception housing scheme will only be permitted where:

- f. The majority of the development is for affordable housing;

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- g. The provision of the market housing element will be for occupation as a principal residence only; and
- h. It has been demonstrated that it is essential to the viability and successful delivery of the overall affordable housing scheme and insufficient or no public subsidy is available.

### Older people and vulnerable groups

**6.87** National policy requires local authorities to meet the specific needs of older people and other vulnerable groups. The Government aims to support people in their own homes so that they can lead a more independent life. The Government is also committed to helping older people live independently by promoting the development of 'lifetime neighbourhoods'. These are accessible places, which by their design and location are suitable to be lived in by all people regardless of their age or disability.

**6.88** The needs of both older people and vulnerable groups are often considered in tandem. However, this shared definition masks a significant diversity<sup>(73)</sup>. While most people who are able to do so prefer to remain within their own homes for as long as possible, with or without support, others require specialist accommodation to meet their specific needs. **It is important that the Core Strategy enables the provision of increased housing choices for older people and vulnerable groups, whatever their requirements.** Offering attractive housing choices for older people and vulnerable groups will assist the Council in freeing up family sized homes which are currently under occupied.

**6.89** There has been general support for the Council's approach to housing for older people and vulnerable groups, and to the provision of specialist accommodation. However, there was concern from the development industry that there was no national policy basis or evidence to require a target for the provision of houses to meet 'lifetime homes' standards.

**6.90** The Sustainability Appraisal identified that the approach is likely to have major positive effects on health and well-being and sustaining safer communities by providing purpose built accommodation to meet the specific needs of older and disabled people in sustainable locations, helping to promote social inclusion.

### Meeting the housing needs of older people and vulnerable groups

**6.91** Northumberland is projected to have a significantly increasing proportion of older people within its communities. Population forecasts for the period 2012 to 2031 show a significant increase in the over 65 age group, an increase of 52.6%. Between 2012 and 2031, the 75 to 79 age group is predicted to increase by 48.7%, with the 80-89 age group increasing by 90.5% and the 90+ age group experiencing the most significant increase, 161.4%<sup>(74)</sup>.

**6.92** The changing needs of three broad groups of older people<sup>(75)</sup> can be identified as:

73 For future living – innovative approaches to joining up housing and health, pp44 and 45 IPPR, 2014

74 2012-based Sub-national Population Projections (ONS).

75 Older people in Northumberland, A longer Term View (Northumberland Strategic Partnership, 2006).

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- Older workers (who either still have jobs or are still actively seeking work);
- Third agers<sup>(76)</sup> (who have retired from work and can reorganise their lives around leisure, family responsibilities, non-vocational education or voluntary work); and
- Older people in need of care (whose lives are substantially affected by long-term illness or disability).

**6.93** While the first two groups may wish and be able to live independently with little or no support, the latter group may require additional care or specialist accommodation. In many cases the housing requirements of older people in need of care are somewhat similar to those of other vulnerable groups.

**6.94** National research suggests older people's housing preferences are shaped by a lack of available options for accommodation, support and related services:

- There is very limited choice for older person households moving home to accommodate their support needs<sup>(77)</sup>
- The specialist housing currently on offer does not reflect the choices that most older people make<sup>(78)</sup>
- Housing decisions are often taken by other people<sup>(79)</sup>.

**6.95** Evidence of the housing preferences of older people suggests that older people do not choose to move to a care home<sup>(80)</sup> and that more attention should be given to living well at home<sup>(81)</sup> and access to help irrespective of their tenure<sup>(82)</sup>. Whilst the provision of additional retirement, sheltered housing and extra-care housing will need to be considered to meet increasing demand; many of the housing requirements of older people can be met through general housing provision through developments which offers high standards of accessibility, in terms of their design and location.

**6.96** Lifetime Neighbourhoods and integrated facilities providing tiers of support may meet the requirements of older people and those with need for support. Advances in technologies such as 'telecare' can help support people to stay in their homes longer. Vulnerability, be it within the older population or other groups, is not necessarily permanent or fixed. Properties which allow for adaptation will reduce the need for people to require specialist accommodation, even in the short to medium term.

**6.97** The Ageing Well<sup>(83)</sup> study shows a clear interrelationship between location, space and design for older people's housing, with moves earlier in retirement being driven by amenity migration. Moves in later life are more reactive often as a result of a specific event and are influenced by proximity to local services (especially in rural locations). In an urban setting accessible housing was only found to be an attractive alternative if it was located centrally. Centrally located sites in key settlements with better access to health, leisure,

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76 The "third age" is a stage of life after the "first age" of childhood and the "second age" of working life, but before the "fourth age" of age-related ill-health.

77 Market assessment of housing options for older people (SHELTER, JRF, 2012).

78 Housing our Ageing population: Panel for Innovation (Homes and Communities Agency, 2009), Older People's housing: choice, quality of life and under-occupation (JRF, 2013).

79 Finding out what determines 'a good life' for older people in care homes (JRF, 2009).

80 Finding out what determines 'a good life' for older people in care homes (JRF, 2009).

81 The living Well at Home Inquiry (The All-party Parliamentary Group on Housing and Care for Older People, 2011).

82 Breaking the mould (National Housing Federation, 2011).

83 Ageing Well in Northumberland, Older People's Housing Needs and Aspirations (LQR, 2013)

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education and transport facilities will allow people to remain in their communities and sustain local services. The study showed independent living was highly valued in connection with remaining active and socially connected and that the quality of the local neighbourhood and the opportunities for out of home mobility has a profound impact on people's ability to age well.

**6.98** The Northumberland Countywide Housing Needs Survey (2012) identified that properties currently occupied by older people are mainly three bedroomed. The survey indicated that older people planning a move within Northumberland have a preference to continue to own their own home, downsize to two bedroom properties and live in bungalows. Demand for supported accommodation (other than sheltered accommodation) is identified as being predominantly for independent accommodation with visiting support.

**6.99** Joint Social Care and Health Commissioning Plans between the Council and Northumberland Care Trust, and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment aim to promote independence and support individuals to live independently. Evidence confirms that this is in line with older people's preference<sup>(84)</sup>. In addition, analysis of admissions to residential care since 2006<sup>(85)</sup> shows that numbers have consistently reduced over that time (with the exception of an increase caused by redefining older clients who had been included with the totals for different long term conditions), despite an increasingly ageing population and stronger demand for residential care.

**6.100** The Core Strategy supports the development of housing which is accessible in terms of design and its location, allowing older people and vulnerable groups to live as independent lives as possible. The Council will support opportunities to create Lifetime Neighbourhoods which will be expected to demonstrate:

- The availability of shops, community facilities and transport connections;
- The accessibility of the neighbourhood for people who may have restricted mobility;
- The current and potential attractiveness of the area to older people;
- The safety and sociability of public spaces.

**6.101** The designation of any Lifetime Neighbourhood may be considered through the preparation of the Delivery Document or Neighbourhood Plans.

**6.102** The provision of homes which incorporate additional space, and / or are designed to enhance accessibility or adaptability may assist in meeting the needs of older people and vulnerable groups. National guidance indicates that if a local planning authority wishes to introduce accessibility standards exceeding the minimum standards required by Building Regulations, or space standards, these should be referenced in the Local Plan and be in accordance with Housing – Optional Technical Standards.

**6.103** The Council does not consider it currently has evidence to support a requirement for new developments to include a proportion of homes to meet the accessibility or nationally described space standards.

**6.104** However, the Council supports the provision of homes which are accessible, adaptable, and which incorporate additional space, and facilities, such as downstairs toilets.

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84 Securing Good Care for Older People, Wanless, 2006

85 Northumberland County Council (SWIFT), 2014

### Policy 21

#### Housing for older people and vulnerable groups

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the Council will support the provision of accommodation to meet the needs of older people and vulnerable groups, in appropriate sustainable locations.

All residential development schemes should assist older people and vulnerable groups to live securely and independently within their communities.

In plan making, consideration should be given to the opportunity to create 'Lifetime Neighbourhoods' and centres which incorporate the delivery of integrated tiered support.

In assessing development proposals the Council will:

- a. Require developers, through the design and access statement, to demonstrate how proposals meet the space and accessibility needs of older and vulnerable people;
- b. Support the provision of bungalows and other types of general needs housing which is adaptable to the changing accessibility needs of older people and vulnerable groups;
- c. Support the provision of extra-care housing as part of a housing mix to create and maintain balanced and sustainable communities; and
- d. Consider accessibility to existing local services and facilities, including local health, leisure, and education and transport facilities.

#### Meeting the need for specialist accommodation

**6.105** The groups of people who will sometimes require specialist accommodation include individuals with very specific support needs such as:

- people with a complex learning disability;
- people with severe autism;
- people with acute and on-going mental health difficulties;
- offenders;
- people needing rehabilitation services;
- individuals whose carers require respite care;
- older people with severe dementia, or with 24-hour nursing needs.

**6.106** Whilst projections for Northumberland appear to show a projected downward trend in some vulnerable groups<sup>(86)</sup>, this is contradicted by the trends in admissions to residential homes for younger people with an illness or disability (18–64)<sup>(87)</sup> and the growing number of people in Northumberland with dementia<sup>(88)</sup>. Northumberland has significantly

86 PANSI, 2014.

87 Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework outcome 2A 2010-11 to 2013-14 – permanent admissions to care homes per 100,000 population.

88 Draft Northumberland Dementia Strategy (Northumberland County Council, 2014).

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more people with learning disabilities than the national and regional averages<sup>(89)</sup>, and fortunately as a result of improvements in health and social care people with learning disabilities are living longer. This does, however, pose some health concerns for people with learning disabilities in older age. In particular, there is a higher risk of complex health problems and dementia in people with Down's syndrome or profound and multiple learning disabilities. This in turn will mean that specialist supported accommodation will need to be available.

**6.107** As national and local policy is directed towards supporting people to enable them to remain in their own homes, and demand for specialist accommodation overall is in decline, for development proposals to be supported it is important that an identified local need for this type of accommodation is identified.

### Policy 22

#### Specialist accommodation

The Council will support the provision of specialist accommodation for older and vulnerable people who are unable to live independently, in appropriate sustainable locations and where there is an identified need. When assessing development proposals the Council will consider:

- a. The need for the development as evidenced by a specialist housing need assessment. Growth in the number of older people or those with special needs in the local population will not on its own be regarded as need for this type of accommodation;
- b. Accessibility to existing local services and facilities, including local health, leisure, education and transport facilities;
- c. Opportunities to enhance and sustain local service provision; and
- d. Whether schemes have been designed in a way which maximises the opportunity for residents to live independently and minimises any institutional character.

#### Provision for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities

**6.108** The Government has a duty to 'facilitate the gypsy way of life' for ethnic Gypsies and Travellers under the Human Rights Act. An increasing need for the provision of permanent and transit pitches has been identified. Government guidance aims to increase significantly the number of Traveller sites in appropriate locations, with local authorities being required to provide for a five year supply of pitches with at least broad locations identified for later years.

**6.109** The Council is committed to providing appropriate housing to meet the needs of the whole community. This includes the provision of sufficient sites for the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (including Travelling Showpeople) communities. Within Northumberland there are currently two Gypsy Traveller sites owned and managed by Northumberland County Council, Hartford Bridge near Bedlington and Lyneburn Cottages near Lynemouth.

89 NEPHO, 2012.

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Both sites are located adjacent or near to the boundaries of the settled communities and have access to the same local services and facilities. There are also three private sites in Northumberland, established on land owned by Gypsy and Traveller families, who have planning permission, as well as a Showman's Guild yard which is privately owned and managed. There are currently no authorised transit sites or stopping places in Northumberland.

**6.110** The latest Northumberland Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) has a base date of April 2014<sup>(90)</sup>.

**6.111** In assessing the need for permanent pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, the GTAA takes account of factors such as household formation, the projected low rate of pitches becoming vacant and also that five new pitches at Hartford Bridge came on stream during 2015. Based on this, it identifies:

- A requirement for five further new permanent pitches (over and above recent provision) during the period to March 2019 – all of these in the South East Delivery Area;
- A requirement for eleven further new permanent pitches during the remainder of the plan period to March 2031 – nine in the South East Delivery Area and two in the North Delivery Area.

**6.112** The Assessment also found a need for non-permanent facilities in South East Northumberland on a year-round basis and in some other parts of North and West Northumberland Delivery Areas during the summer season.

**6.113** There is not considered to be a pressing need for a further Travelling Showpeople yard, although it is assumed that additional plots may need to be accommodated within the boundary of the existing facility to take account of household formation.

**6.114** Concerns expressed at previous stages of the Core Strategy have centred on the need for up-to-date information. The new GTAA has sought to address this. Further concerns regarding the range of safeguards relating to sites and yards have also been largely addressed, although some additional alterations to criteria dealing with the natural and water environment have been included in the version of the policy below.

**6.115** The Sustainability Appraisal has found that the policy should have direct positive effects on the health and well-being, provision of affordable homes and preservation of the cultural heritage of the GRT groups, as well as on community services and facilities. The inclusion of a number of safeguards means that there should be neutral effects on local environmental factors such as air quality and flood risk avoidance and landscapes.

**6.116** Work is on-going to identify suitable locations to meet the needs for additional permanent and temporary pitches/ sites needed within the initial five year period. If additional sites require a formal allocation, this will be undertaken through the Northumberland Delivery Plan Document.

**6.117** The strategic policy approach below will apply to both permanent and temporary sites / yards for Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

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90 The Northumberland Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (2015) is available to view on the Council's website at:  
<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3458>

## 6. Providing existing and future communities with a choice of decent, affordable homes

### Policy 23

#### Provision for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, in order to facilitate the way of life of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities within the context of Northumberland's environment, economy and its settled communities, the Council will make provision for the necessary sites and/or yards, and additional pitches and/or plots over the plan period to meet the need identified in the Northumberland Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment.

Any new land allocation required to meet medium or longer term accommodation needs will be identified in the Northumberland Delivery Plan Document.

The following criteria will be taken into consideration when determining the allocation of sites or extensions to existing sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, and in determining planning applications:

- a. Proposals will not be permitted in areas designated as Green Belt;
- b. Proposals will be regarded in the same way as any residential proposal in relation to risk of flooding;
- c. The site will be well related to local services and facilities, including jobs, shops, schools, medical facilities and public transport;
- d. The proposal will be well screened and landscaped and not cause unacceptable harm to ecosystems or the character and appearance of the surrounding area, including any unacceptable impact on water bodies, water quality, biodiversity and / or heritage assets;
- e. The site will have safe vehicular access from the highway and adequate parking provision and turning areas as well as space for storage of equipment;
- f. The proposal will not result in disturbance or loss of amenity to any neighbouring residential properties, settled communities or places of visitor accommodation;
- g. The internal amenity of the site will be secured through the provision of essential infrastructure and on-site facilities, including water supply, sewerage, and waste removal/recycling, work areas and play areas.

### 7. Green Belt

**7.1** The Green Belt in Northumberland has an important role in delivering the vision and objectives of the Core Strategy, particularly helping to direct development to the most sustainable locations whilst ensuring that development requirements can be met within and beyond the plan period. This section sets out the strategic policy approach to the Green Belt within Northumberland.

#### National policy requirements

**7.2** Nationally, the Government attaches great importance to the Green Belt. The NPPF states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open, and that a key attribute of land in the Green Belt is its openness.

**7.3** The NPPF sets out the five purposes of the Green Belt<sup>(91)</sup>, which are to:

- Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
- Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- Assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

**7.4** NPPF includes a presumption against permitting inappropriate development within the Green Belt<sup>(92)</sup>. Exceptions to this are:

- Buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- Provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and cemeteries as long as the development preserves the openness of the Green Belt;
- The limited extension or alteration, or replacement of existing buildings;
- Limited infilling in villages, and limited affordable housing for local community needs; and
- Limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites, which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.

**7.5** The over-riding principle is that new development in the Green Belt should preserve its openness and reflect the purposes of its designation.

#### Extent of the Tyne and Wear Green Belt

**7.6** The Green Belt that lies within Northumberland forms part of the wider Tyne and Wear Green Belt. The overriding purpose of the Green Belt within Northumberland is to prevent the unrestricted sprawl of the Tyne and Wear conurbation. The Green Belt also performs an important role in preventing merger of rural settlements. Areas of Green Belt were designated around the Tyne and Wear conurbation, including in parts of Northumberland, in the 1960s and 1970s.

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91 National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012, paragraph 80

92 A more complete definition of inappropriate development is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012, paragraphs 87 to 92 and other relevant documents including Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, March 2012.

## 7. Green Belt

**7.7** Since the original designation was made, areas have been added to<sup>(93)</sup> as well as removed<sup>(94)</sup> from the Green Belt. Across Northumberland, the current Green Belt covers 70,126 hectares (701.26 square kilometres), which amounts to 17.6% of Northumberland's Local Plan area, see Figure 7.1. Main Towns and Service Centres that are inset<sup>(95)</sup> in the Green Belt are Corbridge, Hexham, Prudhoe, Ponteland and Seaton Delaval/Seghill/New Hartley/Holywell.

**7.8** An extension to the Green Belt around Morpeth was identified in Regional Planning Guidance in 2002, with Policy S5 of the revised Northumberland Structure Plan (2005) defining the general extent.

**7.9** The Green Belt approach within the now cancelled 2008 North East Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) sought to continue to safeguard the countryside from encroachment, check the unrestricted sprawl of Tyne and Wear and maintain the broad extent of the Green Belt with detailed boundaries to be defined in relevant Local Plans, around Morpeth. Specifically, in relation to Northumberland, it stated that the Green Belt should:

- Prevent the merging of: Newcastle upon Tyne with Ponteland, Newcastle Airport, or Cramlington: North Tyneside with Cramlington or Blyth;
- Preserve the setting and special character of Hexham, Corbridge and Morpeth; and
- Assist in urban regeneration in the city-regions by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

**7.10** As a result of the cancellation of the RSS, the saved Structure Plan Policy S5 relating to the Green Belt around Morpeth was retained by the Government to enable the Northumberland Local Plan to define the detailed boundaries of the Green Belt extension. This reflected the Government's commitment to safeguarding Green Belt protection<sup>(96)</sup>.

**7.11** In accordance with the NPPF, the strategic policy approach to the Tyne and Wear Green Belt within Northumberland will seek to:

- Continue to check the unrestricted sprawl of Tyne and Wear;
- Continue to safeguard the countryside from encroachment; and
- Preserve the openness of the Green Belt within Northumberland.

**7.12** Planning permission will not be granted for inappropriate development in the Green Belt unless very special circumstances clearly outweigh the potential harm to the Green Belt.

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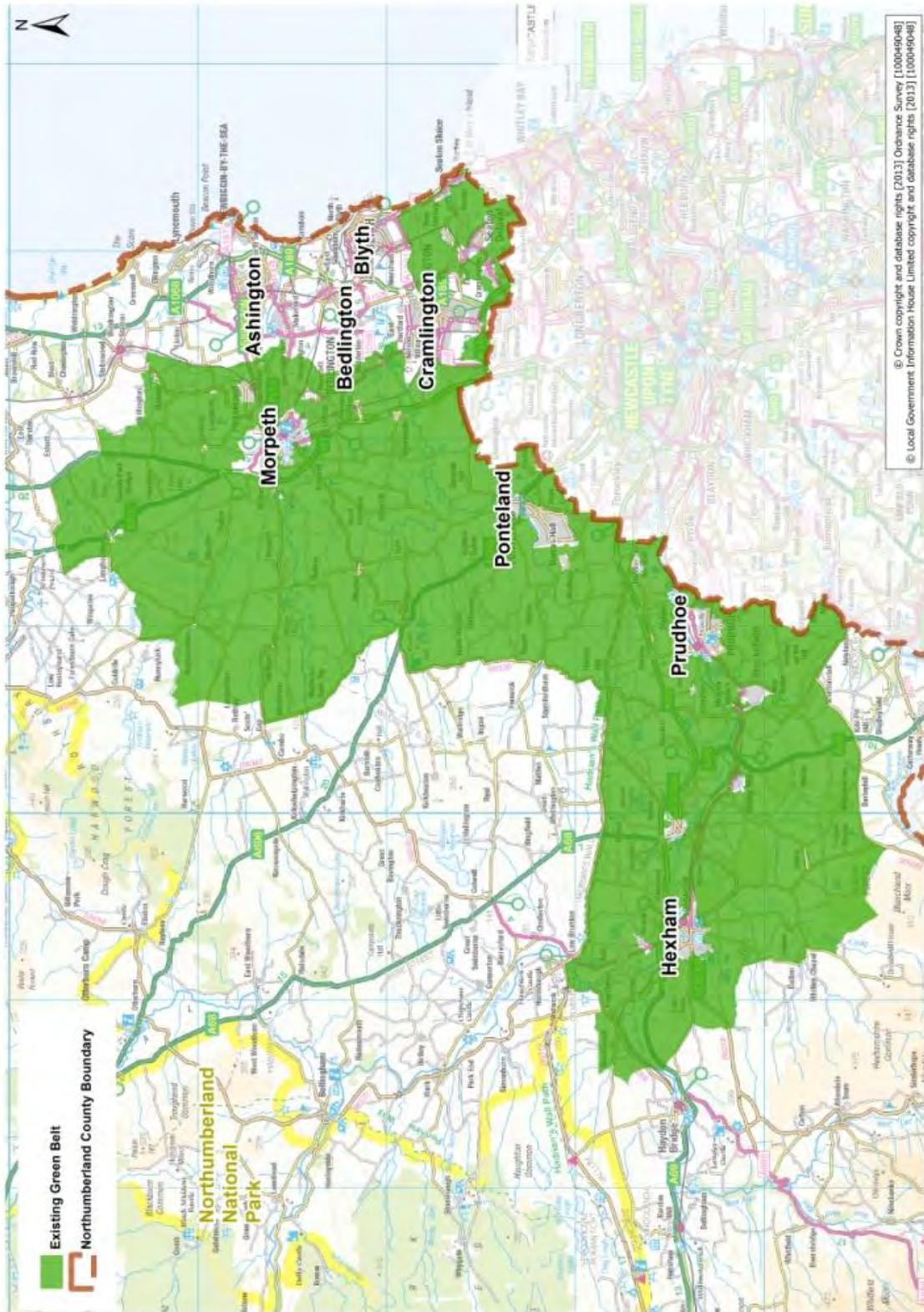
93 Seaton Valley area through the Blyth Valley Local Plan (adopted in 1999), the area west of Hexham through the Tynedale Local Plan (adopted 2000), the area to the West of Darras Hall, Ponteland through the Castle Morpeth Local Plan (adopted 2003) and the area to the north of Morpeth through the Northumberland Structure Plan (adopted 2005).

94 Operational area of Newcastle Airport through the Castle Morpeth Local Plan (adopted in 2003).

95 Inset means that the settlement itself is excluded from the Green Belt and Green Belt policies do not apply to development within the settlement. Green Belt policy will apply to those areas designated as Green Belt outside of the settlements.

96 <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-vote-office/March-2013/18-03-13/6.DCLG-Abolition-of-Regional-Planning.pdf>

Figure 7.1 Existing Green Belt in Northumberland



## 7. Green Belt

### Policy 24

#### Strategic approach to Green Belt

The Tyne and Wear Green Belt within Northumberland as defined in Figure 7.1 will be protected to:

- a. Safeguard the countryside from encroachment;
- b. Check the unrestricted sprawl of Tyne and Wear;
- c. Prevent the merging of: Newcastle upon Tyne with Ponteland, Newcastle Airport, or Cramlington; and North Tyneside with Cramlington or Blyth;
- d. Preserve the setting and special character of Hexham, Corbridge and Morpeth;
- e. Prevent Morpeth merging with neighbouring settlements;
- f. Prevent the merger of rural settlements; and
- g. Assist in the regeneration of settlements in South East Northumberland beyond the Green Belt.

In plan making and assessing development proposals, development that is inappropriate in the Green Belt will not be allowed unless very special circumstances clearly outweigh the potential harm to the Green Belt.

#### Existing Green Belt boundaries

**7.13** The NPPF requires that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances. Where it is considered necessary to alter Green Belt boundaries, this should be undertaken through the preparation or review of a Local Plan. New boundaries need to have permanence enduring beyond the plan period.

**7.14** The NPPF requires Councils when preparing or reviewing Green Belt boundaries to take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development. In doing so consideration should be given to the consequences for sustainable development of directing development towards:

- Urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary;
- Towns and villages inset within the Green Belt; and
- Locations beyond the outer Green Belt<sup>(97)</sup>.

**7.15** Through previous consultations on the Core Strategy the Council has highlighted that some of the existing Green Belt boundaries around Main Towns and Service Centres do not provide sufficient capacity to accommodate the level of growth required to deliver: objectively assessed housing and economic development needs, or support the delivery of sustainable development. As a result, a Green Belt review was undertaken to ensure that settlements would be provided with sufficient space to allow for the delivery of the required future economic and/or residential development.

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97 National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012, paragraph 84.

**7.16** In accordance with the provisions of NPPF, the Council considers the need to provide land, in the correct places, to deliver the objectively assessed development needs in sustainable locations, constitutes exceptional circumstances.

**7.17** In 2014 the Council consulted on a methodology for the Green Belt Review. Following feedback this methodology has been further refined<sup>(98)</sup>. The Green Belt review methodology now focuses solely on an assessment of the identified land parcel areas and how they perform against the Green Belt purposes identified in the NPPF. The Green Belt assessment has fed into the Strategic Land Review which has:

- Considered the level of land required to deliver the proposed housing / employment requirements;
- Identified and mapped relevant constraints;
- Defined sectors and options for appropriate locations for future development; and
- Refined options and identified a preferred location for changes to the Green Belt boundary, including the need for the identification of safeguarded land.

**7.18** The use of this methodology has ensured consistency in approach to the identification of locations to be removed from the Green Belt to allow for sustainable future development.

### Hexham

**7.19** Hexham has an existing inset boundary that is relatively tightly drawn. Land safeguarded since the adoption of the Tynedale Local Plan in 2000 has now been largely taken up. To ensure the delivery of sustainable development through the Core Strategy there is a need to provide land for additional housing and employment development over and above what could be accommodated in the town's current inset boundary.

**7.20** Following feedback on the Preferred Options (Stage 2), the Full Draft Plan (2014) proposed a significant reduction in the housing numbers for the town but still identified that Green Belt releases would be required to meet sustainable development needs. The preferred approach was:

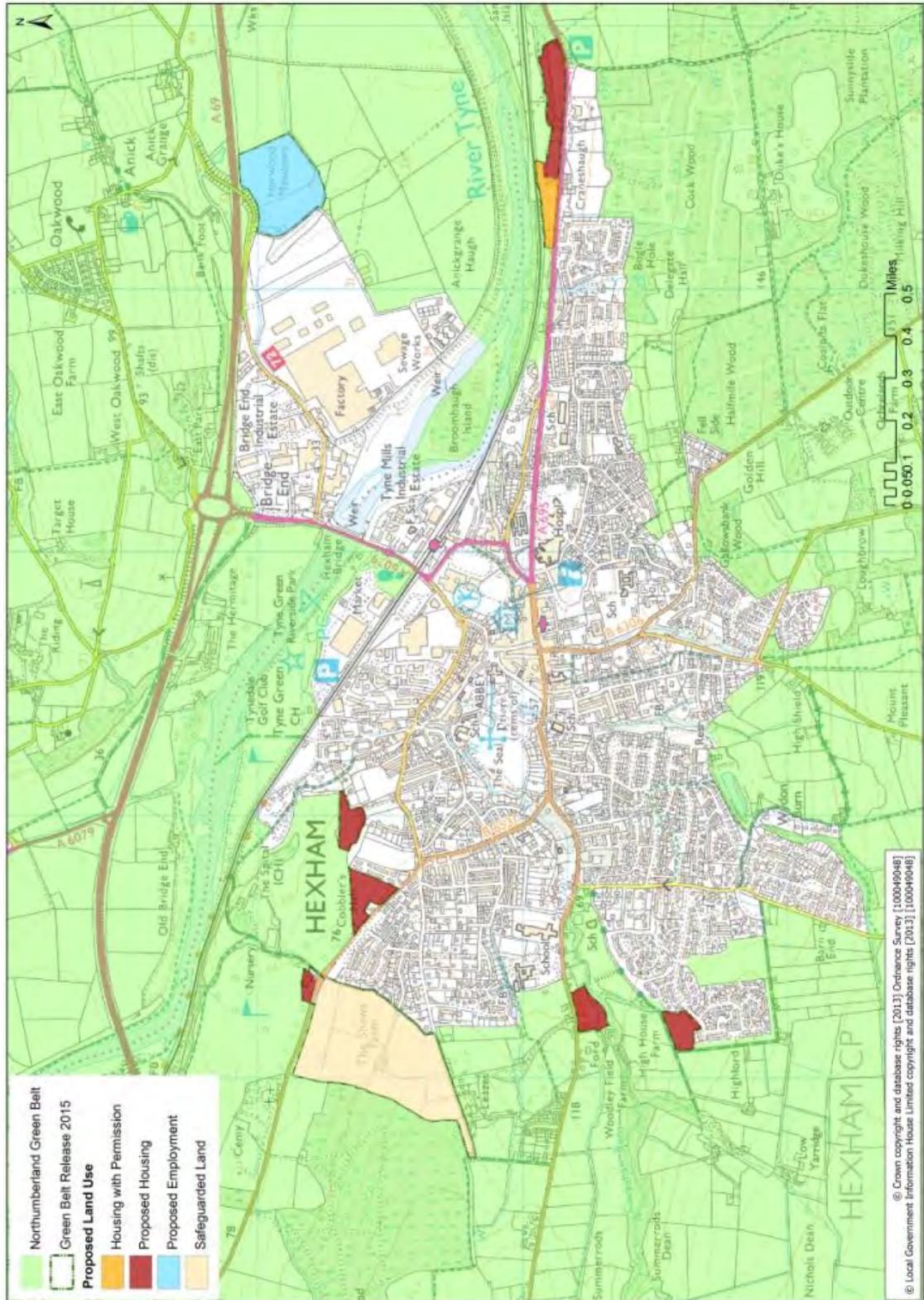
- Within the plan period to:
  - Release 5 small sites on the edge of Hexham for housing development; and
  - Release land for employment development;
- Beyond the plan period to:
  - Safeguard land to the west of Hexham for future housing development and potentially additional employment development.

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98 The Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Green Belt Review (2015) can be viewed on the Council's website at: <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=3458>

# 7. Green Belt

Figure 7.2 Hexham Green Belt boundary



**7.21** The revised approach received some local objections, but there was recognition that the revised approach better reflected the need for incremental growth of the town. In summary the feedback highlighted:

- Objection to the proposed location of land to be removed from the Green Belt;
- Concerns about the impacts on the town's infrastructure and the ability to cope with additional housing;
- No justification to identify safeguarded land;
- Need for additional land to be identified for Green Belt release to meet the development needs of the town; and
- Need to have a clear explanation of whether the housing requirement will be delivered on the proposed sites.

**7.22** Following feedback and additional work the Council now proposes to reduce the level of safeguarded land to be removed from the Green Belt to the west of the town (see Policy 25), and identify two additional sites to be removed from the Green Belt, one to provide the required additional employment land (see Policy 4) and the other to ensure there is capacity to meet the housing development needs of the town within the plan period (see Policy 15).

**7.23** **The strategic approach and the proposed amendments to the Green Belt boundary for Hexham will allow for the sustainable expansion of the settlement, plus additional safeguarded land to meet the long term development needs beyond the period of the Core Strategy.** The proposed Green Belt boundary for Hexham is shown in Figure 7.2.

### **Ponteland**

**7.24** Ponteland has an existing inset boundary that is tightly drawn around the built-up area, with no safeguarded land included for future development. To ensure the delivery of sustainable development through the Core Strategy there is a need to provide a mix of additional housing and employment land over and above what could be accommodated in the town's current inset boundary.

**7.25** Following feedback on the Preferred Options (Stage 2), the Full Draft Plan proposed a significant reduction in the housing numbers but still considered that Green Belt releases would be required to support the delivery of sustainable development. The preferred approach was:

- Within the plan period to:
  - Remove the area to the south east of Ponteland; north of Rotary Way, which included the previously developed sites of the Ponteland Leisure Centre and the Ponteland High and Middle schools. This would facilitate relocations/re-provision of the education and leisure facilities and the redevelopment of the existing sites for housing/employment uses;

## 7. Green Belt

- Remove the area to the north of Cheviot View, which could potentially facilitate the delivery of part of the bypass/relief road;
- Remove the area of the former Police HQ, plus some land to the east of this, west of North Road and north of the built-up area of Ponteland;
- Beyond the plan period to safeguard land for future housing development:
  - To the north and north west of Ponteland to the south of the route safeguarded for the Ponteland bypass. A bypass/relief road would be required in order to deliver development of this safeguarded land;
  - To the north of Cheviot View, which should support the delivery of part of the bypass/relief road; and
  - To the west of Callerton Lane.

**7.26** This approach continued to receive significant local objections. In summary the feedback highlighted:

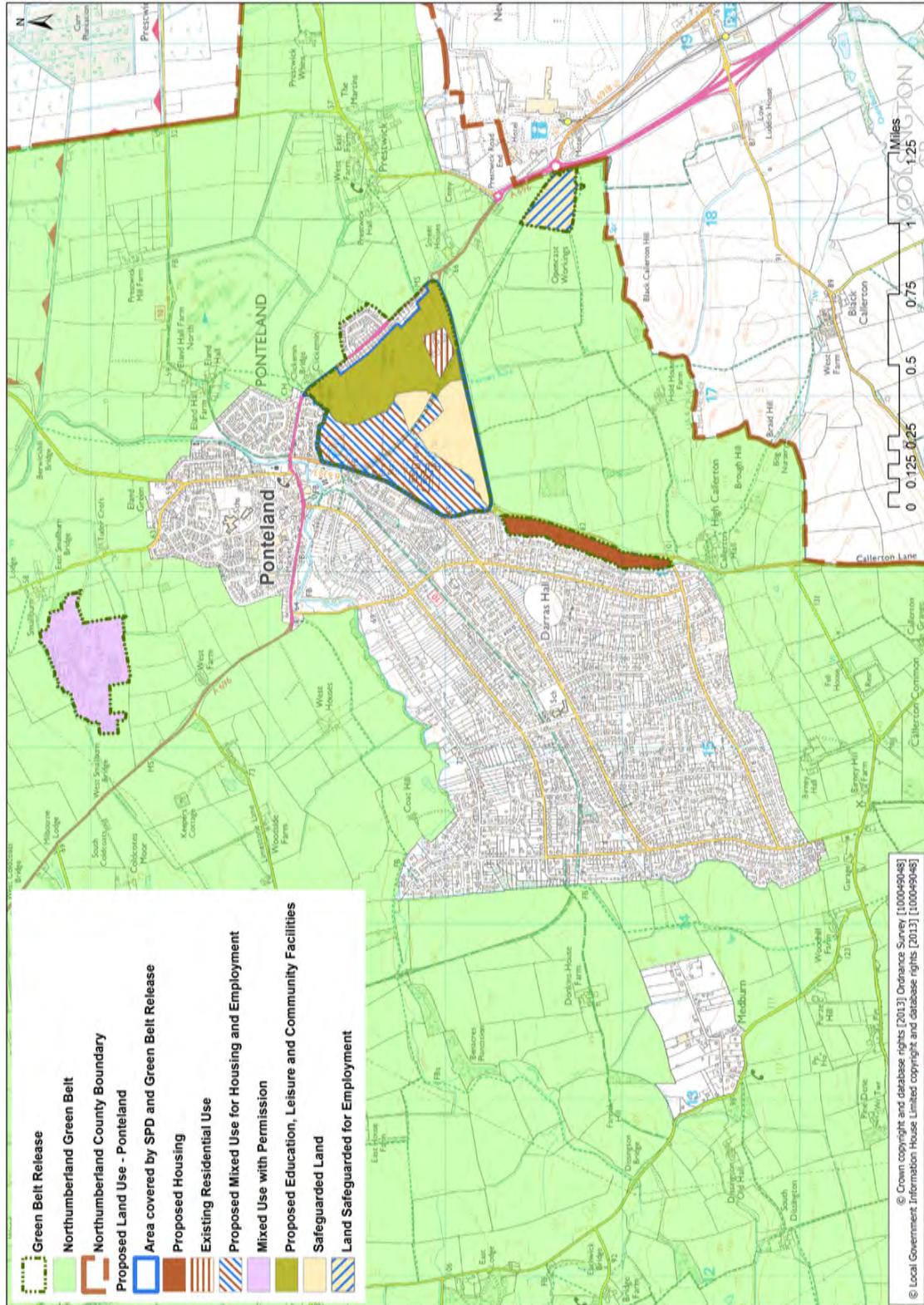
- Concerns as to whether sufficient land has been identified to meet the development needs of the settlement;
- Objection to the proposed locations of land to be removed from the Green Belt; that too much land has been identified for removal;
- Concerns about the impacts on the settlement's infrastructure and the ability to cope with additional housing.

**7.27** Following feedback and additional work the Council proposes to:

- Continue to remove the area to the south east of Ponteland; north of Rotary Way, which included the previously developed sites of the Ponteland Leisure Centre and the Ponteland High and Middle schools (see Policy 15). This will facilitate improvements to the education and leisure facilities and the redevelopment of the existing sites for housing and employment uses;
- Continue to remove the area of the former Police HQ, plus some land to the east of this, west of North Road and north of the built-up area of Ponteland (see Policy 15);
- Identify land to the west of Callerton Lane for housing development within the plan period (see Policy 15);
- No longer identify land at Clickemin to be removed from the Green Belt;
- Remove existing housing on Cheviot View and Ridgley Drive from the Green Belt;
- Reduce the level of safeguarded land for development beyond the plan period (see Policy 25). As a result of the need to provide a bypass/relief road to deliver safeguarded land to the north of the town, safeguarded land will now only be included in the area covered by the South East Ponteland Supplementary Planning Document; and
- Remove an area of land to the east of Ponteland adjacent to the A696 near the Airport for employment uses. This is to be safeguarded for employment development beyond the plan period.

**7.28** **The strategic approach and the proposed amendments to the Green Belt boundary for Ponteland will allow for the sustainable expansion of the settlement, which will allow for a mix of development to be delivered within the plan period plus additional safeguarded land to meet the long term development needs beyond the period of the Core Strategy.**

Figure 7.3 Ponteland Green Belt boundary



## 7. Green Belt

**7.29** The proposed Green Belt boundary for Ponteland is shown in Figure 7.3. The area identified to the south east of Ponteland is covered by a draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which is being consulted on alongside this version of the Core Strategy. The key principles for the development of the site which will inform the SPD include the delivery of:

- Improved leisure and education facilities – this will be required to allow for additional housing and economic development to come forward on the sites of the existing education and leisure facilities on the site;
- A mix of types of housing to meet needs and support sustainable communities;
- New built development, that protects the most sensitive parts of the site from development - minimising impact of the development on the wider Green Belt and that of key views;
- Improved accessibility to education provision - reducing congestion in the town;
- Employment development with good links to the town centre;
- Improved pedestrian and cycling links to education and leisure provision;
- Strategic open space/ green wedge;
- Development that addresses flood risk issues; and
- Safeguarded land for future development beyond the plan period.

**7.30** The Ponteland Town Council have had some input to the development of the Supplementary Planning Document and will continue to be involved in the master planning of the site. Where other Supplementary Planning Documents/ master planning activities are proposed for sites to be removed from the Green Belt, this will include input from the Town Council. The Neighbourhood Plan will define the Ponteland settlement boundary.

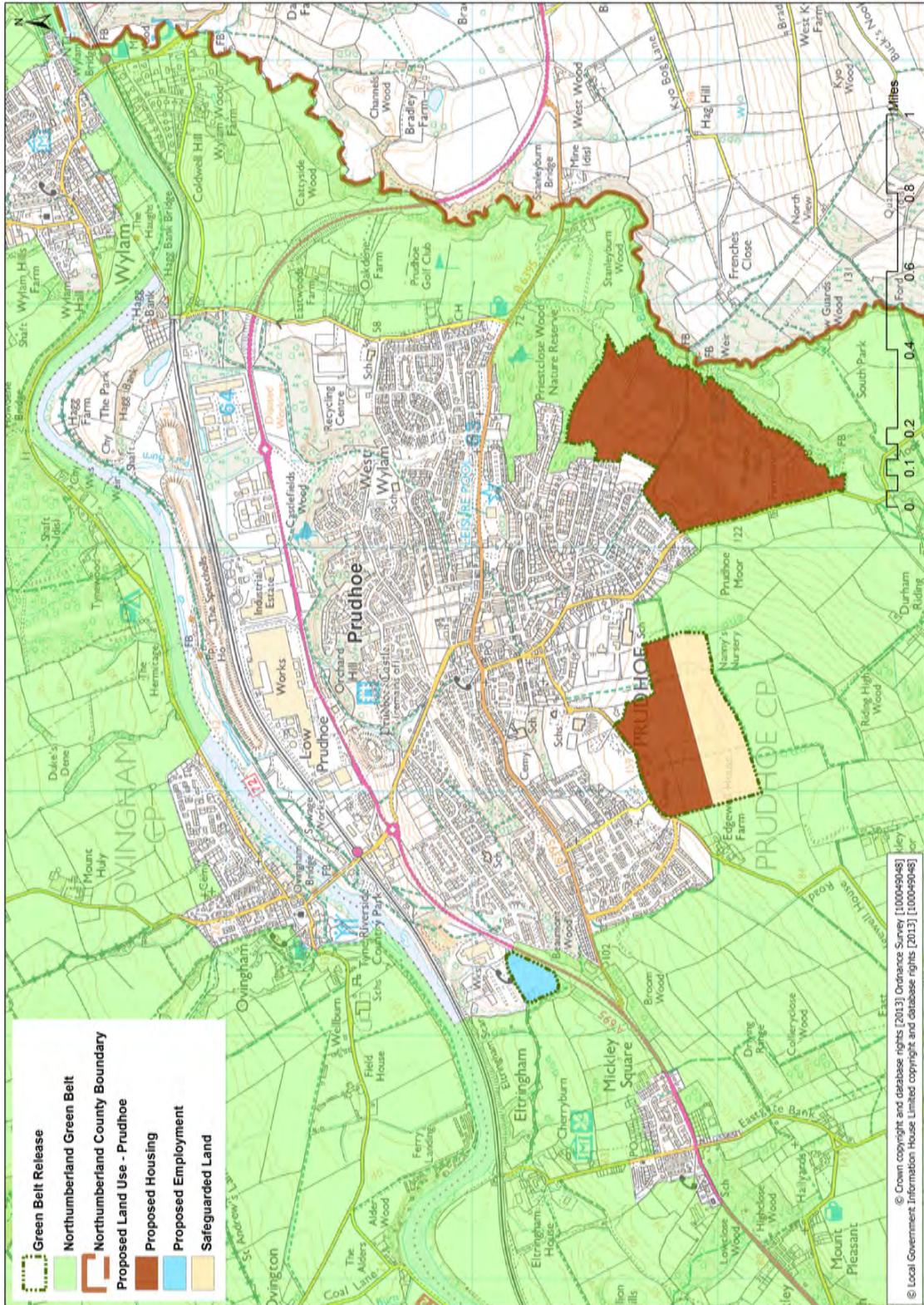
### Prudhoe

**7.31** Prudhoe has an existing inset boundary that is relatively tightly drawn and no land was safeguarded for future development in the previous Local Plan. To ensure the delivery of sustainable development through the Core Strategy there is a need to provide additional housing and employment land over and above what could be accommodated in the town's current inset boundary.

**7.32** Following feedback on the Preferred Options (Stage 2), the Full Draft Plan (2014) proposed a reduction in the housing numbers for Prudhoe but still identified that Green Belt releases would be required to meet development needs. The preferred approach was to:

- Remove the whole of the Prudhoe Hospital site bounded by the B6395, Stanley Burn, Moor Road and the existing settlement edge from the Green Belt, for housing development during the Plan period;
- Remove land bounded by the B6395, the first set of field boundaries south-west of Edgewell, Edgewell House Road and the existing built-up area of Prudhoe for housing development. This Green Belt release would include land safeguarded for development land beyond the Plan period; and
- Release land for employment development.

Figure 7.4 Prudhoe Green Belt boundary



## 7. Green Belt

**7.33** The revised approach received some local objections. In summary the feedback highlighted:

- Concerns as to whether sufficient land has been identified to meet the development needs of the settlement;
- Objection to the proposed location and level of land to be removed from the Green Belt; and
- Concerns about the impacts on the settlement's infrastructure and the ability to cope with additional housing.

**7.34** The Council has previously highlighted concerns with the identification of land to the west of the settlement for housing development. Following feedback and further work the Council has reconsidered the option to identify land to be removed from the Green Belt to the south of the town as was identified within a previous version of the Core Strategy (see Policy 15). This also includes some land to be safeguarded for future housing development beyond the plan period. It is still proposed to remove the Prudhoe hospital site from the Green Belt (see Policy 15) and remove land to the west of the existing industrial estate from the Green Belt to provide additional required employment land (Policy 4).

**7.35** **The strategic approach and the proposed amendments to the Green Belt boundary for Prudhoe will allow for the sustainable expansion of the town, plus additional safeguarded land to meet the long term development needs beyond the period of the Core Strategy.** The proposed Green Belt boundary for Prudhoe is shown in Figure 7.4.

### Safeguarded land

**7.36** Green Belt boundaries are intended to endure over the longer term, therefore when reviewing Green Belt boundaries, it is important to draw new boundaries having regard to potential development needs arising beyond the plan period. The Full Draft Plan (2014) considered it necessary to identify areas of safeguarded land in order to meet long term development requirements and avoid the need for another review of the Green Belt at the end of the Plan period. Safeguarded land has therefore been proposed in Hexham, Morpeth, Ponteland and Prudhoe.

**7.37** This approach received objections. In summary the feedback highlighted:

- Concern that identifying safeguarded land may not prevent development taking place on the land;
- Concern that the land identified as safeguarded land should either be identified for development within the plan period or included within the Green Belt;
- There are other settlements that could benefit from safeguarded land;
- It is difficult to predict what the development requirements will be longer term.

## Policy 25

### Safeguarded land

Safeguarded land is proposed in Hexham, Morpeth, Ponteland and Prudhoe, as illustrated on Figures 7.2, 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5, that may be required to meet long term development needs, beyond the period of the Core Strategy. It is not allocated for development within the plan period.

When assessing development proposals on or affecting safeguarded land, the following principles will apply:

- a. Safeguarded land is not allocated for development during the plan period. Permanent development of safeguarded land will only be permitted following the adoption of a replacement Core Strategy which proposes such development; and
- b. Any development which would prejudice the future comprehensive development of safeguarded land will not be permitted.

## Defining Green Belt Boundaries

### Morpeth Inner Green Belt Boundary

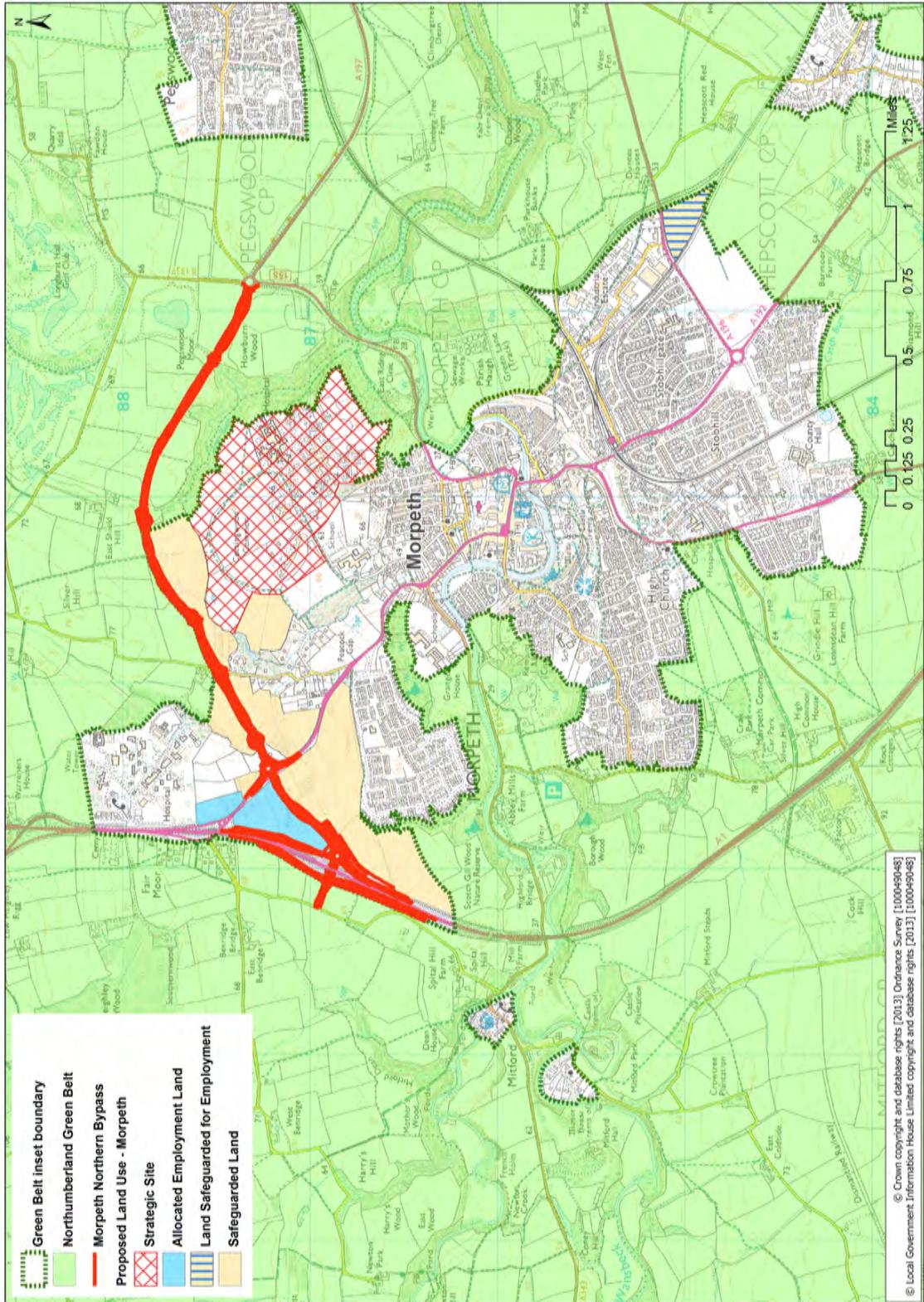
**7.38** As part of identifying the detailed boundaries of the Green Belt extension around Morpeth, an appropriate inner boundary to the settlement of Morpeth needs to be identified through the Core Strategy. As Green Belt is a long term planning tool their boundaries are required to have permanence beyond the plan period. The Morpeth Inner Green Belt boundary therefore needs to provide for sufficient capacity to meet strategic land requirements, both in the current plan period and subsequent plan period.

**7.39** As part of the Green Belt review an assessment was undertaken of land parcel areas around the town in terms of their contribution to Green Belt purposes to inform the Core Strategy – Full Draft Plan (December 2014). This assessment work confirmed that the areas proposed for exclusion from the Green Belt through the earlier Green Belt Review work were appropriate. The Inner Green Belt boundary identified in the Core Strategy – Full Draft Plan was based on the following principles:

- The eastern boundary should be drawn tightly to the existing settlement edges to maintain and protect the strong River Wansbeck green infrastructure corridor and setting of Morpeth. In particular, the railway line and River Wansbeck act as strong boundaries, with the Blue Mountains, Parish Haugh area, Wansbeck river valley, Bluebell Woods and the A197 provide strong boundaries in relation to the preservation of the setting of Morpeth;
- Due to the historic setting of the town, the nature conservation, environmental and landscape designations running east west along the River Wansbeck, the western boundary should be tightly drawn to the existing settlement edges. This will protect the strong green infrastructure boundary of Morpeth Common, Athey's Dean, the Borough Woods, the Wansbeck river valley and Scotch Gill Woods as well as the setting of Morpeth;

# 7. Green Belt

Figure 7.5 Morpeth Green Belt Boundary



- The northern boundary should allow for most development to take place to the north of Morpeth, including the previously developed St George's Hospital and Northgate Hospital sites. The recently Government and County Council funded Morpeth Northern Bypass will provide better access to promote economic regeneration, access to housing and improve social inclusion across South East Northumberland. It therefore contributes positively to the Green Belt purpose of assisting urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of land. The provision of infrastructure is key to the delivery of the strategic site to the north of Morpeth and the overall level of development proposed over the plan period; and
- In relation to the southern boundary, it would allow for approved development at South Loansdean within the plan period and limited long term development potential, south of the A196. The preferred southern boundary would retain the rural character of the rising ground to the south and ensuring separation from Clifton and Hepscott.

**7.40** In summary the feedback from the consultation on the Full Draft Plan suggested:

- The safeguarded land identified to the north of Lancaster Park and to the east of the rail line should be in the Green Belt;
- The inner boundary should be drawn tighter around the settlement as the current proposed boundary would allow for too much development in the town;
- Need for additional land to be identified to meet the development needs of the town;
- The proposal will result in the merger of Fairmoor with Morpeth; Northgate and Fairmoor should be inset

**7.41** A minor amendment has been made to the inner boundary to reflect the employment land allocation at Coopies Lane Industrial Estate. The proposed Morpeth Inner Green Belt boundary is shown in Figure 7.5. **The Morpeth Inner Green Belt boundary gives scope for the planned sustainable expansion of the town during the Plan period and also for safeguarded land to meet long term development needs beyond the Plan period.**

### **Morpeth Outer Green Belt Boundary**

**7.42** Saved Policy S5 of the Northumberland Structure Plan established the general extent of the Green Belt extension around Morpeth. Parts of this detailed boundary have already been defined in existing development plans covering the former Blyth Valley and Wansbeck districts. However, the detailed boundaries of the Green Belt extension within the former Castle Morpeth area were not defined as the review of the Castle Morpeth Local Plan did not reach adoption before Local Government reorganisation in 2009.

**7.43** Although Structure Plan Policy S5 did not define the detailed outer boundary, the policy provided a detailed description of where the boundary should be defined:

- West of Netherwitton, Hartburn and Belsay;
- North of Longhorsley and west of Widdrington Station, excluding the Stobswood Opencast site;
- East of Pegswood;
- West of Ashington, Guide Post, Bedlington and the A1068; and
- East of Bothal, Hepscott, Nedderton and Hartford Bridge.

**7.44** As defined within adopted policy, the purpose of the Green Belt extension around Morpeth is to:

## 7. Green Belt

- Preserve the special setting and character of Morpeth;
- Prevent Morpeth merging with neighbouring settlements;
- Assist regeneration of main settlements and coalfield villages in South East Northumberland beyond the Green Belt; and
- Safeguard the countryside from encroachment.

**7.45** As the Core Strategy has progressed, a number of options for the outer boundary have been considered and consulted on. There was significant objection to the definition of a tighter outer boundary. Furthermore the Council does not consider that it can demonstrate exceptional circumstances to deviate from the adopted detailed Structure Plan policy. The approach to the treatment of small settlements within the Green Belt extension has been informed by consultation with Parish Councils. The approach allows for an appropriate level of development to allow for sustainable development. In addition, a policy is proposed to allow for appropriate economic development within the Green Belt.

### Small settlements in the Green Belt

**7.46** Existing development plans across Northumberland have an inconsistent policy approach to the treatment of Green Belt settlements below Main Town and Service Centre level. The Preferred Options (Stage 2) identified that the existing Green Belt boundaries around these smaller settlements may constrain the ability to allow for sustainable development to support diverse and resilient communities. It identified that a Green Belt review would be required to establish:

- Whether any Green Belt releases were necessary to meet development needs; and
- A consistent approach to the treatment of settlements below Main Town and Service Centre level, including those settlements within the Green Belt extension around Morpeth.

**7.47** The Green Belt review methodology has been applied to the smaller settlements. This assessment was published alongside the Full Draft Plan, together with a discussion paper on the approach to small settlements in the Green Belt. Further discussions took place early in 2015 with Parish Councils regarding the approach to settlements within their areas.

**7.48** The NPPF provides guidance on defining boundaries, including:

- Ensuring consistency with the Local Plan strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development;
- Not including land within the Green Belt which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open; and
- Defining boundaries clearly using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.

**7.49** The NPPF also identifies that if it is necessary to prevent development in a village, primarily due to the important contribution which the open character of the village makes to the openness of the Green Belt, the village should be included within the Green Belt. Should the character of the village need to be protected for other reasons, other means should be used such as conservation area designation or normal development management policies and the village should be excluded from the Green Belt.

**7.50** The approach to the treatment of small settlements within the Green Belt, including defining boundaries has been informed by:

- The NPPF requirements;
- The strategy of the Plan to focus the majority of development in the Main Towns and Service Centres;
- Opportunities to meet the objectively assessed need in settlements outwith the Green Belt;
- Green Belt review assessments; and
- Feedback received from Parish Councils and others.

**7.51** The Strategic Land Review has illustrated that capacity exists within the existing small settlements to deliver objectively assessed housing needs and therefore there is no requirement to amend the Green Belt boundaries. The main issue is the consistency of approach to how settlements are treated and to address any minor anomalies in the Green Belt boundaries that had been defined in the District Local Plans.

**7.52** The following settlements will continue to be inset within the Green Belt, with no change proposed to their inset boundaries. The inset boundaries are included within Appendix D:

- Acomb
- Bothal
- Hartford Bridge
- Heddon on the Wall
- Medburn
- Nedderton
- Ovingham
- Ovington
- Riding Mill
- Slaley
- Stamfordham
- Stocksfield
- Wylam

**7.53** A minor change is proposed to the inset boundary for Horsley to exclude the business units at the eastern end of the village from the Green Belt.

**7.54** There are a number of settlements in the former Tynedale Council area which were included within the Green Belt but also had boundaries within which limited infill development could take place. The NPPF advises that settlements should either be within the Green Belt and Green Belt policy applies; or should be specifically excluded from the Green Belt. It is proposed that these settlements will be inset within the Green Belt. The inset boundaries proposed are those that were formally identified as infill boundaries in the Tynedale Core Strategy and are included within Appendix D. This approach applies to the following settlements:

- Broomhaugh
- Newbrough
- Mickley Square

## 7. Green Belt

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- Wall
- Whittonstall

**7.55** A minor change is proposed to the boundary for Fourstones to exclude the allocated employment site from the Green Belt.

**7.56** There are a number of settlements that are currently included within the Green Belt. No change is proposed to those settlements and they will remain in the Green Belt:

- Broomley
- Newton
- Warden
- Whitley Chapel

**7.57** The approach to the small settlements in the Green Belt around Morpeth has also been informed by the approach identified in paragraph 7.50 above.

**7.58** The assessment has identified that the majority of settlements should be excluded from the Green Belt and have inset boundaries. Inset boundaries have been defined for the following settlements based on the settlement boundaries defined in the Castle Morpeth Local Plan. These inset boundaries are included within Appendix D. These boundaries were considered to be appropriate when assessed against the factors outlined in paragraph 7.50 above.

- Belsay
- Hartburn
- Longhirst
- Netherwitton
- Stannington
- Ulgham
- Whalton

**7.59** An inset is proposed for Longhorsley which is based on the settlement boundary identified in the Castle Morpeth Local Plan but amended to reflect recent planning consents granted in the village. This inset boundary is included within Appendix D. Stannington Station has previously not had a settlement boundary. However, it is considered that Stannington Station is a settlement that is capable of accommodating new development when considered against a range of sustainability criteria. An inset boundary is proposed for Stannington Station. This inset boundary is included within Appendix D. The boundary has been defined to ensure that an appropriate scale of development can be accommodated within the settlement.

**7.60** The Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to the County Council in June 2015. The Plan defines a number of settlement boundaries. These have been considered in the light of the considerations outlined in paragraph 7.50 above to determine whether they would be appropriate as inset boundaries for Green Belt purposes. The proposed settlement boundaries are generally appropriate although there are certain locations where the boundaries do differ to ensure that the Green Belt boundary is clearly defined using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent. Inset boundaries are proposed for:

- Hebron,
- Hepscott,
- Mitford
- Pegswood

**7.61** These inset boundaries are included within Appendix D.

**7.62** Any settlement not specifically referred to in this section is included the Green Belt.

### **Previously developed land in the Green Belt**

**7.63** A number of major developed sites within the Green Belt are identified in policies in existing development plans. While these sites are located within the Green Belt, the policies generally allow limited infill development where this would not have an adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The NPPF does not require the identification of major developed sites; it encourages partial or complete development or infilling of previously developed sites in the Green Belt, whether redundant or in continuing use. That is provided the development would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.

**7.64** The Core Strategy does not propose to identify major existing or new major developed sites in the Green Belt. However, following feedback on earlier versions of the Core Strategy the Core Strategy does include policies relating to uses acceptable in the Green Belt and the expansion of employment or visitor related buildings in the Green Belt.

### **Acceptable uses in the Green Belt**

**7.65** The NPPF makes clear that the construction of new buildings within the Green Belt should be seen as inappropriate. There are exceptions, including buildings for agriculture and forestry; facilities for outdoor sport and recreation<sup>(99)</sup>, cemeteries, the extension, alteration or replacement of a building, limited infilling in villages, limited affordable housing for local needs and the limited development of previously developed land. In all of these exceptional circumstances the new building would only be acceptable if it would not have a detrimental impact on the integrity of the Green Belt through its bulk, scale, height or intrusiveness.

**7.66** In the case of changes of use, the main considerations will be to ensure that the building being converted or renovated is of substantial construction and that the new use will not create significantly greater external impacts (e.g. parking or access ways) than the existing use.

**7.67** The NPPF also lists other forms of development that, in certain circumstances, could be appropriate in the Green Belt – i.e. mineral extraction, engineering operations, local transport infrastructure, conversion of permanent, substantial buildings to new uses and development brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order<sup>(100)</sup>.

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99 Possible examples of such facilities include small changing rooms or unobtrusive spectator accommodation for outdoor sport, or small stables for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation.

100 These types of uses would only be acceptable if they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with Green Belt purposes.

## 7. Green Belt

**7.68** The NPPF is clear that whilst new buildings are generally inappropriate in the Green Belt, there may be ‘very special circumstances’ where the potential benefits of a development clearly outweigh the potential harm it may have on the Green Belt. It is considered that a locally specific approach to this could lead to better planning of development and clearer decision making.

**7.69** Policies elsewhere in the plan, notably those on Gypsies, Roma Travellers and renewable energy cover particular provisions about what forms of development may or may not be sited in the Green Belt.

### Policy 26

#### Uses acceptable in the Green Belt

In plan making and assessing development proposals in the Green Belt the over-riding principle is that new development in the Green Belt should preserve its openness and reflect the purposes of its designation. Development that is inappropriate in the Green Belt will not be allowed unless very special circumstances clearly outweigh the potential harm to the Green Belt.

- a. New buildings will only be acceptable for the following purposes:
  - i. Agriculture and forestry;
  - ii. Essential facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries or other open land uses;
  - iii. Limited infilling in villages or other coherent groupings of buildings that are washed over by the Green Belt;
  - iv. Where the site is previously developed land, the infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment (excluding temporary buildings) provided that there would not be a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt;
  - v. Limited affordable housing for local community needs within, adjacent or well related to existing settlements subject to criteria on exception sites being satisfied;
  - vi. Proposals for the limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings, where the dwelling would replace another permanent dwelling and not a caravan or chalet, irrespective of the permanence of its occupancy; and
  - vii. Where the requirements of Policy 24 are satisfied.
- b. Proposals for the change of use, conversion or extension of existing buildings will be permitted where:
  - i. The buildings are of permanent and substantial construction; and
  - ii. The proposed use and any associated use of land are in keeping with their surroundings and will not have a materially greater impact than the existing on the openness of the Green Belt or on the purposes of including land in it.

### Expansion of employment or visitor related buildings in the Green Belt

**7.70** The Green Belt in Northumberland stretches across large parts of the more densely populated areas of the South East and Central Delivery Areas, with many businesses and visitor facilities, by no means all of which are located in the 'inset' towns and villages.

**7.71** Retaining the integrity of the Green Belt is vital but there are strong reasons why, in some instances, buildings not normally acceptable under Policies 24 and 26 may need to be allowed. In particular, there are many smaller developed sites of varying size and business activity located in the Green Belt, which contribute to the local economy and provide employment opportunities for local residents. These include isolated groups of offices or workshops, farm complexes, and longstanding one-off uses such as hotels and institutions. Their continued operation is important to protect and enhance rural employment opportunities and promote rural diversification. Whilst, in accordance with NPPF, the designation of major developed sites is proposed to be discontinued, it is important to consider the type of situation in which special circumstances will apply.

**7.72** Policy 27 below requires the demonstration of a number of criteria before proposals could be considered as 'very special circumstances'.

#### **Policy 27**

##### **Expansion of employment or visitor related buildings in the Green Belt**

In assessing development proposals that lie within the Green Belt, proposals for the expansion of existing employment or visitor related development where an existing employer requires limited infill development and/or the re-use, partial re-use or redevelopment of existing buildings within the same complex of buildings where they currently operate, this will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that:

- a. The proposal, including any associated infrastructure, would have no greater impact than the existing development on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it;
- b. Existing buildings within the ownership of the applicant could not be used;
- c. The development would not constitute a disproportionate increase in the developed portion of the site or building heights; and
- d. The design and appearance of the development is appropriate to its setting and capable of being integrated into the character of its surroundings.

When the expansion of an existing business would comprise development at a scale beyond that identified above, including new buildings, consideration will be given as to whether the proposal constitutes 'very special circumstances'. This is considered to be:

- e. Whether it has been demonstrated that there is a evident and significant positive impact on the economy in terms of jobs, visitors and/or expenditure;
- f. After consideration of the extent of potential harm of the development in relation to the purposes and openness of the Green Belt, and factoring proposed mitigation measures, the positive economic, environmental and/or social benefits clearly outweigh the degree of potential harm;

## 7. Green Belt

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- g. That there is no suitable, available and deliverable site outside of the Green Belt which could accommodate the development;
- h. Where a business plan and/or viability assessment demonstrates that the use of an existing building (including its conversion or extension) does not meet the needs of the proposed or existing business, because it is either not economically viable, fails to provide for the needs of a business or the requirements of its market; and
- i. The development will be expected to adhere to criteria d of this policy.

## **8. Conserving and enhancing Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic, water and built environments**

### **8. Conserving and enhancing Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic, water and built environments**

**8.1** Northumberland's environment is distinctive and valued; it is a significant asset. The sweeping landscapes and seascapes, important wildlife habitats, iconic landmarks and characteristic towns and villages within the County are hugely valued, not just by local inhabitants, but also by the many visitors from across the region and beyond.

**8.2** The natural environment of Northumberland is distinguished by a unique pattern of geology, natural landforms, river systems and soils. While these strongly influence the landscape and wildlife, much of what is valued can be attributed to human influence. Many of the most attractive landscapes and much of the wildlife reflect the turbulent social and economic history, agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining, manufacture, commerce, the building and expansion of communities and, most recently, tourism.

**8.3** The County's rich cultural heritage has left a diverse legacy of well-preserved archaeological sites, buildings and other assets. In terms of the built environment, many of the County's main historic landmarks, as well as the distinctive character of traditional market towns, villages, hamlets and farmsteads have their origin in the ancient, mediaeval and pre-industrial history. The more recent past has also created distinctive buildings, structures and townscapes, which continue to evolve.

**8.4** The biodiversity, elements of the valued landscapes and the architectural and historic fabric which they support can be fragile and require protection. One of the Strategic Objectives of the Core Strategy seeks to conserve and enhance Northumberland's distinctive and valued environment. This will have wider benefits to the community and local economy, through continuing to attract visitors and investment to the County.

#### **Principles for the environment**

**8.5** Conserving and enhancing Northumberland's natural, historic and cultural assets will deliver a number of the Core Strategy's objectives, particularly protecting and enhancing Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic, water and built environments. Northumberland's unique environment underpins many of the other objectives of the Core Strategy. It is particularly important in providing the setting for all development arising out of the implementation and delivery of the Core Strategy policies.

#### **An ecosystem approach**

**8.6** From the coast to the forests and high moors, from parkland estates to post-industrial landscapes, the natural environment of Northumberland contains internationally, nationally and locally important habitats and wildlife species. It is vital that wildlife is considered beyond these protected areas in an integrated way, looking at biodiversity across the whole of the County and beyond its boundaries.

**8.7** The unique environment of Northumberland demands an approach that goes one step further than this. The consideration should be of ecosystems, covering not only biodiversity but also treating human activity and development needs as part of a functioning natural system. The ecosystem approach, adopted within the Core Strategy, aims to

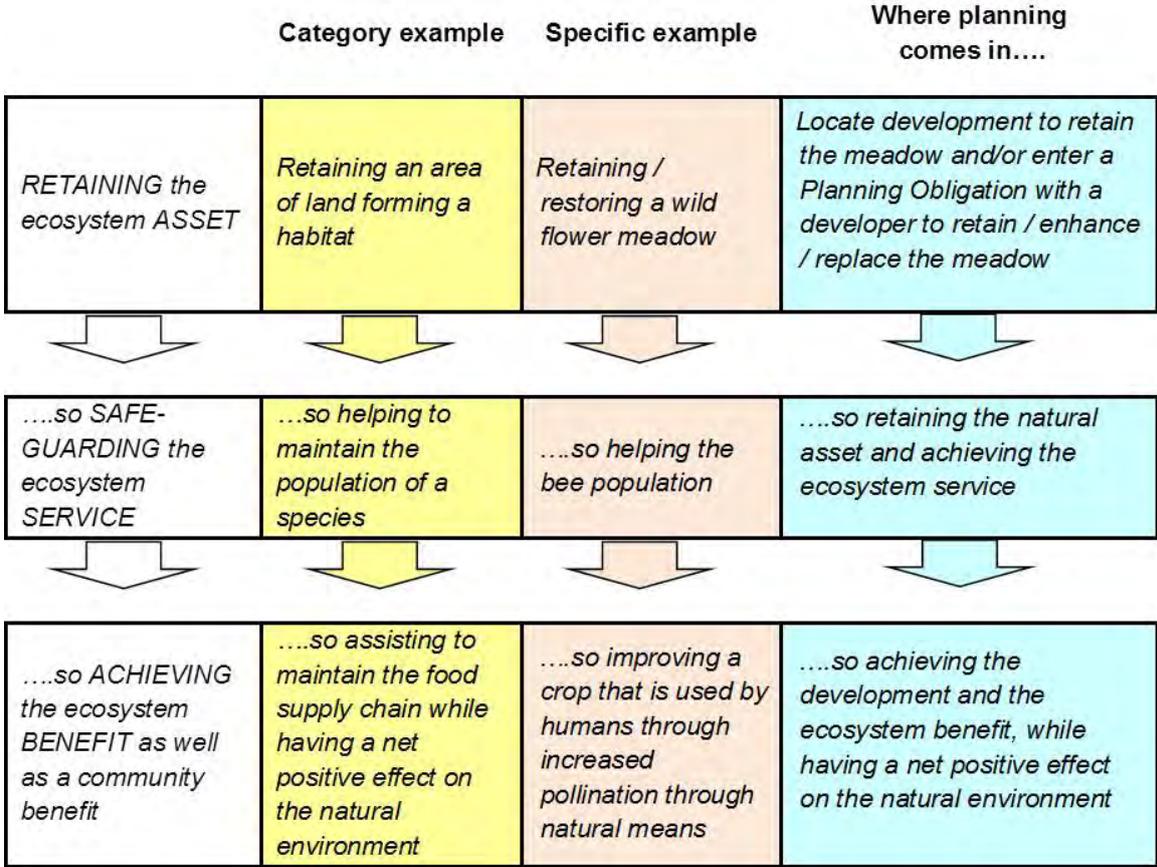
# 8. Conserving and enhancing Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic, water and built environments

integrate plan-making and development management into the management of natural systems across wide areas. This will, in turn, inform the levels of protection to be given to sites and species.

**8.8** The ecosystem approach is recognised internationally as the best way to manage complex, dynamic, natural systems. Applying the approach through the plan will particularly help to protect and enhance Northumberland’s natural environment. An example of an ecosystem approach in spatial planning would be the development of Habitat Opportunity Mapping or of a Wildlife Network, where the full range of significant habitats and species in an area are considered as a whole, rather than just concentrating on designated sites, or the sites occupied by a particular range of protected species.

**8.9** An integral part of the ecosystem approach is the provision and retention of 'ecosystem services' which help to sustain human life and well-being. These are the things that nature does for us, frequently without us even noticing. Examples include maintaining soil quality, preventing soil erosion, water supply, regulation of water and air quality, quality, climate change regulation and carbon storage, regulation of water flows, flood storage, maintenance of genetic diversity, regulation of pest species, pollination, food supply, human recreation, health and wellbeing. The Core Strategy should seek to help safeguard ecosystem services, as illustrated below.

**Figure 8.1 How spatial planning can safeguard ecosystem services**



**8.10** There has been general support for the ecosystem approach through consultation stages on the Core Strategy. Earlier feedback suggested that the approach should be more strongly articulated throughout the Plan and amendments were made to reflect this.

## 8. Conserving and enhancing Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic, water and built environments

### Designated areas

**8.11** The County contains large numbers of designated areas both in terms of the natural and historic environment. The main ones are shown in Table 8.1. Designations vary in importance from having international recognition through to local designations. It is important to bear in mind that the position of an asset in the hierarchy does not always give the full picture on its importance. For example, Ancient woodlands are often not covered by a statutory designation but are nevertheless irreplaceable.

**8.12** The Core Strategy defines how the Council intends to plan sustainably for the protection and enhancement of designated sites and areas in the wider context of population and economic growth. The policy approach recognises that the whole County has the potential to be affected in terms of biodiversity, landscape character and the settings of historic and cultural assets.

**8.13** The strategic policy on the environment operates in an integrated way, looking at the wide context of designations, all landscape characteristics and the whole spectrum of biodiversity, climate change adaptation, the effects of pollution on land, air and water and incorporating the ecosystem approach.

**8.14** Biodiversity and landscape are key aspects of the environment which are part of the integrated approach in the strategic policy but also require specific, more detailed policies. The more fundamental building blocks of the environment – the geology, soils, air and water must also be protected. The water environment is a major issue in Northumberland not just in terms of ecology but also the practical issues of water supply, flood risk and drainage which must be considered in relation to development.

**8.15** Air quality is a concern that arises particularly where development is proposed and additional traffic is generated. It is touched on in relation to these topic areas but is also integrated into the strategic environmental principles policy.

**8.16** The geology underlying Northumberland's distinctive landforms will not generally come under threat from development. Nevertheless where key geological features are close to the surface – e.g. the Whin Sill or the rock formations of the North Pennines area - these warrant specific protection. In addition, they determine where the mineral resource areas are, covered in Chapter 11.

**8.17** Soil is also a vital element of the environment that requires protection from loss and degradation, and improvement where degradation may already have occurred. Due to its extremely slow process of formation, soil is considered as a non-renewable resource, having a vital role within ecosystems – storing and filtering water and nutrients and acting as the biggest global carbon store. In addition, soil is a key element in the production of food, determining the quality of agricultural land. While Northumberland does not have the highest grade agricultural soils, with the majority being classified Grade 3, and upland areas lower, there is still a need to direct development to lower quality land where feasible.

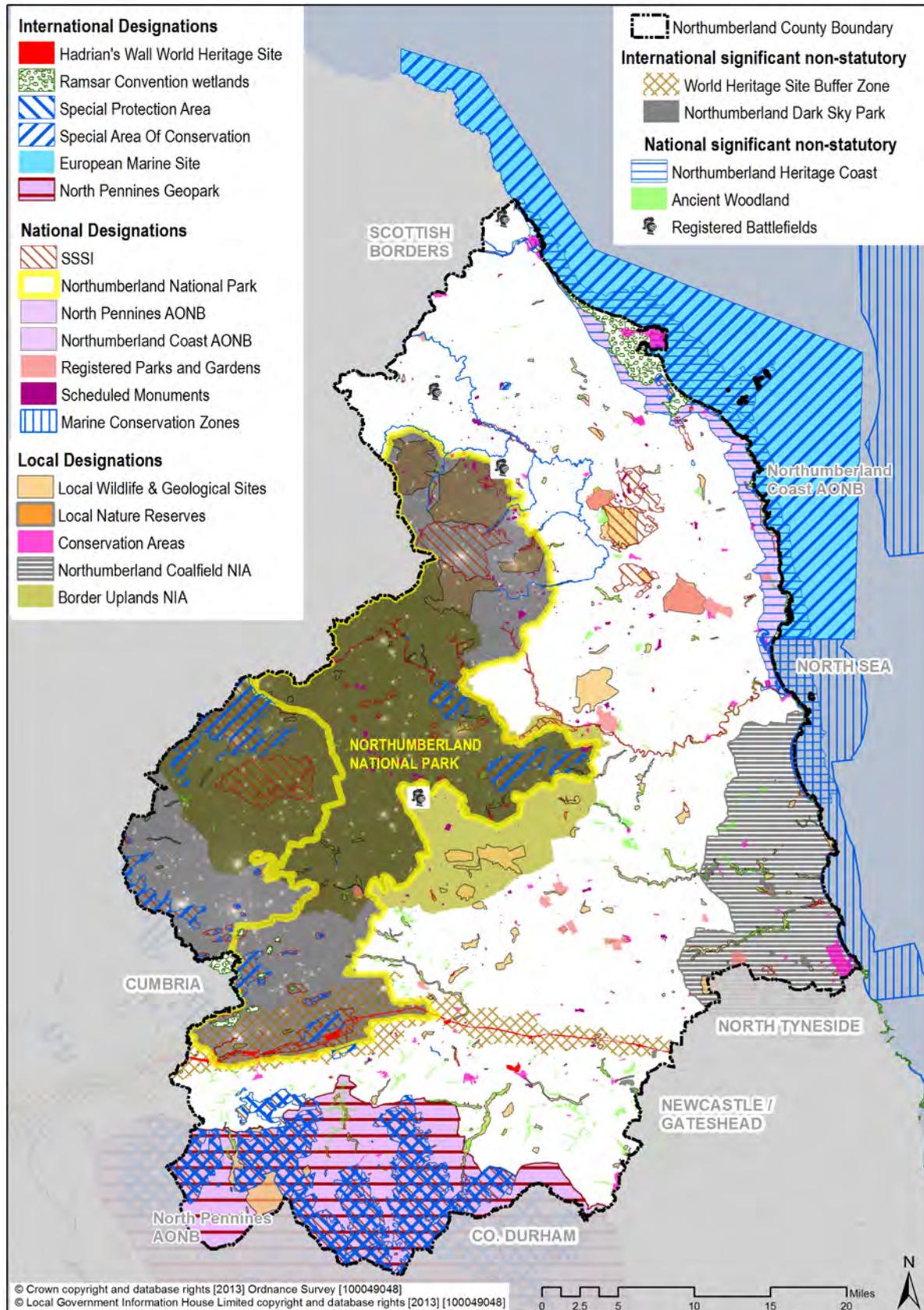
## 8. Conserving and enhancing Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic, water and built environments

**Table 8.1 Natural and heritage designations in Northumberland**

International	National	Local
<b>Statutory:</b>		
<p>Scheduled Monuments and other listed assets that form part of the Hadrian's Wall, World Heritage Site</p> <p>Four Ramsar Convention wetlands</p> <p>Six bird-related Special Protection Areas (SPAs)</p> <p>14 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)</p> <p>The Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast European Marine Site (EMS)</p> <p>The North Pennines Geopark (geological heritage)</p>	<p>More than 100 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)</p> <p>The Northumberland National Park</p> <p>North Pennines AONB</p> <p>Northumberland Coast AONB</p> <p>18 Registered Parks and Gardens</p> <p>Nearly 1,000 Scheduled Monument and more than 5,500 Grade I, II and II* Listed Buildings and their settings</p> <p>9 National Nature Reserves</p> <p>Aln Estuary Marine Conservation Zone extending landward of Mean Low Water</p>	<p>More than 200 Local Wildlife and Geological Sites (LWGSs)</p> <p>23 Local Nature Reserves including reserves, mostly in the control of the Local Authority</p> <p>69 Conservation Areas</p> <p>Two Nature Improvement Areas: (the Border Uplands NIA and the Northumberland Coalfield NIA)</p>
<b>Assets discovered and/or re-evaluated for designation in the future:</b>		
	<p>Two additional proposed Marine Conservation Zones extending landward of Mean Low Water</p>	
<b>Significant non-statutory:</b>		
<p>The Hadrian's Wall, World Heritage Site and its buffer zone - all that does not have a statutory designation.</p> <p>Some key areas of Ancient and Semi-ancient Woodlands (continually wooded since at least 1600 AD)</p> <p>Northumberland International Dark Sky Park (Kielder area)</p>	<p>The Northumberland Heritage Coast</p> <p>Most Ancient Woodlands (continually wooded since at least 1600 AD) and veteran trees</p> <p>Registered Battlefields</p> <p>Certain non-designated archaeology</p>	<p>Locally Listed Heritage Assets and their settings</p> <p>Non-statutory nature reserves managed by Northumberland Wildlife Trust, Woodland Trust RSPB and other local groups</p> <p>Remaining areas of Ancient Woodlands (continually wooded since at least 1600 AD) and remaining veteran trees</p> <p>Heritage assets recorded on the Historic Environment Record</p>

# 8. Conserving and enhancing Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic, water and built environments

Figure 8.2 Natural and built heritage designations



# 8. Conserving and enhancing Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic, water and built environments

**8.18** Northumberland's coalmining and industrial legacy means that issues of land stability and possible contamination are a frequent concern, especially where brownfield land is the subject of development proposals. A principle of this plan is to consider the relationship between these issues and the proposed after use in all relevant cases, as well as looking for opportunities to tackle these land related problems as part of larger scale development schemes.

**8.19** Northumberland is ranked first out of 87 authorities in terms of tranquillity, according to a Campaign to Protect Rural England study undertaken in 2006. The Core Strategy recognises tranquillity as a distinctive characteristic of Northumberland's remote countryside and will seek to avoid urbanising effects in these areas where possible. Such effects also include light pollution<sup>(101)</sup>. Seeking a reversal of the trend for increased night time brightness through decisions on development can help to maintain the quality of life in the county. In recognition of the significance of the dark skies, Northumberland National Park, along with Kielder Water and Forest Park has been awarded 'Dark Sky Status' by the International Dark Skies Association. It is the largest area of protected night sky in Europe and the fourth largest in the world

**8.20** During previous consultations stages, statutory bodies, dealing with natural and built heritage, have provided a valuable input as the strategic policy has evolved.

## Policy 28

### Principles for the environment

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the character and significance of Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic, built and water environments, landscape, heritage assets, townscapes and, where appropriate, their settings, will be conserved, protected and enhanced by:

- a. Giving appropriate weight to the statutory purposes and special qualities of the hierarchy of international, national and local designated and non-designated nature and historic conservation sites and their settings. Greatest weight will be given to international and national designations, followed by sites of regional and local importance;
- b. In applying part (a) above, recognising that assets with a lower designation or non-designated, are irreplaceable, may be nationally important and/or have qualitative attributes that warrant giving these the appropriate protection in-situ;
- c. Applying an ecosystem approach that demonstrates an understanding of the significance and sensitivity of the natural resource. Such an approach should result in a neutral or net benefit for those ecosystems;
- d. Seeking, as far as possible, to coordinate environmental measures in a way that, cumulatively, could help pro-actively to minimise the causes of climate change, while also adapting to it and mitigating its causes;
- e. Minimising adverse impacts on biodiversity, securing net biodiversity gains wherever possible;

101 The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), 2003, Light Pollution Map: North East shows an increase in night time brightness between 1993 and 2000, of 1,000% compared with a 24% percentage increase across England.

## 8. Conserving and enhancing Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic, water and built environments

- f. Promoting a shared understanding of the significance of natural and historic assets and their settings, seeking to avoid adverse impacts of proposals, and identifying opportunities to mitigate harm or enhance them;
- g. Promoting high quality design in building and landscapes, where scale, mass and form, and external finishes respect the character of the surrounding landscape or townscape and promotes and enhances local distinctiveness;
- h. Avoiding unacceptable pollution impacts relating to the ground, soil, water, air, light or noise, taking account of previous uses, construction activity and proposed uses;
- i. Preventing harm to geological conservation interests and, where appropriate, providing opportunities for public access to those features;
- j. Recognising that soil is a vulnerable natural resource and protecting it through sustainable use, the encouragement of appropriate new landscape features to protect it from erosion, and, where agricultural land is required for development, prioritising poorer over higher quality land;
- k. Always taking account of, and seeking to reduce issues of land instability or possible contaminated land;
- l. Limiting the impact of urbanising effects on open countryside landscapes or natural habitats or the settings of historic / cultural assets, including efforts to retain current levels of tranquillity and dark skies and, where possible, improve on these;

In the context of the ecosystem approach, and recognising the health, social and economic benefits derived from the enjoyment of Northumberland's rich natural, historic and built environment, the Council will work with relevant lead authorities, land and property owners, local communities and groups, developers, adjoining local planning authorities and Local Nature Partnerships to:

- m. Identifying opportunities for appropriate environmental enhancements, including:
  - i. Habitat improvement, restoration and creation;
  - ii. Landscape enhancement in accordance with valued characteristics; and
  - iii. Restoring, enhancing and bringing into viable use heritage assets.
- n. Gathering, recording and updating evidence to advance understanding of the significance of Northumberland's natural and historic environment and heritage assets; and
- o. Identifying opportunities to make information on assets widely accessible and promote the enjoyment of the physical and cultural components of these assets.

### Biodiversity and geodiversity

**8.21** The 2011 Natural Environment White Paper 'The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature' highlighted the important role that a healthy, properly functioning natural environment plays in society, and the need to properly understand its economic and social value while recognising nature's intrinsic value. The Government followed the White Paper with the publication of 'Biodiversity 2020: A Strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services'. The overarching objective of this Strategy is 'to halt overall biodiversity loss,

## 8. Conserving and enhancing Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic, water and built environments

support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people'. It identified four areas where action is particularly needed:

- A more integrated large-scale approach to conservation on land and at sea;
- Putting people at the heart of biodiversity policy;
- Reducing environmental pressures; and
- Improving our knowledge.

**8.22** These priorities are reflected in the NPPF, which recognises that moving from a net loss of biodiversity to achieving net gains for nature is central to sustainable development<sup>(102)</sup> and that contributing to conserving and enhancing the natural environment is a core planning principle<sup>(103)</sup>.

**8.23** Internationally protected sites (SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites) are strictly protected, and the NPPF states that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply to developments that may affect such sites. Where such sites could be affected by development, the impact of this must be assessed in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 as amended. Nationally important sites are also strictly protected, with the NPPF advising that developments that are likely to affect SSSIs should normally be refused.

**8.24** Local Wildlife and Geological Sites (formerly known as Sites of Nature Conservation Importance or SNCIs) are non-statutory sites containing habitats or populations of species of at least local importance, although they can be considerably more important than that. These, together with legally protected species and other features such as Habitats and Species of Principal Importance in England<sup>(104)</sup> (listed by the Government under S.41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, 2006) and species and habitats included in the Northumberland Biodiversity Action Plan, all contribute to the very important ecological resources that occur outside of sites receiving statutory protection and are important material considerations in the determination of planning applications. Locally distinctive themes emerging from the BAP have helped inform the approach set out in this Chapter.

**8.25** The government encourages a wide range of people to be involved in how decisions are made about the natural environment in their local area and Northumberland currently includes two Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs): the Northern Upland Chain LNP comprising Northumberland National Park, North Pennines AONB, Nidderdale AONB, and the Northumberland Lowlands and Coast LNP. The role of a LNP is to help communities in their local areas to manage the natural environment as a system and to embed its value in local decisions, for the benefit of nature, people and the economy<sup>(105)</sup>.

**8.26** A key initiative to be led by these LNPs is Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs). These are intended to bring about measurable improvements in nature conservation over widely defined areas, reflecting partnerships' shared visions. Currently within Northumberland, these are:

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102 National Planning Policy Framework 2012, para.9.

103 National Planning Policy Framework 2012, para.17

104 Habitats and Species of Principal Importance in England are listed by the Government under S.41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

105 <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/natural/whitepaper/local-nature-partnerships/>

## 8. Conserving and enhancing Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic, water and built environments

- **The Northumberland Coalfield NIA**, which aims to tackle the lack of connectivity between wildlife areas over a 41,000 hectare area, straddling the boundaries between Northumberland, Newcastle and North Tyneside. The area presents many opportunities for significant improvements to be achieved, especially through habitat creation linked to existing networks of subsidence wetlands, neutral grasslands, ancient woodlands and coastal habitats, and valuable opportunities to increase peoples' opportunities to experience the natural world; and
- **The Border Uplands NIA**, which covers an area of approximately 100,000 hectares in west Northumberland with just over half in the Northumberland National Park, straddling the two current LNP areas. It has significant Forestry. There are substantial opportunities to improve ecological networks through enhanced management and expansion of a number of moorland related habitat types that are the subjects of their own Biodiversity Action Plans. Such actions can build upon the presence of a number of designated sites within the area defined.

**8.27** Development proposals within the NIAs will be considered in the context of the improvements to the natural environment being sought in these areas.

### Policy 29

#### Biodiversity and geodiversity

In plan-making and assessing development proposals affecting biodiversity and geodiversity, adverse impacts of development will be minimised by:

- a. Avoiding unacceptable harm through site selection and/ or design. Where unacceptable harm cannot be avoided, applicants will be required to demonstrate that adverse impacts will be adequately mitigated or, as a last resort compensated for;
- b. Securing net biodiversity gains and/or wider ecological enhancements through new development, where viable and practical;
- c. Applying the ecosystem approach, through:
  - i. The restoration, enhancement and creation of priority habitats and the habitats of priority species;
  - ii. The protection and enhancement of ecological networks and links to promote migration, dispersal and genetic exchange;
  - iii. Measures that will buffer or extend existing sites of ecological value, support the development of the Border Uplands and Northumberland Coalfield Nature Improvement Areas or contribute to national or local biodiversity objectives; and
  - iv. Minimising any wider disturbance effects of development and its associated activity on habitats and species if necessary through appropriate buffers or other measures; and
- d. Securing the continued management of ecological features created, restored or enhanced as a result of development.

## 8. Conserving and enhancing Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic, water and built environments

### Landscape

**8.28** Northumberland's landscape is rightly considered a jewel in its crown. It has huge variety and great drama. It contains a spectrum of character from the rugged to the picturesque. It derives from the interaction between nature and people. A rich geodiversity, modified by rivers and climate, underpins this landscape. Human activity, from early forest clearance and cultivation through to modern housing and industry, has changed the visible landscape almost beyond recognition from what would have been there in prehistoric times. Today, expansive upland moors and forests sweep into Cumbria and the Scottish Borders. Rolling farmland intersperses with country estates, parkland and wooded valleys. The other great influence, the sea, meets the geology of the land in a spectacular coastline characterised by rocky headlands, islands and sandy bays backed with dunes.

**8.29** Northumberland's settlements have distinctive architecture using local building stones. The more densely populated, south east area occupies a landscape associated with deep and opencast coal mining, and industries which led to the expansion of fishing villages into larger coastal towns. Early mining restoration led to the creation of some relatively featureless agricultural land across the coastal plain but, through the planning process, recent projects have included more sensitive landscape restoration, improved public access and land art.

**8.30** Local communities and visitors attach great importance to the whole landscape of Northumberland and this is central to the character-based approach to landscape assessment that forms the basis of the policy approach.

### Landscape character

**8.31** Landscape protection, management and planning is promoted by the European Landscape Convention (ELC), which became binding in the UK in 2007. The ELC takes a holistic approach to the landscape recognising that "landscape can exist at any scale from parks, gardens and streetscape to extensive tracts of land". The NPPF requires that all England's diverse landscapes are valued and well looked after, providing a sense of place and identity relevant to people's lives, and that their complex ecosystems function well. This illustrates how landscape is central to the ecosystem approach.

**8.32** Local Plans are able to embrace this holistic way of looking at landscapes by considering what is important about the character of any landscape, i.e. what gives it its sense of place, rather than confining the consideration of landscape to defined areas. Criteria-based policies can then be used to assess character in a consistent way for any proposal that may affect the landscape. It is only where this character-based approach would be insufficient to protect valued landscapes that the Council would then consider having local landscape designations, which are defined areas of protection below the level of the National Parks and AONBs.

**8.33** The starting point for the defining landscape character in the County is National Character Area (NCA) profiling carried out by Natural England<sup>(106)</sup>, nine of the defined NCAs fall fully or partly in Northumberland. These have nationally agreed descriptions and profiles.

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106 Information about the National Character Areas can be found at <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/publications/nca/default.aspx>

## 8. Conserving and enhancing Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic, water and built environments

**8.34** A major part of the landscape evidence base for the Core Strategy is the Northumberland Landscape Character Assessment<sup>(107)</sup>, which sub-divided the nine NCAs into 44 local Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and 108 Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). Each of the 108 LCAs has a detailed profile. In addition, each of the 44 LCTs has, defined for it, key qualities, forces for change and accompanying guidance on how to treat proposals which may impact on these positively or negatively. Each LCT has, assigned to it one of three overarching guiding principles, as follows

- **Protect** - where conservation of landscape character is required in the face of pressures for change; or
- **Manage** - where some change can be absorbed but changes arising from social, economic and environmental processes need to be managed; or
- **Plan** - where important landscape character has been eroded and strong action is needed to enhance or restore it.

**8.35** The LCTs and their guiding and more detailed principles provide general guidance on landscape character. A LCT covers a relatively large expanse of land within which there will be local variations. A detailed, locally focussed character assessment will need to be carried out in association with proposals for certain types of development.

**8.36** The policy below sets out some aspects of the landscape character which will be considered when assessing the impact of development on landscape character. This includes relevant guiding landscape principles, settings and cumulative impacts. In accordance with national guidance Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments will be used where appropriate. The policy recognises that in rural areas impacts can be magnified - e.g. a small structure in an otherwise open location may be visible over a large area.

**8.37** Following concerns that local landscape designations had been removed, the Council undertook initial work looking at the need for any local designations<sup>(108)</sup>. Government guidance makes clear that any such designations would need to be based on strong evidence that important aspects of character would be lost otherwise. The work<sup>(109)</sup> identified that some clusters of more valued landscapes, particularly those adjacent to the National Park and the two AONBs, can be sensitive to certain types of development. As a result, there may be significant adverse impact, either individually or cumulatively, particularly with regard to long range views to and from the nationally designated areas. The issue of views in and out is covered in the two AONB policies (Policies 31 and 32).

**8.38** All of the above means that it is no longer appropriate for the Core Strategy to retain any of the locally designated Areas of High Landscape Value that formed part of previous Local Plans.

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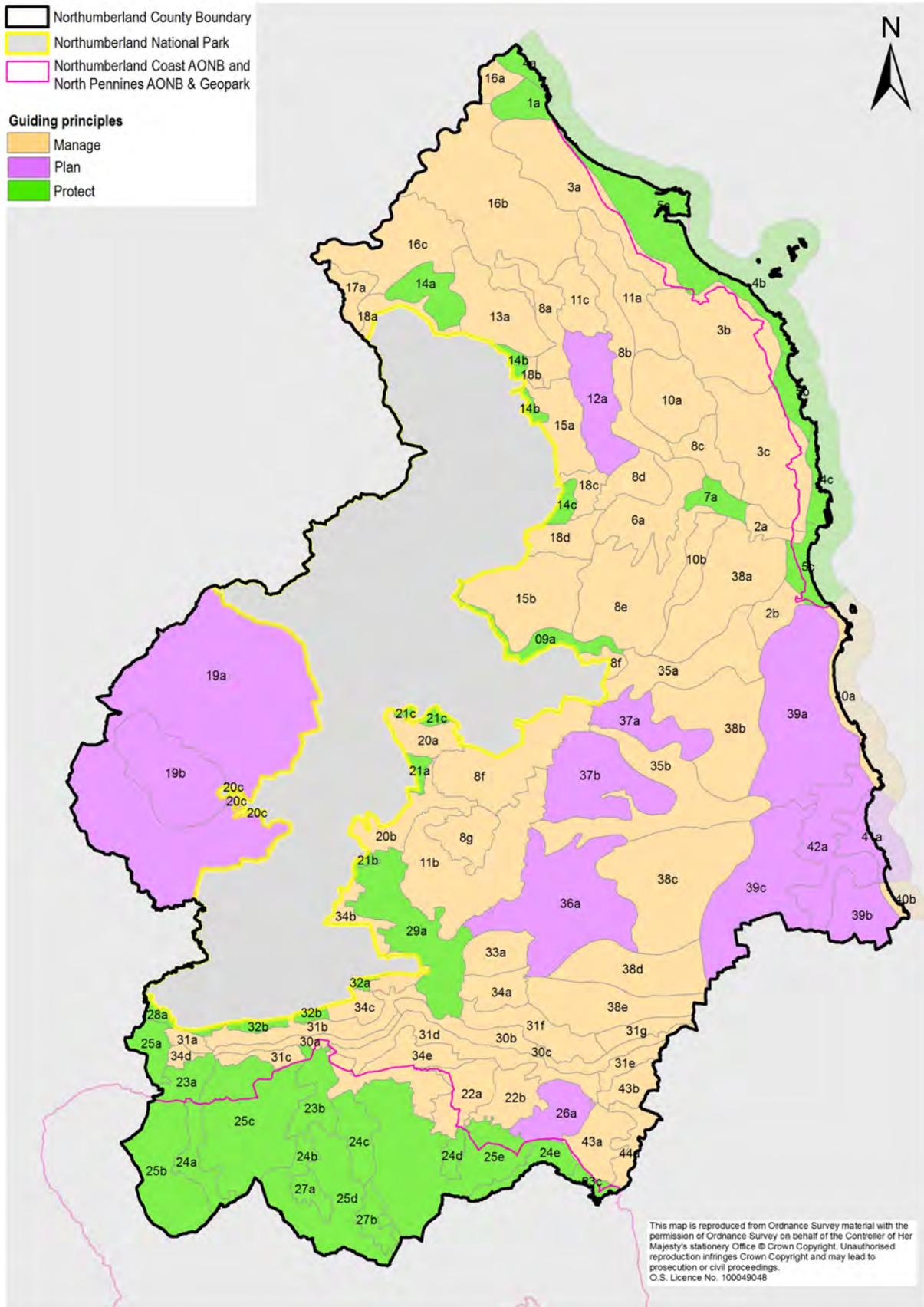
107 The Northumberland Landscape Character Assessment covered the County excluding the National Park can be found at <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3458>.

108 See the Key Land Use Impact Study Part D (available at: <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3458>)

109 See especially the Key Land Use Impact Study Part C (available at: <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3458> and Northumberland Coast AONB Sensitivity and Capacity Study (available at: <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=6882>).

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Figure 8.3 Landscape Character Types and their guiding principles



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### Policy 30

#### Landscape

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the following landscape considerations will apply:

- a. Plans and proposals should maintain and where appropriate enhance important elements of landscape character, as defined in the Northumberland Landscape Character Assessment and other relevant studies, guidance or management plans;
- b. Consideration of the impact on the special qualities and the statutory purposes of the Northumberland National Park, North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- c. There should be no net adverse impact on the level of dark skies and where appropriate improvements sought, particularly within the International Dark Sky Park and areas from where its light levels may be affected;
- d. In assessing development proposals in relation to landscape character, consideration will be given to:
  - i. The guiding principles and other relevant guidelines set out in the Northumberland Landscape Character Assessment;
  - ii. The possibility of wider impacts on the landscape, townscape or seascape or of other significant impacts on the environmental resource, through the proportionate use of landscape and visual impact assessment;
  - iii. The setting and surroundings of the County's historic towns and villages, ensuring that new development on the edge of settlements does not negatively impact on the landscape character of the settlement edge and, where possible that it has a net positive impact;
  - iv. The setting of recognised heritage assets including the defined buffer zone of the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site, within which development will not be permitted if it would compromise the outstanding universal value, including aspects of scale, complexity, group value of features, communal values and the landscape setting of the World Heritage Site itself;
  - v. The Historic Landscape Characterisation;
  - vi. The potential impact that small scale development can have on the landscape in sensitive rural settings; and
  - vii. Any net negative cumulative impacts of development on landscape character, taking into account other existing or approved developments that have already been assessed as having a negative impact.
- e. Where it is considered that landscape character may be adversely affected, or aspects of this character that warrant protection would be degraded as a result of a proposed development, then the development will only be permitted if:
  - i. It can be clearly demonstrated how the harmful effects will be satisfactorily mitigated or, as a last resort, satisfactorily compensated; and
  - ii. Where it can be clearly demonstrated that there are significant national or, outside designated landscapes, regional or local planning reasons for allowing

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the development, these considerations outweigh the landscape considerations.

### National landscape designations

**8.39** There are three areas wholly or partly within Northumberland which are nationally important designated landscapes. The Northumberland National Park and the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) are wholly within the County. The North Pennines AONB straddles the boundaries of Northumberland, Cumbria and Durham. The Northumberland National Park, while entirely within Northumberland, is a separate planning authority with its own planning policies. The strong landscape and ecosystem connections between the National Park and the rest of Northumberland mean that great importance must be attached to the County Council's statutory responsibility to only allow development outside the boundaries of the National Park that does not impact on the special qualities and statutory purposes. The National Park has a management plan, as well as its own Local Plan, natural environment vision and landscape guidance policy documents. Under its statutory duties, the County Council will have full regard to the implications of these documents when making decisions on planning applications.

### Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

**8.40** There are two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, (AONBs) in Northumberland, the Northumberland Coast and North Pennines. Currently, planning decisions that seek to protect and enhance the unique landscapes of these two AONBs are largely dictated through national policy and guidance, while some more specific saved policies in former District Local Plans are also taken into account.

**8.41** Reflecting the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000), the NPPF states that, within AONBs great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty, as they, alongside National Parks have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.

**8.42** The NPPF is clear that planning applications for major developments in AONBs should be refused except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest, and subject to three tests:

- The need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations and the impact of permitting or refusing it upon the local economy;
- The cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the AONB or meeting the need in some other way; and
- Any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which these could be moderated.

**8.43** There is no nationally imposed definition of what 'major development' in an AONB would constitute. It will therefore be at the discretion of the Council as to whether a development is regarded as such, taking into account its scale, nature and context. Any development the characteristics and/or specific impacts of which would be likely to have a significant impact on the special qualities of the AONB will be regarded as major. There is no definitive list of such development types or scales but it would almost certainly include

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any large infrastructure projects, any waste management or mineral operations and most large scale tourism projects. Outside the Service Centres of Seahouses and Allendale and other substantial built up areas it could include much smaller scale schemes for housing, employment and/or tourism, including conversions of existing buildings and temporary structures, dependent on the local landscape character and likely visual or other significant impact.

**8.44** This flexibility in how 'major' is defined, allows for the possibility that alternative, acceptable (or more acceptable) could lie elsewhere within the AONB as well as outside it. For example, relocating a proposal from an exposed, countryside or coastal position to a more concealed site or one within a built-up area, could mean that it would no longer need to be seen as 'major' in the context of the new location. This is very important in the context of the AONBs as living, working communities.

**8.45** The addition of two AONB-specific policies at the Full Draft Plan stage of the Core Strategy was generally welcomed. Most concerns came from statutory bodies with a role in protecting the AONBs who wished to ensure that policy wording was stronger.

**8.46** There was also some concern from renewable energy bodies that the policies refer to the impact of developments outside the AONB. However due to the openness of the landscape, there are important and often extensive views into and out of both AONBs. Consequently, development or land use change occurring outside of their boundaries can still be harmful to their special qualities. The revised AONB management plans have assisted in the formulation of the two locally distinctive overarching AONB policies in the Core Strategy. Both AONBs also have in place detailed design guidance documents, which aim to assist in the conservation of the AONBs' special qualities.

### Northumberland Coast AONB

**8.47** The **Northumberland Coast AONB** was designated in 1958. It comprises a narrow strip of coast between Spittal and the Coquet Estuary, and covers a distance of 64km. However, it is only around 4km wide at its widest point and covers just 138km<sup>2</sup>. It is best known for its sweeping sandy beaches, rolling dunes, rocky headlands and isolated islands, and contains numerous nationally and internationally important designated sites. The landscape contains scattered settlements, imposing castles and extensive sea and inland views.

**8.48** While parts of the AONB landscapes are contained, there is inter-visibility between much of the area and the landscapes and seascapes beyond. The former include the Kyloe and Cheviot Hills, which create a dramatic backdrop to the AONB when looking from within it towards the west.

**8.49** Within the AONB, there is also inter-dependence between the special qualities of the landscape and the hugely important wildlife components, including internationally recognised nature conservation sites and protected species and habitats, stretching out into the overlapping European Marine Site.

**8.50** The area has a population of around 12,500; it contains a string of living, working communities, including North Sunderland / Seahouses, Longhoughton, Lesbury / Alnmouth, Bamburgh, Beadnell, Embleton, Craster and Warkworth, as well as several smaller villages and hamlets.

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**8.51** Traditional agriculture and fishing often sits alongside more recent employment types, many of which are connected with tourism. As the boundary was defined around the special qualities of the area rather than parish or other administrative boundaries the communities and the local economy straddle the boundary. Communities and businesses within the area have links with Berwick, Amble, Alnwick, Belford, as well as places further afield.

**8.52** All of these factors, but especially increasing visitor numbers, place considerable pressure on the key components of the AONB's special qualities. Without a careful, sustainable management approach, conflict could easily result, so threatening the unique environment and possibly the functioning of the local coastal economy and communities.

**8.53** The Northumberland Coast AONB Management Plan (2014-19) sets out a vision which seeks to maintain and enhance:

- A sense of remoteness and wildness;
- Wide open coastal and sea views;
- A naturally functioning coastline rich in wildlife;
- A clear distinction between settlements and open countryside.

**8.54** It aims to integrate successfully the working economy with the landscape, history, culture and natural environment. The Management Plan identifies issues which are both of strategic importance and locally distinctive to the AONB which could be impacted on by inappropriate development, therefore would benefit from inclusion in a Core Strategy policy.

**8.55** In accordance with national policy, major development within the AONB should be strictly limited. Development pressure poses a threat to the conservation of its natural beauty. However, the sustainability of local communities by providing housing and employment opportunities is also considered to be integral to its conservation and enhancement.

**8.56** Many of the issues covered in the Management Plan, such as those relating to the conversion of buildings, protection of dark skies and impact of renewable energy development are covered in countywide Core Strategy policies. However there are some issues, locally distinctive to the AONB, which are strategic planning matters and should therefore be included in the Core Strategy:

- The long and narrow form of the area and the presence of potentially conflicting land uses means that great weight should be attached to the sensitivity and capacity of the landscape, as articulated in a recent study<sup>(110)</sup>. Importantly, this study includes considerable information on the capacity of the landscape to absorb further camping, caravan and chalet parks, perhaps the development type that is placing the greatest pressure on the AONB's special qualities;
- The Management Plan's overarching vision refers to key assets and characteristics of the landscape, the conservation of which should be emphasised as key principles in the Core Strategy;

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110 See Northumberland Coast AONB Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study, August 2013.

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- The interrelationship with surrounding landscapes and seascapes should be given clear reference in the Core Strategy to ensure that this is a consideration when major development is proposed, not just within but also outside the area;
- An important local issue within the AONB is the proliferation of second homes. The Core Strategy requires new housing development to contribute to the provision of affordable homes, limited to permanent occupancy where there is an identified need. The Delivery Document and Neighbourhood Plans could include policies to limit new housing to be occupied by people with a local connection where evidence shows there is a need to do this.
- Design matters are a key part of the framework in the Management Plan. Therefore the AONB Design Guide<sup>(111)</sup> should be referred to in the Core Strategy policy.

### Policy 31

#### Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The landscape and other special qualities of the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be conserved and enhanced, having regard to the current AONB Management Plan and locally specific Design Guidance.

In plan making and when assessing development proposals in and around the AONB particular considerations will include the:

- a. Sensitivity of local landscapes and their capacity to accommodate new development, including temporary structures such as caravans and chalets;
- b. Intervisibility between the AONB, the seascape and the landscape beyond, including the Kyloe and Cheviot Hills;
- c. Interdependency between the special qualities of the landscape and the marine and coastal environment, including the internationally and nationally important nature conservation sites and associated ecosystems, geology, species and habitats; and
- d. Need to maintain:
  - i. The settings of heritage assets, as well as the assets themselves;
  - ii. A sense of remoteness, wildness and open views;
  - iii. The natural functioning of the coastline; and
  - iv. A clear distinction between settlements and open countryside.

As far as possible, it will be recognised that the AONB is a living, working area by allowing small scale development where it does not impact on the AONB's special qualities including those in criteria a. to d. above. In particular, in assessing development proposals, consideration will be given to the extent to which the development:

111 See Northumberland Coast AONB Design Guide for Built Development.

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- i. Adds to the availability of permanently occupied and affordable housing to meet local needs; and
- ii. Supports the growth and diversification of the rural economy through the expansion of existing businesses and the development of new ones.

Major development will not be permitted except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated to be in the public interest; and that there is no alternative location which could absorb the development without a significant adverse impact on the AONB.

### North Pennines AONB

**8.57** The **North Pennines AONB** was designated in 1988 covering an area of 1,983 square km. It reaches into Northumberland with a third of the AONB being within the County, the remaining two thirds of the AONB lie within the counties of Durham and Cumbria and a very small section in North Yorkshire. The North Pennines landscape has a highly distinctive character which has been shaped by early settlers who cleared the forests, followed by generations of farming, a long history of mining for lead and other minerals, moorland management and more recent development. Part of its unique quality reflects the retention of a sense of wildness, remoteness and tranquillity. The geology, recognised at European level, is another key element of the landscape character.

**8.58** The North Pennines AONB Management Plan sets out the special qualities of the area: it is characterised by open moorland, which in the context of the rest of England can be considered relatively wild, remote and free from large scale visual intrusion. This sense of wildness and remoteness gives the area much of its character. The settlements are found in the valleys of the Derwent, the East and West Allen and the South Tyne, with only isolated hamlets and scattered farmsteads elsewhere. The landscape is the result partly of the underlying geology but also of the interaction between people and nature over thousands of years – deforestation, hill farming and long history of mining for lead and other minerals which brought enclosure of the land as well as creating a legacy of buildings, structures and landscape features such as hushes. Other special qualities of the area include truly dark night skies, species rich hay meadows, and internationally important birdlife.

**8.59** Unlike the Northumberland Coast AONB, there is a high level of development pressure within the Northumberland part of the North Pennines AONB. Indeed the population of the Allen Valleys was much higher in the past than it is now. It is important to seek to sustain the local population, while recognising that even a single development which is out of scale or character with the area, including those beyond the AONB boundary, can have a widespread impact due to the openness of the moorland that makes up much of the AONB.

**8.60** The North Pennines AONB Management Plan (2014-19) sets out a vision, which is largely based around the good management of the area's special qualities. It also seeks to manage activities that could damage the natural beauty, such as excessive heather burning and certain modern farming practices.

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**8.61** The Management Plan also promotes good planning and design, through two guidance documents<sup>(112)</sup>, as well as seeking to bring the landscape, geology and history to life through education resource initiatives.

**8.62** In line with national policy, major development should be strictly limited. However, the existence, within the area, of a series of communities and a working economy must be recognised within the context of the environmental constraints.

**8.63** Many of the planning issues covered in the Management Plan, such as those relating to tranquillity, dark skies or the encouragement of rural businesses, are covered in countywide Core Strategy policies. However there are some issues, locally distinctive to the AONB, which are strategic planning matters to be included in the Core Strategy:

- The wildness, remoteness and tranquillity of the area means that relatively small scale development can easily be out of character; development out with the boundary can be just as damaging to the area's special qualities as that located within the AONB;
- Bringing redundant or underused buildings back into use can present a challenge in relation to conserving landscape character, though their long term use may retain them in the landscape and help to support local communities and the economy;
- The retention of dark night skies is important in maintaining a special quality of the area and this is only possible through the planning system and sensitive management;
- Geology in the AONB is unique and an important contributor towards the special landscape qualities<sup>(113)</sup>;
- The AONB Management Plan identifies the special qualities of the AONB, the conservation of which should be emphasised as key principles in the Core Strategy;
- The North Pennines Building Design Guide and the North Pennines Planning Guidelines should be referred to in the Core Strategy Policy – these documents have also been identified through consultation as the preferred mechanism for determining the suitability of development proposals within the Allendale Neighbourhood Development Plan;
- The Design Guide acknowledges that, as well as stone, other materials, including timber, form part of the local vernacular. In view of the local lack of affordable homes, it is important to allow for these materials to be utilised in an innovative way, if this can, within the parameters of local guidance, lead to lower cost, more sustainable buildings;
- The moorland areas are home to a high proportion of England's red grouse. Their management through shooting forms the focus of a visitor industry, which makes an important contribution to the local economy. However, there is a danger that heavy concentrations of these activities can lead to structures such as stone roads being put in place in remote locations and, without careful planning, these could damage the special landscape qualities of the AONB.

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112 North Pennines AONB Planning Guidelines, 2011 promote new development to conserve and enhance the natural beauty while accommodating the needs of its communities, in a consistent way across the AONB. The North Pennines AONB Building Design Guide, 2011 seeks to help those undertaking building developments or maintenance works, of any scale, to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the North Pennines.

113 The North Pennines has the status of a Global Geopark, under the auspices of UNESCO. See also North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and European Geopark Geodiversity Action Plan 2010–2015.

## 8. Conserving and enhancing Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic, water and built environments

### Policy 32

#### North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The landscape and other special qualities of the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be conserved and enhanced, having regard to the latest AONB Management Plan, AONB Planning Guidelines and AONB Building Design Guide.

In plan making and assessing development proposals, in and around the AONB particular considerations will include the:

- a. Openness of the landscape and its sensitivity to development;
- b. Inter-visibility between the AONB and areas to its north and east;
- c. Interdependency between the special qualities of the landscape and the natural functioning of the environment taking into account internationally and nationally important nature conservation sites and associated ecosystems, species and habitats, and the geology;
- d. Need to maintain archaeological and built heritage assets and their settings; and a sense of remoteness, wildness and tranquillity; and
- e. Its status as a European Geopark.

As far as possible, it will be recognised that the AONB is a living, working area, seeking to sustain the local population by allowing small scale development where it does not impact on the AONB's special qualities including those in criteria a. to e. above. In particular, in assessing development proposals, consideration will be given to the extent to which the development:

- i. Adds to the availability of permanently occupied and affordable housing to meet local needs;
- ii. Supports the growth and diversification of the rural economy through the expansion of existing businesses and the development of new ones;
- iii. Reuses redundant buildings that contribute to the character of the area;
- iv. Applies design guidance, recognising that a variety of materials, including timber, have their place in the local vernacular and could contribute to lower cost, more energy efficient buildings; and
- v. Recognises that shooting supports jobs in land and estate management and attracts additional visitors but only to the extent that this does not necessitate additional permanent structures in remote locations.

Major development will not be permitted except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated to be in the public interest; and that there is no alternative location which could absorb the development without a significant adverse impact on the AONB.

## 8. Conserving and enhancing Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic, water and built environments

### Historic and built environment

**8.64** The NPPF defines the historic environment as "all aspects of the environment resulting from interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora". Northumberland's historic environment has been shaped by a combination of factors, which include the economic value of its agriculture, fishing, minerals and other natural resources; its position as a national and maritime frontier; its importance for north-south communication between England and Scotland; and its remoteness.

**8.65** Northumberland traditions of pastoral and community care run deep: from early Christianity to the influential role of 148 Parish and Town Councils; from the care and expectations of feudal landlords to the paternalism of large country estates; or from fishing community market networks and rescue services to the supporting sense of community from Miners' Welfares.

**8.66** Northumberland's physical and cultural heritage is manifest in well-preserved historic towns, buildings, archaeological sites, battlefields, designed and historic landscapes, many of international importance. The significance of these assets must merit consideration in planning decisions. Designated heritage assets are identified in Table 8.1 and all known heritage assets are recorded on the Historic Environment Record. Some locally important assets have been identified by the local planning authority or by Town or Parish Councils through local lists. The County is also rich in undesignated archaeological sites. It is not always possible to understand the significance of heritage assets, particularly archaeological sites, without further investigation; in these circumstances, further assessment will be required to inform planning decisions.

**8.67** Designated assets include the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings. For planning purposes both designated and non-designated heritage assets require balanced judgements to be made regarding the potential scale of loss or harm caused by development, measured against their significance. The loss or substantial harm to heritage assets of the highest significance should be wholly exceptional and must have a nationally significant public benefit that outweighs that harm. In other cases substantial harm or loss should be resisted unless it is necessary to achieve substantial public benefit that outweighs it. The incremental loss of larger designated heritage assets, such as battlefields and designed landscapes should be guarded against.

**8.68** To ensure that appropriate consideration can be given to the impact of developments on conservation areas outline applications will not be acceptable for proposals within conservation areas.

### Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site

**8.69** The Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site (WHS) was designated by UNESCO in 1987. The key objective within its Management Plan is to secure protection of the outstanding universal value of the WHS. Government guidance states that it is essential that appropriate policies are included in the Local Plan and that the importance of maintaining the integrity of Hadrian's Wall and its landscape setting must be recognised.

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**8.70** Current UNESCO operational guidelines strongly recommend inclusion of a buffer zone in the nomination of a new site, to provide additional protection and such a zone is included in the Hadrian's Wall Management Plan. In landscape terms, this is the area considered to be most sensitive to change that could affect the setting of the World Heritage Site and is therefore referred to in Policy 30 (Landscape).

**8.71** The policy approach to the World Heritage Site is to take a positive, flexible, case by case approach, which considers the type and scale of development, its specific location within or adjacent to the site, its setting and advice from expert bodies.

### Protecting the Wider Historic Environment – a positive strategy

**8.72** The NPPF gives strong protection to the historic environment, recognising its cultural significance and the multiple ways it supports and contributes to the economy, society and daily life. In particular, an awareness and understanding of buildings and spaces, and how they can:

- Connect people with their environment and heritage - creating a sense of place and identity, and helping people develop an attachment to their environment;
- Help people to develop new skills and responsibilities through environmental and heritage volunteering;
- Help to get children learning outdoors about the places in which they live, bringing history alive and nurturing the next generations appreciation of the need to safeguard important buildings and spaces;
- Encourage and empower communities to protect historic environments that are important to them.

**8.73** Northumberland's historic legacy is the setting for people's lives; it is where they live, work, shop and enjoy leisure and recreation activities. It is also an important draw for tourists. Many of the County's buildings are iconic and frequently appear in marketing material: Alnwick, Lindisfarne, Bamburgh, Dunstanburgh and Warkworth castles, Hexham Abbey and Cragston are symbolic of Northumberland, to the extent that they help to define the historic character of North East England.

**8.74** Whilst many of the iconic buildings benefit from ownership or guardianship by national bodies, the majority of the County's heritage assets do not, and are in private ownership. Some of the larger private houses are safeguarded by their owners opening them to the public and charging for access, others have been converted into hotels, conference centres, and wedding venues.

**8.75** The vast majority of Northumberland's listed buildings and structures are domestic, agricultural or small scale commercial. Being responsible for the upkeep of a listed building brings with it certain obligations which may incur additional costs. Many farm buildings have long since stopped being suited to modern agricultural working and have been converted to residential or small-scale employment use. Commercial properties, usually in town centres frequently have narrow footplates which make modern retailing challenging.

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**8.76** Incomes across Northumberland tend to be below the national average, therefore the finance needed to maintain the fabric of buildings can be hard to come by. As a result the architectural and historic integrity of the assets may be endangered by a lack of investment both on an individual basis, but also cumulatively where assets are grouped together, for example in Conservation Areas.

**8.77** Given that conservation areas are located predominantly in towns and villages, their well-being can be significantly harmed if the condition of buildings deteriorates.

**8.78** This fragility has been acknowledged in successful bids to the Heritage Lottery Fund under its Townscape Heritage Initiative for schemes in Bedlington, Blyth and Berwick-upon-Tweed; the latter has also secured Conservation Area Partnership Scheme funding. Whilst these schemes are designed to secure the fabric of individual buildings they have wider regenerative objectives, acknowledging that the preservation and enhancement of heritage assets is important to the social and economic well-being of communities.

**8.79** Within this context, the Core Strategy sets out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of Northumberland's historic environment and heritage assets, including those at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. It acknowledges that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and the need to conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance.

**8.80** The Northumberland Historic Environment Record (HER) is the primary evidence base for decision-making on, and future management of the historic environment. It is a dynamic record, constantly being updated and enhanced. The HER is supplemented by a range of local studies and resources, such as Conservation Area Character Appraisals, Conservation Area Management Plans, Extensive Urban Surveys and the Historic Landscape Characterisation Study, which contain wide ranging information on the entire historic environment, including locally important non-designated heritage assets. Local groups, especially Town and Parish Councils preparing Neighbourhood Plans, may be able to add to this – for example through compiling 'Local Lists' of locally important heritage assets. The comprehensive evidence base, comprising the above sources, will inform plan making and the decision making process in guiding and determining applications.

**8.81** The Historic Landscape Characterisation study places the main historic landmarks in a wider context, bringing to the fore associated features and potential areas of interest. The evidence that it provides of different eras and aspects of human occupation within a single landscape greatly enriches the understanding of those areas and brings significant additional information to decision-making on projects that may affect heritage or the landscape. In order to support the positive strategy for the historic environment, and where resources are identified, the Council will promote a review of existing Conservation Areas, the designation of new Areas and the means of protecting and enhancing their intrinsic qualities.

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### Policy 33

#### Historic environment and heritage assets

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, there will be a requirement to ensure the conservation, and enhancement of the quality, integrity and setting of Northumberland's historic environment and heritage assets by ensuring that:

- a. Decisions affecting a heritage asset will be based on a sound understanding of the significance of that asset and of the impact of any proposal upon that significance;
- b. Proposals that would result in harm to or loss of the significance of heritage assets will not be permitted except in exceptional circumstances where: the harm is outweighed by public benefit which cannot be met in any other way and is appropriately mitigated against. Where mitigation requires excavation or survey, the results should be made publicly accessible through appropriate archiving and publication. The ability to record evidence of the past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted;
- c. The historical context will be a key consideration, making use of the Historic Landscape Characterisation study, the Historic Environment Record and other relevant records to inform decision-making;
- d. New development in historic settlements and conservation areas should seek to reinforce local distinctiveness through appropriate design and the use of appropriate materials;
- e. When considering proposals that may impact on the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site, in addition to (a), factors that contribute to its Outstanding Universal Value will be taken into account, in line with the World Heritage Site Management Plan. This will include seeking to protect and where appropriate, enhance:
  - i. Evidence of the scale and complexity of the Wall and its associated frontier features;
  - ii. The group value of features, including features beyond the World Heritage Site;
  - iii. The landscape value and setting; and
  - iv. Communal values including educational and recreational.
- f. Recognition is given to the contribution that historic places and sites can make to the visitor economy;
- g. Where conservation or enhancement of the heritage assets may be required but there are limited resources available, priority will be given to assets that are considered characteristic of Northumberland, important within the context of its history, cultural development or landscape and/or unique to the area and Heritage at Risk;
- h. The Council will direct available resources towards:
  - i. Preparing, updating and acting on Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Conservation Area Management Plans;
  - ii. Designating additional Conservation Areas;

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- iii. Where there is a case, promoting Article 4 Directions to protect Conservation Areas from harm from Permitted Development;
- iv. Preparing or supporting master plans or design briefs for significant places or sites, where major change is proposed in relation to heritage assets; and
- v. Promoting and supporting bids for external funding designed to conserve and enhance the historic fabric of towns and villages.

### Heritage at risk

**8.82** Currently there are over 150 Grade I and II\* Listed Buildings and structural Scheduled Monuments on Historic England's current Heritage at Risk Register in Northumberland. The structures range between pit head baths and Romano British settlements, all of which are in varying condition and with uncertain prospects of recovery.

**8.83** Historic England assesses whether assets should be included on the basis of condition and, where applicable, occupancy (or use). They are removed from the Register when they have been brought into a stable condition, their future secured, and where appropriate, occupied or in use. There is no comprehensive information on Grade II Listed Buildings or Structures at risk. However, given the much greater numbers of buildings and structures falling within this category, it follows that there will be substantially greater numbers of them 'at risk'. The NPPF requires plans to promote a positive strategy to address heritage assets most at risk, because they are not replaceable once lost.

### Policy 34

#### Heritage assets at risk

The Council will seek to secure the sustainable future of heritage assets at risk, giving priority to:

- a. Grade I, Grade II\* buildings and structures and Scheduled Monuments identified in Historic England's at Risk Register; and
- b. Historic assets, including any from the above Register, that are considered characteristic of Northumberland, important within the context of its history, cultural development or landscape and/or unique to the area.

Reduction in the level of risk and removal from the Historic England Register will be achieved through working in partnership with the owner of the asset, Historic England and the community to:

- c. Offer specialist support to the owners of assets at risk;
- d. Promote and support proposals for assets which have the potential to bring them into sustainable economic use;
- e. Promote and support bids for external funding to secure the sustainable use of the asset, stabilisation or repair; and
- f. Where risk of loss becomes immediate or acute, consider the expediency of taking direct action to carry out repairs;

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The Council will work with local communities to identify other heritage assets at risk or vulnerable to becoming at risk, including (but not limited to) those that are nationally listed at Grade II and to support the development and implementation of local strategies to reverse and remove the risk.

### Water environment

**8.84** Water is vital to life. It ebbs and flows, across the area, through the seasons and over time. Water has shaped the topography, landscape and ecology of Northumberland.

**8.85** Natural water systems, comprising the water table, springs, river systems, inland water bodies and the sea, are all subject to pressures from human activity and associated development. This includes demands on water supply and drainage, modifications to watercourses, the effects of pollution on water quality and water-based ecosystems, flood risk, erosion and the results of climate change.

**8.86** Therefore, as with all aspects of the environment, sustainable planning and design must always consider the demands and effects of development on the water environment. The water environment policies reflect the increasing attention given to ensuring:

- The protection of water supply and quality;
- The protection and where appropriate the restoration of the natural form and function of the river environment; and
- That there is maximum resistance and resilience to flood risk.

**8.87** The policies will deliver a number of the Core Strategy strategic objectives, particularly making Northumberland more resilient to climate change, contributing to mitigation against its effects and managing the prudent use of Northumberland's natural resources. Good water quality, water supply and sewerage facilities are vital to maintaining and creating sustainable communities.

**8.88** The draft water environment policies have been largely supported through the various Core Strategy consultation stages. The sustainability appraisal regarded them as likely to have positive impacts on health and well-being, the provision of sustainable homes and businesses, the protection of natural resources, climate change mitigation and a number of other factors. The Core Strategy policies reflect advice given by statutory bodies at each stage and also seek to take on board the wider concerns of residents and businesses regarding flooding in particular.

### Water quality

**8.89** Northumberland has some of the only few 'high status' surface water bodies in England. They support some rare species that rely on the exceptional water quality to exist at all<sup>(114)</sup>. The Council and relevant statutory bodies would resist any proposed development affecting the high status of these water bodies. Through the Core Strategy the Council has set out policies which will: protect the water environment from pollution; maintain quality; and improve water resources, systems, natural processes and

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114 For example, the Freshwater Pearl Mussel, which is a protected species.

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environments, which do not currently meet European and national standards. The impacts of new development need to be managed to avoid compromising the quality of river and coastal systems, thereby protecting communities from the risk and effects of water pollution and environmental deterioration.

**8.90** The European Water Framework Directive 2000<sup>(115)</sup> established a framework for the protection of inland surface waters (rivers and lakes), transitional waters (estuaries), coastal waters and groundwater. The Directive seeks to ensure that all water bodies achieve 'good status' by 2021, it also established the requirement for river basin management plans<sup>(116)</sup>. It seeks a common, consistent approach to the management of the water environment: Under the directive each country has to:

- Prevent deterioration in the status of aquatic ecosystems, protect them and improve the ecological condition of waters;
- Aim to achieve at least good status for all water bodies by 2015. Where this is not possible and subject to the criteria set out in the Directive, aim to achieve good status by 2021 or 2027;
- Meet the requirements of Water Framework Directive Protected Areas;
- Promote sustainable use of water as a natural resource;
- Conserve habitats and species that depend directly on water;
- Progressively reduce or phase out the release of individual pollutants or groups of pollutants that present a significant threat to the aquatic environment;
- Progressively reduce the pollution of groundwater and prevent or limit the entry of pollutants; and
- Contribute to mitigating the effects of floods and droughts.

**8.91** The Council has a major contributory role in relation to the above national aims, through the policies in this Plan and its decisions on individual development proposals. The complexity of the water environment in the County means that assessing existing issues, measuring progress towards eliminating them or achieving enhancements, and gauging how the wider ecosystem may be affected, can be difficult:

- All areas of water that are above ground are required to have "good ecological status" and "good chemical status". Given the huge variations in water bodies, measuring these is complex<sup>(117)</sup>. There will be areas where higher standards can and must be set, than others. This would be the case, for example, where drinking water comes straight from the water body or where there is a risk that sensitive areas will be flooded.
- In the case of groundwater, the presumption is that it should not be polluted at all. This means that the EU imposes a prohibition on direct discharges to groundwater,

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115 This was 'Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy'. It was adopted and came into force in December 2000.

116 River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) are produced by the Environment Agency and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency. Northumberland is covered by the Northumbria River Basin Management Plan and the Solway Tweed River Basin Management Plan. The Environment Agency are currently in the process of updating Cycle 2 of the Northumbria RBMP.

117 These variations reflect differing 'hydromorphology' – essentially how the bodies of water move and flow in the context of the rocks, sediments etc. that are present.

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and (to cover indirect discharges) a requirement to monitor groundwater bodies for changes in chemical composition.

- The directive also sees the extraction of water as reducing the quality if it reaches the point where reduction adversely affects ecosystems.

**8.92** The Directive requires all inland and coastal water bodies to achieve a 'good status' by 2015. By 2012, just under half of the inland water bodies in Northumberland were achieving this target. Where meeting the 2015 target has not been possible under Cycle 1 of the Directive, it does allow, (subject to certain criteria) the revised (Cycle 2) target date of 2021 to be used. River Basin Management Plans action plans have been assisting in bringing the remaining water bodies up to standard.

**8.93** Related to the overall issue of water quality is the quality of bathing waters – i.e. beaches, lakes or ponds that are used by a large number of bathers. A separate EU Directive on Bathing Water<sup>(118)</sup> requires Members States to monitor and assess the bathing water and inform the public about bathing water quality. In Northumberland, there are 12 designated Bathing Waters, where standards, set out in the revised Bathing Water Directive, must be achieved by the end of the decade. Planning decisions must therefore make sure that the network of sewerage facilities and pumping stations associated with new development have sufficient capacity and will not exacerbate any outflows (whether from normal conditions or storm event) affecting these Bathing Waters. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) can help with this and also contribute to enhancements of Bathing Waters.

**8.94** Water quality is not just about water for drinking or bathing, it is about maintaining water bodies as valuable habitats. The effective management of the water environment is therefore integral to the ecosystem approach advocated across Northumberland's natural environment and, by implication, to the provision and maintenance of strategic and local green infrastructure.

**8.95** Within Northumberland, it is recognised that abandoned coal mining may result in poor quality water (minewater) which could potentially impact on ground and surface waters. Within the minerals section of the Core Strategy the policy on the environmental criteria for assessing minerals proposals deals with ground and surface water quality, flow and water abstraction issues, requiring applicants to consider the potential for the proposal to affect the flow, quality and quantity of ground and surface water supplies and include measures to prevent water pollution.

**8.96** The challenge for the policies within the Core Strategy and development management process is to maintain current water quality, in all its aspects, and improve areas that are not currently meeting required European and national standards. It is vital that discharges from new developments do not compromise the quality of river and coastal waters, nor should development be put at risk from water pollution. Other policies within the plan will also contribute to this aim – not least the flooding policy, which seeks to minimise surface water run-off and the risk of sewer flooding.

**8.97** It is also important to recognise that, under the Water Framework Directive, any development schemes where impact on a water environment is a possibility must result in improvements.

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118 This is the Directive 2006/7/EC of The European Parliament and of the Council of 15 February 2006 concerning the management of bathing water quality and repealing Directive 76/160/EEC.

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### Policy 35

#### Water quality

In plan making and assessing development proposals, the Council will seek to ensure that all water bodies achieve 'good status' by 2021 in terms of their ecological balance and other relevant factors, preventing any deterioration in that status. This will be achieved in line with the Water Framework Directive and/or the Bathing Water Directive, having regard to local river basin management plans and the findings of the Northumberland Water Cycle Study, applying the ecosystem approach, through:

- a. Giving favourable consideration to any development and/or landscape measures that maintain, or may result in enhanced water quality, including bathing water;
- b. Ensuring that any development where impact on a water environment is a possibility, will bring about an improvement to that environment;
- c. Avoiding development if it would have an adverse impact on water quality in surface water bodies or it could affect the chemical balance of groundwater including any wider impacts;
- d. Avoiding any reduction in the 'high status' of certain surface water bodies in the County, giving very close scrutiny to any development that may affect them; and
- e. Assessing the effects of development on designated Bathing Waters.

#### Water supply and sewerage

**8.98** In accordance with national planning policy, there is a need to ensure that the expected level and distribution of proposed development is deliverable and will not result in water supply and sewerage infrastructure issues that cannot be resolved. The Council will work with Northumbria Water, prospective developers and key stakeholders to identify where strategic solutions to water-related infrastructure investment may be required in order to support the strategic aims and expectations of this Plan. This will mostly relate to the provision or upgrading of waste water treatment works, but it will also apply to assurances over the supply of water in certain areas where there are issues in its guaranteed continuity.

**8.99** In terms of **water supply**, Northumberland is identified as an area of 'low water stress'<sup>(119)</sup> and most of the river catchments in Northumberland are classified as having 'water available'. There are exceptions to this, mentioned below.

**8.100** The supply of water in Northumberland is split into two 'water resource zones' (WRZs), shown in Figure 8.4:

- The **Kielder WRZ** serves the vast majority of Northumberland. Most development coming forward in this zone would be capable of being supplied without problem,

119 Water stress occurs when the demand for water exceeds the available amount during a certain period or when poor quality restricts its use. See Environment Agency, Areas of Water Stress: Final Classification, October 2007.

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although, within the area, the rivers Coquet and Font have been identified as experiencing some water resource availability issues.

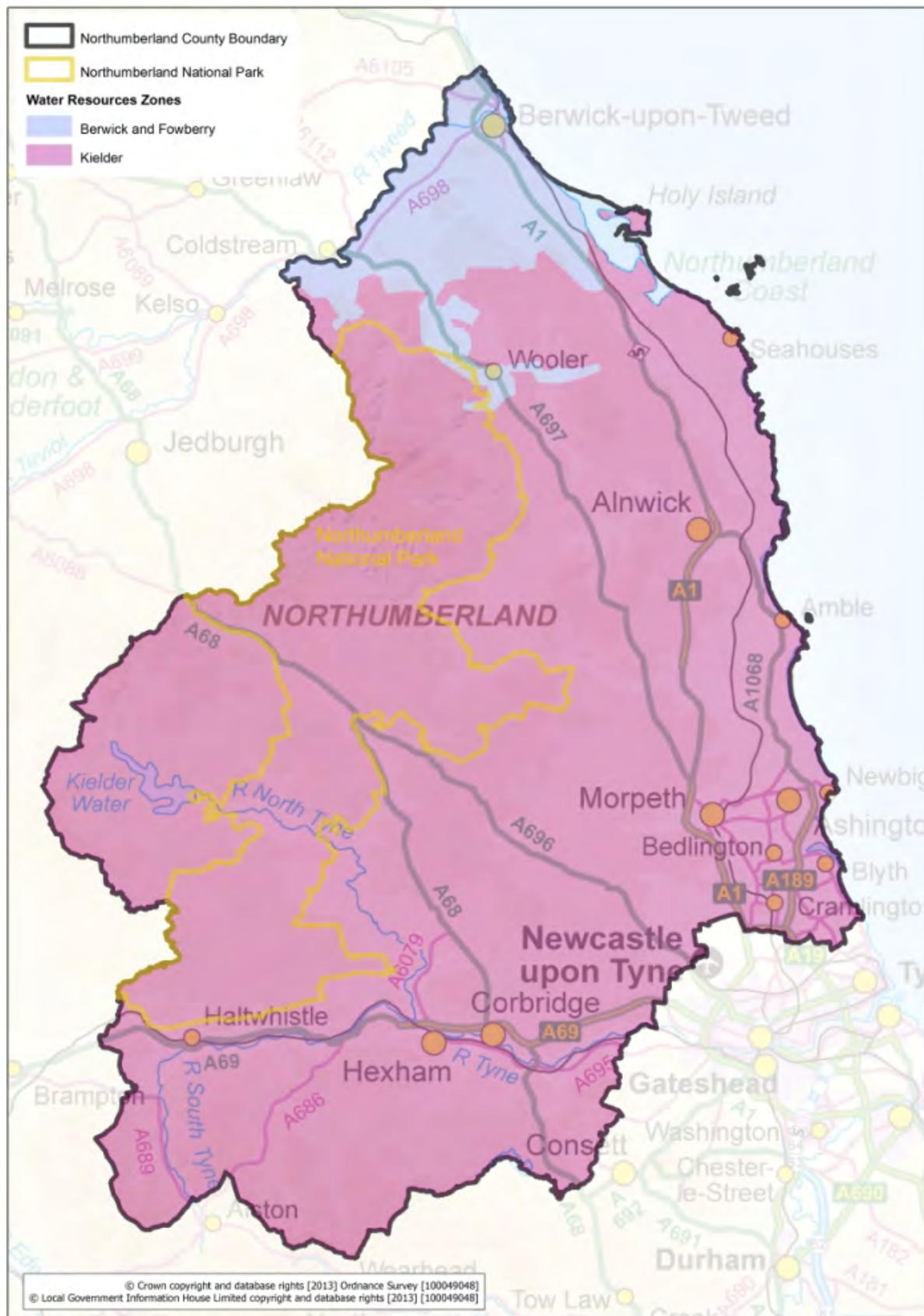
- The **Berwick and Fowberry WRZ** serves the far north of Northumberland and whilst there is generally an adequate water supply, shortages have been experienced during periods of high demand. Work has been undertaken by NWL to improve this situation, but there is a need to ensure adequate supplies can be achieved and maintained before development is agreed, as well as the protection of the sources themselves. Further action may include improving infrastructure, demand management and leakage control. NWL's Water Resources Management Plan (2014) includes the current position and future plans to ensure that there is a sustainable water resource for the Berwick area<sup>(120)</sup>.

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120 Northumbrian Water Final Water Resources Management Plan, 2014.

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Figure 8.4 Water Resource Zones



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**8.101** The importance of maintaining the quality of groundwater has been emphasised above. Apart from the ecological implications of not doing so, this is important because groundwater is a significant contributor to household water supply in Northumberland. The Fell Sandstone outcrop, which extends from Berwick in the north, south to Wooler and Rothbury, and then to the south west of Kielder Reservoir, is a designated Principal Aquifer which supports a number of important licensed groundwater abstractions in the Berwick and Wooler areas. These groundwater abstractions are a source of water supply within the Berwick and Fowberry WRZ. There are also a number of Secondary Aquifers, such as the Carboniferous Limestone and Millstone Grit, which are capable of supporting water supplies at a local scale, including Abbey Well in Morpeth. Given the rural nature of the County both the Principal and Secondary Aquifers support a significant number of private water supplies. It is important that these water resources are protected.

**8.102** In terms of **sewerage**<sup>(121)</sup>, as with any infrastructure, an important principle of sustainable planning is to make best use of existing capacity. Through the associated Infrastructure Delivery Plan, the Core Strategy must plan for the necessary new or upgraded capacity in wastewater treatment works. Some of these should be capable of accommodating wastewater from new development through the plan period. Others have limited capacity and will require investment in the medium term. However, certain treatment works do not have any remaining capacity, meaning that there are areas of the County where little or no additional development could be accommodated until new capacity is installed. Allowing new development in advance of such works could compromise water quality.

**8.103** A small part of the wastewater from the South East and Central Delivery Areas is treated at the Howdon Wastewater Treatment Works in North Tyneside, along with wastewater from neighbouring authorities. There are potential future capacity issues relating to the Howdon treatment works. A large part of the Howdon catchment is served by combined sewers and there is often no option but to accept both foul and surface water from development, leading to unnecessary treatment of surface water. To ensure wastewater from future new development can be accommodated at the treatment works, there is currently on-going joint work between the Council, other local authorities, NWL and the EA on the development of a strategic policy to reduce the amount of surface water in new developments, and separate it from the sewerage system.

**8.104** Parts of the County, mainly in rural areas are not served by mains sewerage. This results in the use of non-mains systems such as package treatment plants and septic tanks. The proliferation of some small scale non-mains drainage proposals has contributed towards water bodies failing to meet the Water Framework Directive within the County. Therefore, all new development that is located within sewered areas should be directed to the public sewer system. Spillages from non-mains drainage systems can have significant adverse impacts on the water environment and its ecology if they are not properly managed; therefore, if non-mains systems cannot be avoided, they must be sited and designed to avoid any adverse impact on ground and surface waters.

**8.105** The capacity for existing sewerage infrastructure to cope with new development in the County was examined, at a high level, in the Northumberland Outline Water Cycle Study (WCS)<sup>(122)</sup>. This has informed the identification of strategic locations for development,

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121 The term sewerage refers to foul water.

122 The Outline Water Cycle Study undertakes and analysis of environmental and infrastructure constraints.

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where key land allocations are likely to be made, demonstrating deliverability of the strategic approach to the distribution of development. Further detail can be found within the Strategic Land Review<sup>(123)</sup>. The Detailed WCS<sup>(124)</sup> has informed the Infrastructure Delivery Plan that accompanies the Core Strategy. It will also assist with the preparation of the Delivery Document, which will set out the detailed site allocations for housing.

### Policy 36

#### Water supply and sewerage

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the satisfactory provision of adequate water supply and sewerage infrastructure will be maintained or secured, having regard to the findings of the Northumberland Water Cycle Study, as follows:

- a. Minimising the need for new infrastructure by directing development:
  - i. In terms of the supply of water;
    - To areas where an adequate supply can be guaranteed;
    - Within the Berwick and Fowberry Water Resource Zones, ensuring the adequate protection of existing abstraction sources; and
    - Obtaining an assurance from the water provider that a supply is available to support the development before the proposal is agreed;
  - ii. In terms of the sewerage network and treatment works, primarily to areas where the necessary capacity already exists, and only then to areas where the required capacity is planned, having regard to:
    - The infrastructure providers' Water Resource Management and Strategic Business Plans; and
    - The findings of the Northumberland Water Cycle Study.
- b. Ensuring that, where new water related infrastructure is needed to serve development:
  - i. That the provision of the infrastructure and the development are aligned, including any appropriate phasing;
  - ii. That the infrastructure provision does not have a harmful impact on existing ecosystems, sites of international, European, national or local importance for biodiversity, the natural or built environment, archaeology, or the amenity of local residents.
- c. Ensuring that new or improved water and sewage treatment facilities, including fluvial and coastal outfalls, contribute towards improvement in water quality and

123 The Strategic Land Review is available to view at:  
<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=3458>.

124 The Detailed Water Cycle Study will identify what infrastructure is required, when it is required and how it will be funded and implemented.

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demonstrate there is no significant adverse impact upon the natural environment, including the coastal and marine environment; and

- d. Retaining an appropriate buffer between development and sewage treatment works, sufficient to allow for operational needs, including any planned expansion of the works, and in order to avoid any odour or noise issues for sensitive neighbouring uses.

Non-mains drainage systems, such as package treatment plants and septic tanks should only be employed in non-sewered areas. Where they are required, careful consideration of their siting and design will be required to ensure that there is no adverse impact upon ground water, water quality or existing ecosystems.

### Flood risk

**8.106** Flood risk is critical when assessing the location of development. There is strong evidence that flood risk is increasing because of climate change. National policy therefore requires that Local Plans should minimise the risk of flood damage by locating development away from areas of highest risk of flooding.

**8.107** The main sources of flood risk within Northumberland are from rivers and watercourses (fluvial), the sea (tidal), surface water run-off and sewers. Groundwater flooding is localised in nature.

**8.108** Fluvial and tidal flood risk maps have existed for many years and allow accurate planning of where different types of buildings should or should not be sited according to their vulnerability.

**8.109** National guidance sets out a 'sequential test' to be used when considering development in relation to flood risk, with the ultimate object being to steer vulnerable buildings towards areas of low risk from flooding. The Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for Northumberland provides a more detailed picture of areas susceptible to different types of flooding and identifies risks across the County. It suggests dividing the sequential test into a series of detailed stages, which will be applied when considering future land allocations and for individual proposals<sup>(125)</sup>.

### Resilience and resistance to flooding

**8.110** Not all flooding is as predictable as fluvial, in either location or frequency. As a result, planning policies and decisions must concentrate on minimising risk through other measures such as promoting infrastructure improvements or influencing building design. Some aspects of this are outlined below.

### Sewer flooding

**8.111** Flooding from sewers is increasingly recognised as an issue in areas that are not necessarily at risk from fluvial flooding – whereby rainfall events, sometimes away from the area concerned, cause major surface water run-off to enter the sewerage system. In

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125 Northumberland Level 1 SFRA, September 2010, Paragraph 5.3.

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places, the network does not have the capacity to accommodate these peak flows and wastewater discharges from the network to surrounding land, housing and commercial property.

**8.112** Future investment in sewerage infrastructure is primarily intended for future sewage disposal which is predictable and their primary intent would not normally be to alleviate much less predictable surface water flooding issues<sup>(126)</sup>. The latter must therefore be dealt with through different means<sup>(127)</sup>. The policies within the Core Strategy will be important to help address this. The policies seek to minimise the risk that future development locations could be flooded from sewers or add to an existing risk by ensuring that surface water run-off entering the sewer system is kept to an absolute minimum. Other benefits of such an approach will include a much reduced risk to water quality. A number of Drainage Area Studies are among the evidence that will inform decisions on how to locate and manage new development in relation to sewer flood risk<sup>(128)</sup>.

### Design and flooding

**8.113** Sometimes a development scheme that includes highly vulnerable uses, may encroach into areas at risk from flooding, including those areas prone to surface water flooding, in which case opportunities will be sought to reduce the overall level of risk through the layout, mix and/or form of the development, as well as the appropriate application of Sustainable Drainage Systems.

**8.114** Where floodwaters are likely to affect buildings and it has been demonstrated that development may be acceptable in the particular location, the design can build in resistance to water penetration ('dry proofing'), or, if this cannot be achieved, resilience to the entry of water ('wet proofing'). Resilience can also be designed into a building's internal layout, fixtures and fittings so that, in the event of a flood incident, there will be, for example, easy access to safer upper floors and the opportunity for quick reoccupation afterwards. The SFRA has identified a number of resistance and resilience measures for consideration in the assessment of development proposals. The guidance covers building materials, foundations, floors, walls, doors and windows, fittings and utilities<sup>(129)</sup>.

### Surface water

**8.115** Relatively small changes in hard surfacing and surface gradients can result in surface water flooding becoming more frequent<sup>(130)</sup>. Reusing brownfield land can be beneficial insofar as development is likely to increase rather than reduce their permeability.

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126 Northumbrian Water do invest in sewerage infrastructure projects which are specifically targeted to reduce the incidence of sewer flooding, including the separation of surface water from combined sewerage systems.

127 See, for example, the reference to the Howdon Works under 'Surface water' below.

128 The Drainage Area Studies cover areas around towns and villages in Northumberland, or groupings of these. They have been undertaken by, and are available from Northumbrian Water Limited, (NWL).

129 Northumberland Level 1 SFRA, September 2010, Table 6-1.

130 An example would be the paving over of front gardens.

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**8.116** National guidance<sup>(131)</sup> sets out a hierarchy of acceptable surface water discharge solutions with discharge into the ground being the most preferred solution and connection to sewers the least preferred solution. The emphasis of the guidance is that surface water runoff entering the sewerage system should be kept to an absolute minimum.

**8.117** Surface water flooding is an issue in parts of Northumberland and there is a need for surface water management to reduce the risk of flooding from new development. Aside from large scale prevention of water draining into sewers, (see above), the management of surface water can best be achieved through Sustainable Drainage Systems.

**8.118** The provision of green infrastructure (explained in Chapter 10) can also play a less direct but important role in the management and mitigation of surface water flooding, including preventing pollution by filtering surface water run-off, thereby maintaining or improving the quality of water in the environment in line with legislation.

### Flood alleviation

**8.119** There are a number of existing flood defences and other flood management structures across Northumberland. These are mostly on rivers close to low-lying populated areas or other vulnerable land uses. There are still communities affected by flooding, where there will be a need to plan for additional flood defence and management schemes. Following the 2008 flood at Morpeth, work has now been completed on a major flood alleviation scheme involving raised flood defences and the storage of floodwater upstream.

## **Policy 37**

### **Flooding**

In plan-making and assessing development proposals the potential for both on and off-site flood risk from all potential sources will be measured, taking into account the policy approach contained within: the relevant Catchment Flood Management Plan; the Northumberland Local Flood Risk Management Strategy; the Northumberland Outline Water Cycle Study; and the findings of Drainage Area Studies.

Development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they will minimise flood risk to people, property and infrastructure from all potential sources by:

- a. Avoiding inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding and directing the development away from areas at highest risk, applying the Sequential Test and if necessary the Exceptions Test, in accordance with national policy and the Northumberland Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Site Specific Flood Risk Assessments will be required in accordance with national policy and guidance;
- b. Ensuring that the development will be safe over its lifetime, taking account of climate change, will not increase flood risk elsewhere and where possible, reduce flood risk overall;

131 Part H of the Building Regulations and the Draft national standards and specified criteria for sustainable drainage, June 2014

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- c. Assessing the impact of the development proposal on existing sewerage infrastructure and flood risk management infrastructure, including whether there is a need to reinforce such infrastructure or provide new infrastructure;
- d. Ensuring that development proposals in areas at risk from flooding are made resistant and resilient, in terms of their layout, mix and/or building design, in accordance with national policy and the findings and recommendations of the Northumberland Strategic Flood Risk Assessment;
- e. Pursuing the full separation of foul and surface water flows as follows:
  - i. A requirement that all development provides such separation; and
  - ii. Where combined sewers remain, the Council will work with statutory sewerage providers to progress the separation of surface water from foul;
- f. Ensuring that development proposals separate, minimise and control surface water run-off, with Sustainable Drainage Systems being the preferred approach:
  - i. Surface water should be managed at source wherever possible, ensuring that there is no net increase in surface water runoff for the lifetime of the development. Surface water should be disposed of in accordance with the following hierarchy for surface water run-off:
    - To a soak away system, unless it can be demonstrated that this is not feasible due to poor infiltration with the underlying ground conditions;
    - To a watercourse, unless there is no alternative or suitable receiving watercourse available;
    - To a surface water sewer;
    - Disposal to combined sewers should be the last resort once all other methods have been explored;
  - ii. Where greenfield sites are to be developed, the surface water run-off rates should not exceed, and where possible, should reduce the existing run-off rates;
  - iii. Where previously developed sites are to be developed, the peak surface run-off rate from the development to any drain, sewer or surface water body for any given rainfall event should be as close as reasonably practicable to the greenfield runoff rate for the same event, so long as this does not exceed the previous rate of discharge on the site for that same event. If it is demonstrated that this cannot be achieved, then surface run-off rates should be reduced by a minimum of 50% of the existing site run-off rate;
  - iv. Solutions within the wider catchment area should be considered, especially if these would provide ecosystem services and/or if local solutions could be harmful to biodiversity, landscape or built heritage;

In relation to flood alleviation schemes:

- g. The early implementation of approved schemes will be supported through development decisions;
- h. Any proposal for additional schemes should demonstrate that they represent the most sustainable solution and that their social, economic and environmental

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benefits outweigh any adverse environmental impacts caused by new structure(s), including increasing the risk of flooding elsewhere.

Any works relating to the above, which impact on natural water systems, should consider the wider ecological implications, applying the ecosystem approach, and link into green infrastructure initiatives wherever practicable.

### Sustainable Drainage Systems

**8.120** National planning policy requires that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Due to increased pressure on the sewerage system, including greater numbers of connected properties and increased level and intensity of winter precipitation, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are generally the preferred approach to addressing surface water drainage within developments.

**8.121** In contrast to traditional piped sewerage systems, which struggle with sudden influxes of rainwater, SuDS features such as ponds, porous road surfaces and shallow drainage channels (swales) are designed to absorb rainwater where it falls or slow water down to reduce the levels entering the drainage system. Fast run-off from hard surfaces results in flash floods from rainwater trying to enter the drainages system within a short period of time. By slowing down and separating out run-off, the highest peak levels of water entering the drainage system are reduced and flooding limited. The issue of flash flooding due to extreme weather events has affected certain parts of the County quite badly in recent years and needs to be addressed in a way which reflects a coordinated approach and the benefits of which accumulate over time.

**8.122** The Government consulted nationally on proposals to make better use of the planning system to secure sustainable drainage systems and produced a Ministerial Statement on sustainable drainage systems<sup>(132)</sup>. This statement makes it clear that local planning policies and decisions on major developments<sup>(133)</sup> will ensure that sustainable drainage systems for the management of run-off are put in place, unless demonstrated to be inappropriate. With regard to housing, this applies to developments of 10 dwellings or more. The Government intends to keep this under review and will publish revised planning guidance from time to time. However a large proportion of the housing development sites in Northumberland are for less than 10 dwellings and, as it is important to make a meaningful contribution to tackling drainage problems across the County, the use of SuDS principles would be welcomed in Northumberland on smaller sites as well.

**8.123** Different situations will call for different types of SuDS, according to their effectiveness and efficiency. SuDS should be embedded as early as possible in the design process to benefit from cost efficiencies, to maximise and integrate social and environmental benefits and to ensure maintenance and operation requirements are economically

132 House of Commons Written Statement (HCWS161) by The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on 18 December 2001 (Available at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons2014-12-18/HCWS161/>).

133 Developments of 10 dwellings or more; or equivalent non-residential or mixed development (as set out in Article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010).

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proportionate. In addition to managing surface water run-off volumes, in designing SuDS, consideration should be given to improving water quality for example by filtering out harmful pollutants from road surfaces.

**8.124** While it is recognised that SuDS may have implications for the cost of delivering the development, these costs may be comparable with the cost of conventional, piped sewerage systems, and SuDS have considerable, additional environmental and social benefits. In many cases SuDS features can also add to the market value of the built housing.

**8.125** Occasionally particular types of SuDS will not be appropriate (e.g. because they will bring more birds close to airport runways or otherwise cause a hazard, ground conditions are unstable or the development is on a steep slope). However, with regard to major development the onus is on the applicant to provide evidence for SuDS being inappropriate.

**8.126** The Government requires that through the use of planning conditions or planning obligations there are clear arrangements in place for ongoing maintenance over the lifetime of the development. With regard to design, implementation and lifetime maintenance, the Council is working with other Local Planning Authorities and Lead Local Flood Authorities across the North East to achieve consensus on sub-regional SuDS guidance.

**8.127** Consideration will be given to using the Community Infrastructure Levy towards the promotion of sustainable drainage.

### Policy 38

#### Sustainable Drainage Systems

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, water sensitive urban design, including Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be incorporated into development, in order to separate, minimise and control surface water run-off, in accordance with national standards and any future local guidance.

SuDS will be a requirement for any development where it is necessary to manage surface water drainage unless it can be clearly demonstrated:

- a. That SuDS are not technically, operationally or financially deliverable or viable and that any surface water drainage issues resulting from the development can be alternatively mitigated; or
- b. That the SuDS scheme will itself adversely affect the environment or safety, including where ponds could increase the risk of bird strike close to the airport.

Where appropriate, efforts should be made to link SuDS or other water sensitive urban design schemes into wider initiatives to enhance the green infrastructure, improve water quality, benefit wildlife and/or contribute to the provision of an ecosystem service.

Arrangements must be put in place for the management and maintenance of SuDS over the whole period during which it is needed, with such arrangements taking account of the cumulative effectiveness of SuDs in the area concerned.

## 8. Conserving and enhancing Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic, water and built environments

### Coastal change

**8.128** Along with Northumberland's river systems, the sea is the other element of the water environment which most shapes the County's environment. The Northumberland coastline is approximately 130km in length and stretches from the Scottish Border in the north to Seaton Sluice in the south east of the County. Large parts of the coastline have important natural and built assets; its land and seascapes are particularly distinctive. It comprises a series of dune systems and wide, sandy bays separated by lengths of cliffs and small islands (Holy Island, the Farne Islands and Coquet Island). It also includes a number of towns and villages including: Berwick-upon-Tweed, Bamburgh, Seahouses, Beadnell, Craster, Alnmouth, Amble, Cresswell, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Cambois, Blyth and Seaton Sluice. These are important communities in social and economic terms and many retain connections with the sea for employment and commerce. Only a small proportion of the coastline is protected by man-made defences, most notably in the more urban areas.

**8.129** The Northumberland and North Tyneside Shoreline Management Plan 2 (SMP2)<sup>(134)</sup> provides a large-scale assessment of the risks from coastal erosion and sea flooding to places, people and the historic and natural environment. It presents a policy framework to manage these risks over 20, 50 and 100 years. There are areas of the Northumberland Coast where there is the need to address the issue of coastal erosion and coastal change to protect commercial, economic and residential areas. Key challenges posed by the Shoreline Management Plan include the possible need to relocate caravan parks and golf courses and realign sections of roads in certain areas, as well as specific issues of eroding colliery spoil in the Lynemouth area and sea flooding at Blyth.

**8.130** The management of coastal change and its attendant processes requires an integrated approach and the Council is working closely with its partners and neighbouring authorities to promote a coherent planning strategy along the Northumberland Coast and beyond. In line with national policy, the Council will continue to work with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) under the Duty to Co-operate to ensure integration of land-use and marine planning, taking into account the requirements of the UK Marine Policy Statement and the forthcoming marine plan for the north east<sup>(135)</sup>.

**8.131** National planning policy is clear that the planning system should reduce the risk from coastal change by avoiding inappropriate development in vulnerable areas or adding to the impacts of physical changes to the coast. The Core Strategy has a role to play in overseeing and planning for coastal change over time and directing development accordingly.

**8.132** The Core Strategy policy is high level and sets criteria on coastal erosion and coastal change management. The subsequent Northumberland Delivery Document will define Coastal Change Management Areas (CCMAs) and set out the type of development that will be appropriate, the circumstances in which development may be permissible, where a Vulnerable Assessment will be required and the allocation of land for appropriate development within these areas.

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134 Northumberland and North Tyneside Shoreline Management Plan 2, May 2009.

135 The MMO is responsible for issuing licences needed for activities involving a deposit or removal of a substance or object below the mean high water springs mark or in any tidal river to the extent of the tidal influence.

## 8. Conserving and enhancing Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic, water and built environments

**8.133** During the consultation stages, there has been strong support for this approach. Comments received, suggesting that some elements of the policy needed to be strengthened have been taken on board as far as possible. The Sustainability Appraisal found that the overall impacts of the policy would be positive or neutral with no negative impacts.

### Policy 39

#### Coastal erosion and coastal change management

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, areas vulnerable to coastal change will be managed in accordance with the principles and approach set out in the Shoreline Management Plan, while giving full weight to the level of importance of the coast's ecological and heritage value.

Development proposals in these areas in particular will be required to:

- a. Demonstrate that the need for a coastal location overrides the risk of coastal change and provides wider benefits, such as substantial, sustainable environmental, economic and social benefits;
- b. Provide a Coastal Change Vulnerability Assessment which demonstrates that the development is safe over its planned lifetime and will not have an unacceptable impact on coastal change processes elsewhere. The assessment should be appropriate to the degree of risk and the location, scale and nature of the development;
- c. Demonstrate that there will not be a significant adverse impact to ecological and heritage assets and designations, including the Northumberland coastal footpath; and
- d. Provide an assessment of the impact of the development on existing coastal defence infrastructure, including whether new infrastructure would be required as a result of the development proposal.

Proposals for new or replacement coastal defence schemes will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- The works are consistent with the relevant management approach for the area, set out in the Shoreline Management Plan; and
- There will be no significant adverse impacts on the coastal environment, including ecological landscape and heritage assets and designations; and
- Where required, a programme of mitigation can be agreed.

Coastal Change Management Areas will be defined in the Northumberland Delivery Document.

#### Unstable and contaminated land

**8.134** Land stability and contamination issues have the potential to cause harm to human health and the wider environment as well as damage to property and infrastructure.

# 8. Conserving and enhancing Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic, water and built environments

**8.135** Northumberland has a considerable legacy of land contamination and land instability. Much of this originates to past coal mining and industrial activities. Land contamination can, however, sometimes also be caused by naturally occurring sources, agricultural activities or by other small-scale past land uses such as fuel filling stations. Similarly land instability can be caused by natural geological features and the action of water. Some contaminated, or unstable land, may be of historic or archaeological interest.

**8.136** The Core Strategy has an important role in respect to land instability and contamination issues through:

- Helping to ensure that various types of development are not be placed in locations affected by land stability or contamination issues without the appropriate precautions; and
- Providing opportunities for land instability and contamination issues to be addressed and reduced where remediation can form part of the overall development proposal.

**8.137** Land contamination is particularly relevant to the planning process where it is proposed to develop on brownfield land. Where a development is proposed, it is the responsibility of the developer to ensure that any land contamination issues are appropriately addressed and, where necessary, remediation takes place and the site is cleaned up to a level which is appropriate for the proposed end use. Proposals for uses on land which is known or suspected to be contaminated, or for uses that would be particularly vulnerable in terms of exposure to contamination, such as residential accommodation, allotments, public play areas and playing fields, should be supported by sufficient information to enable the possible contamination risks to be fully assessed. It is then important that measures are put in place that will allow the development to take place safely.

**8.138** Land stability as a result of mining legacy is a particularly relevant and important issue in Northumberland given the number of mine entries and other areas of high risk from legacy in the County. This mining legacy is highly concentrated in South East Northumberland, which coincides with where a number of the main urban areas in Northumberland are located. It is important that new development recognises the problems and how they can be positively addressed.

**8.139** Viability considerations do not mean that these problems can go unaddressed when development is proposed. A precautionary approach needs to be taken, whereby further information may have to be gathered or submitted with a planning application and risks be avoided, minimised and/or mitigated, as appropriate. Consideration should be given to the Council's validation checklist for information on the survey information required to support planning applications.

**Policy 40**

**Unstable and contaminated land**

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, unacceptable risks from land instability and contamination will be prevented by ensuring development is appropriately located and that measures can be taken to effectively mitigate the impacts.

## 8. Conserving and enhancing Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic, water and built environments

The following criteria will be taken into consideration when determining planning applications:

- a. Where other planning considerations allow, favourable consideration will be given to development that allows for the beneficial remediation of contamination or unstable land;
- b. Where development is proposed on land that is potentially unstable or contaminated, the applicant will need to provide an assessment in support of the planning application that clearly shows:
  - i. Investigations have been carried out to understand the nature and extent of contamination or stability issues; and
  - ii. The remedial measures that will be needed to allow the development to go ahead safely.
- c. If there is evidence of contamination or land instability, proposals will be permitted where the applicant is able to demonstrate that measures can be taken to effectively mitigate the contamination and/or land instability to ensure the development will not pose a risk to human health and the wider environment; and
- d. The benefits of any proposed remediation of contaminated or unstable are not outweighed by any harm to the natural, built and historic environment caused by the remediation works themselves.

## 9. Ensuring connectivity and infrastructure delivery

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### 9. Ensuring connectivity and infrastructure delivery

**9.1** The Core Strategy seeks to create a sustainable pattern of development which will result in a reduction in the need to travel, with the majority of development focused in the most sustainable locations. Living closer to jobs, education, services and amenities and making the most of communication technologies can lead to more sustainable travel, reduced carbon emissions and more sustainable and enduring communities in the long term.

**9.2** Alongside reducing the need to travel the critical importance of ensuring connectivity is fully recognised. The Core Strategy seeks to maintain and support a local transport system and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) connections that are resilient and responsive to changing needs to:

- Promote sustainable economic growth;
- Minimise the environmental impact of travel;
- Improve safety, health and wellbeing;
- Advance equality of opportunity; and
- Enhance quality of life.

**9.3** Northumberland is the most sparsely populated County in England; there are challenges of connecting remote rural communities, and sometimes unavoidable reliance upon car based travel. It is interdependent with neighbouring areas, including the city regional economies of both Tyne and Wear and Edinburgh. These factors present specific issues for ensuring the mobility of knowledge, people, goods and services.

**9.4** Commuting is a major consideration in the County. The daily outflow of commuters from Northumberland to Tyneside has increased steadily. There is a two-way flow, but out-commuting, mostly to Newcastle, North Tyneside and Gateshead, exceeds in-commuting by a ratio of 2:1. This places pressure on transport infrastructure including roads and public transport. The latest information demonstrates that the net outflow is falling; it has decreased by 19% between 2001 to 2011, as more workers commute into Northumberland. This trend is set to continue with a planned growth of Northumberland based jobs<sup>(136)</sup>. Effective connections across boundaries will however remain crucial to the County's success.

**9.5** Increasing economic prosperity and population growth are also likely to feature as key factors placing new and changing demands upon Northumberland's connecting infrastructure, including modern digital connections.

**9.6** The Council as Local Planning Authority, Local Highway Authority and the organisation leading the iNorthumberland broadband programme, has a key role in addressing these challenges. The Council will continue to work in partnership with a range of other organisations to ensure the County's connectivity and accessibility. Where appropriate, the Council will also require developers to deliver and/or contribute to addressing connectivity solutions and mitigation, in order to make new development acceptable in planning terms.

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136 See Chapter 5 - Delivering a thriving and competitive economy.

## 9. Ensuring connectivity and infrastructure delivery

### Other Organisations, strategies, plans and policies

**9.7** The Core Strategy is one of a range of strategies and plans that address connectivity and access matters, including: the Local Transport Plan and accompanying Implementation Plan; the Northumberland Economic Strategy and accompanying delivery framework; and the Northumberland Broadband Plan.

**9.8** In addition there are a wide range of other organisations with relevant plans and initiatives, such as the North East Combined Authority (NECA). The NECA works closely with the NELEP to help create the conditions for economic growth and new investment. The NECA took over responsibility for strategic transport in the region from the now-dissolved Tyne and Wear Integrated Transport Authority and covers all seven local authority areas in the North East. The NECA's transport role is critical in supporting a growing economy, it:

- Provides leadership and a united voice on strategic transport issues;
- Links strategic transport planning with economic priorities;
- Provides strong representation on transport issues of national significance;
- Provides effective coordination to enable improvement to public transport; and
- Provides a framework to maximise and manage devolution of transport funding.

**9.9** Northumberland County Council is at the centre of this change and will be working to secure investment and support through this mechanism going forward. Further details are provided in the Northumberland Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

### Promoting sustainable connections

**9.10** Sustainable connections facilitate sustainable development. Effective transport and ICT ensure good access to key services and facilities, support economic growth and tourism, and contribute to the quality of life of Northumberland's residents, businesses and visitors.

#### Sustainable transport

**9.11** The NPPF highlights that the Core Strategy should support a range of transport modes with priority given to walking, cycling and public transport and consideration of disabled access.

**9.12** Opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions inevitably vary between urban and rural areas. This is particularly the case in parts of Northumberland, where the reduction of commercially-viable bus services, together with a reduction in available public sector funding for public transport subsidies and other influencing factors have contributed to the loss of some local services.

**9.13** The timetabling and funding of public transport services is not a land-use planning matter and is therefore outside the scope of the Core Strategy. In addition, issues regarding the use of public rights of way and the cycle route network lie outside the scope of the planning system. Whilst the Core Strategy generally cannot directly influence these issues, it provides a positive planning policy framework for the improvement of facilities and networks.

## 9. Ensuring connectivity and infrastructure delivery

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**9.14** There is a need to protect and enhance networks for everyday walking and cycling but also the recreational networks that form an important component of visitor and tourism economy.

**9.15** Northumberland has an extensive public rights of way network along with more informal routes. This network provides access for walking, cycling and other non-motorised transport such as horse riding. Cycling infrastructure includes cycle lanes and cycle tracks which are not public rights of way. They tend to be located in urban areas where they predominantly share the road network. The Council will look to protect and enhance the coverage, standards and safety of these networks, including supporting the Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan<sup>(137)</sup>, Local Transport Plan<sup>(138)</sup>, Cycling Plan and other relevant plans and initiatives.

**9.16** Feedback from previous consultations on the Core Strategy has highlighted that although encouraging sustainable travel is important, given the characteristics of the County, the private car will remain an important mode of transport.

**9.17** The Sustainability Appraisal highlights the major positive effects of a shift towards more sustainable modes, across the spectrum of sustainability objectives and indicators. Walking, cycling and journeys by public transport have many benefits in terms of health and well-being, reducing car trips and therefore carbon emissions, improving air quality and reducing congestion.

### ICT connections

**9.18** Modern telecommunications play an important role in connecting communities and businesses and are essential to the national and local economy. Access to mobile telecommunications and high speed, reliable broadband can reduce the need to travel and contribute to the success of many businesses and lifestyles across Northumberland.

**9.19** The NPPF recognises that advanced, high quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth. The Core Strategy plans for broadband and telecommunications infrastructure across the County, while minimising potential adverse impacts on the environment and local communities.

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137 The Rights of Way Improvement Plan is available at:

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=718>.

138 The Local Transport Plan is available at: <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=7846>.

### Policy 41

#### Promoting sustainable connections

The Council will work collaboratively to:

- Reduce the need to travel;
- Support a range of transport modes with priority given to walking, cycling and public transport; and
- Support a local transport system and ICT network that are resilient and responsive to changing needs.

In plan-making and assessing development proposals the Council will:

- a. Promote a spatial distribution of development, which enhances the accessibility of development, reduces the need to travel, and facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport;
- b. Promote good design principles in respect of the permeability, connectivity and legibility of development; and inclusive access;
- c. Promote sustainable transport choices, including supporting networks for walking, cycling and public transport; and infrastructure that supports the use of low and ultra low emission vehicles;
- d. Support the delivery of reliable, safe and efficient transport networks, in partnership with other organisations, service providers and developers;
- e. Support the roll out of modern digital communications; and
- f. Require development proposals which generate significant amounts of movements to be supported by transport assessments/transport statements, and travel plans, and where appropriate delivery/servicing plans.

### Improving Northumberland's road network

#### Core road network

**9.20** The table below identifies Northumberland's core road network and the highway authorities responsible for these roads.

**Table 9.1 Core road network in Northumberland**

Strategic Road Network (Trunk Roads) (Managed by Highways England)	National Primary Routes (Managed by Northumberland County Council)
A1(T) A19(T) A69(T)	A68 A189 A696 A697 A1068 (part)

## 9. Ensuring connectivity and infrastructure delivery

**9.21** Northumberland's core road network plays an important economic role in facilitating the movement of people and freight across Northumberland. It is therefore critical that the network is fit for purpose.

**9.22** The Council will continue to work with Highways England and other stakeholders, including the NECA, to maintain and enhance these strategic routes. The Council and partners have successfully made the case for dualling the A1 in Northumberland, which it has been estimated will generate £376 million for the local economy. The work has successfully led to the announcement<sup>(139)</sup> of a scheme which will include 13 miles of upgrade to dual the carriageway linking Morpeth and Alnwick bypasses with the dual carriageway near Ellingham. This will create a continuous, high-quality dual carriageway from Newcastle to Ellingham. The Department for Transport (DfT) has also confirmed proposals for enhancing the performance and safety of the A1 to the north of Ellingham, with measures including climbing lanes, enhanced junctions and improved crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. The longer-term vision is to upgrade the full route to Expressway Standard. There is also potential for dualling of the A69<sup>(140)</sup>; this will be subject to more detailed examination by the DfT.

**9.23** While these improvements will be transformational, there remain some key challenges for the core road network. These have been explored as part of the on-going Countywide Transport Assessment and also the Strategic Road Network evidence base prepared by Highways England. The work has assessed the likely impacts of the level of development planned in the Core Strategy over the Plan period. It has helped to identify appropriate means and mitigation to address the impacts of development including:

- A19/A189 Moor Farm roundabout;
- A1/A19 Seaton Burn roundabout;
- Alnwick A1068 junction with the A1; and
- A69 at Hexham.

**9.24** Consideration has also been given to the movement of goods on the Core Road network. While the Core Strategy promotes sea and rail freight (see Policies 44 and 46) the majority of freight movements will remain on the road. This includes freight movements in respect of forestry and agriculture which generate large numbers of movements in Northumberland and also 'last mile'<sup>(141)</sup> deliveries. There are existing operational and capacity issues for road freight, including the stretches of the A1 which remain single carriageway. As the local economy develops, new freight movement patterns may develop, which the Core Road networks must be flexible enough to accommodate.

**9.25** The Countywide Transport Assessment and Strategic Road Network Evidence base have helped to appraise the individual and cumulative impacts of development on the Core Road network. The work has informed the Northumberland Infrastructure Delivery Plan and its prioritisation of infrastructure investments, including in the Core Road network.

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139 Department for Transport Road Investment Strategy for the 2015/16-2019/20 Road Period (March 2015).

140 Department for Transport Road Investment Strategy for the 2015/16-2019/20 Road Period (March 2015)

141 This refers to the final leg of the supply chain in the transportation of goods, for example delivery of goods from a transport hub to the final delivery address.

### Policy 42

#### Improving Northumberland's core road network

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, support will be given to the maintenance and improvement of Northumberland's core road network by:

- a. Supporting and safeguarding lines and areas of improvements, including the:
  - i. Full dualling of the A1 through Northumberland and improved local links/junctions to the A1;
  - ii. Full dualling of the A69 west of Hexham and improved local links/junctions to the A69.
- b. Working collaboratively with stakeholders, including Highways England, the North East Local Enterprise Partnership and North East Combined Authority to deliver continued improvements to the core road network;
- c. Influencing the movement and routing of road freight to best effect, while minimising adverse impacts on the environment and communities.

Where there is a justified need for the impacts of development on the Core Road network to be mitigated, conditions, obligations and other contributions will be sought.

#### The wider road network

**9.26** In addition to the Core Road network, the comprehensive system of local highways is essential for connecting Northumberland's communities.

**9.27** The Core Strategy seeks to prioritise the opportunities for non-car trips, however it has to be recognised that there will still be a need to facilitate motorised transport journeys, including as a result of new development.

**9.28** The on-going Countywide Transport Assessment has assessed key parts of the local highway network with existing issues such as localised congestion, and has identified where future development may give rise to issues on the local network. Similarly to the analysis of the core road network it has helped to identify appropriate means and mitigation to address the impacts of development both individually (for potential significant scale future developments) and cumulatively. This includes opportunities for removing non-essential traffic off the highway network shifting to more sustainable modes, physical measures to address movement and capacity constraints, including effective traffic management and signage. The work has also informed the Northumberland Infrastructure Delivery Plan and its prioritisation of infrastructure investments.

**9.29** It is likely that more detailed investigation will be required to further examine specific issues, routes and junctions. This will be done as part of the Northumberland Delivery Document and / or by developers through the Development Management process.

**9.30** A review of the need for new routes in the form of settlement bypasses or relief roads is currently on-going. A number of routes identified by the former Districts Councils are being reappraised to consider their appropriateness, feasibility and deliverability.

## 9. Ensuring connectivity and infrastructure delivery

Should the work demonstrate the continued need for safeguarding, the routes, including those within the Green Belt, will be considered as part of the Northumberland Delivery Document. Key stakeholders, including Town and Parish Councils, as well as local communities will be engaged in this process.

**9.31** The Northumberland Delivery Document will also consider the need for a review of local parking standards. As highlighted through Core Strategy consultations, the planning system can only determine parking standards associated with new development. Town Centre on and off street parking and general on street parking is dealt with by the Council's Parking Strategy.

### Policy 43

#### The effects of development on the road network

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, all developments affecting the road network will be required to:

- a. Provide effective and safe access and egress to the existing road network;
- b. Include appropriate measures to mitigate its adverse impacts on the road network including its contribution to cumulative impacts;
- c. Minimise conflict between different types of road user, including measures for traffic management;
- d. Facilitate the safe use of the road network, including suitable crossing points, footways and dedicated provision for cyclists;
- e. Suitably accommodate the delivery of goods and supplies;
- f. Minimise any adverse impact on communities and the environment, including noise and air quality.

Where there is a justified need for the impacts of development on the road network to be mitigated, conditions, obligations and other contributions will be sought.

#### Safeguarding existing and future potential rail infrastructure

**9.32** Across Northumberland there are a number of rail routes providing both local and longer distance services for passengers and / or freight. Many of the local services are operating at capacity during peak periods with continuing increasing demands for travel.

**9.33** The South East Northumberland corridor from the Seaton Valley to Ashington currently does not have rail passenger transport services to Tyne and Wear. A key priority of the Council is the reintroduction of passenger services on the existing Ashington, Blyth, Tyne line. This will help facilitate development growth across the South East Delivery Area. The line has significant potential to improve links between the towns, encourage access to employment opportunities, and incentivise employers to locate in south east Northumberland, in addition to its current freight transport role.

## 9. Ensuring connectivity and infrastructure delivery

**9.34** Significant steps have been made in taking long held aspirations for the line forward. This includes progressing plans through a Network Rail GRIP study and assembling funding bid packages. Various options are currently being appraised, including station location, service frequency and considering the development and infrastructure that would be required to support the development and operation of the line. Depending on the outcome of this work, some development may be required within the Green Belt. Subject to the on-going appraisal work and development needs identified, the Council may need to prepare a Development Plan Document to deal specifically with the Ashington, Blyth Tyne Line.

**9.35** In addition, there is potential for the reopening of other lines and stations across Northumberland, for example:

- The South Tynedale Railway which has potential to link the North Pennines AONB and South Tynedale with the national railway network at Haltwhistle;
- The Aln Valley Railway, which would not only provide a new visitor attraction but would also open a transport corridor between Alnwick and the East Coast Main Line at Alnmouth;
- The potential reopening of Belford Station on the East Coast Main Line and Gilsland Station on the Tyne Valley Line.

**9.36** In order to maximise opportunities for the movement of goods, minerals and waste by rail there is a need to safeguard existing rail freight interchanges in Northumberland. Identified potential includes an additional rail facility near West Sleekburn for the transport of waste. Existing freight facilities at the former Rio Tinto Alcan aluminium smelter are also a valuable asset.

**9.37** Some rail freight facilities are privately owned and/or operated. There is a need to ensure that the infrastructure is safeguarded for future use in accordance with Policies 44 and 62.

**9.38** The Sustainability Appraisal has highlighted that rail lines can have major positive benefits for the local economy and the environment. As well as reducing transport-related emissions railway lines can also provide wildlife corridors and valuable habitats for plants and wildlife. Core Strategy consultation responses also reflected the importance of rail links across the County. Support was expressed for safeguarding existing routes and promoting existing rail line usage.

## 9. Ensuring connectivity and infrastructure delivery

### Policy 44

#### Rail transport and safeguarding facilities

A key priority of the Council is to secure the future reintroduction of passenger rail services on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne railway line, provided that any significant adverse impact on the environment and communities can be mitigated. Development which would prevent the reintroduction of passenger rail services and continued rail freight use of the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne railway line, its associated branch lines (including the branch line from Bedlington to Morpeth via Choppington, and the Butterwell line north of Ashington) and supporting infrastructure will not be permitted.

Development which would prevent the reintroduction of passenger rail services on the following lines will not be permitted:

- a. South Tynedale Railway linking the North Pennines AONB and South Tynedale with the Tyne Valley Line at Haltwhistle; and
- b. Aln Valley Railway linking Alnwick with Alnmouth.

The route and alignment of disused railway lines, together with land identified for potential stations will be safeguarded. Development which would prejudice their future use for passenger and freight transport will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development outweigh the importance of the retention of the facilities for future use. The Council will support proposals for the use of such routes for walking and cycling, where it will safeguard them for future rail use.

Existing rail freight facilities will be safeguarded, including:

- c. Battleship Wharf, Port of Blyth;
- d. Rio Tinto Alcan facilities:
  - i. Aluminium Smelting Plant; and
  - ii. Lynemouth Power Station;
- e. Alumina handling facilities, Port of Blyth; and
- f. Tweedmouth Goods Yard.

Infrastructure associated with the transport of minerals will also be safeguarded.

The Council will work with rail and public transport operators and local communities to maintain existing rail connections including along the East Coast Main Line and promote the development of public transport interchanges at key locations along the main East Coast Main Line, including Berwick upon Tweed, and the Tyne Valley rail line.

Support will be given to proposals to improve the flow of passengers and freight by rail, including:

- i. Improvements to car and cycle parking provision at stations;

## 9. Ensuring connectivity and infrastructure delivery

- ii. Improvements to the frequency and quality of passenger rail services stopping at Northumberland stations;
- iii. Improvements to station facilities provided that they would not result in an unacceptable impact on the environment and communities.

Development which would prejudice the retention of these facilities will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development outweigh the importance of the retention of the facilities.

### Newcastle International Airport

**9.39** Newcastle International Airport is an important economic driver for investment and jobs in the North East, including Northumberland, and an international gateway for business and tourism, as well as freight. Part of the northern side of the operational area of the Airport is within Northumberland.

**9.40** The Council will continue to work with Newcastle International Airport operators and Newcastle City Council regarding airport-related development. In line with the options for airport development as identified in the Airport's Masterplan 2013-30 and the Newcastle Gateshead Core Strategy, land to the north will be protected in accordance with Policy 45.

### Policy 45

#### Newcastle International Airport

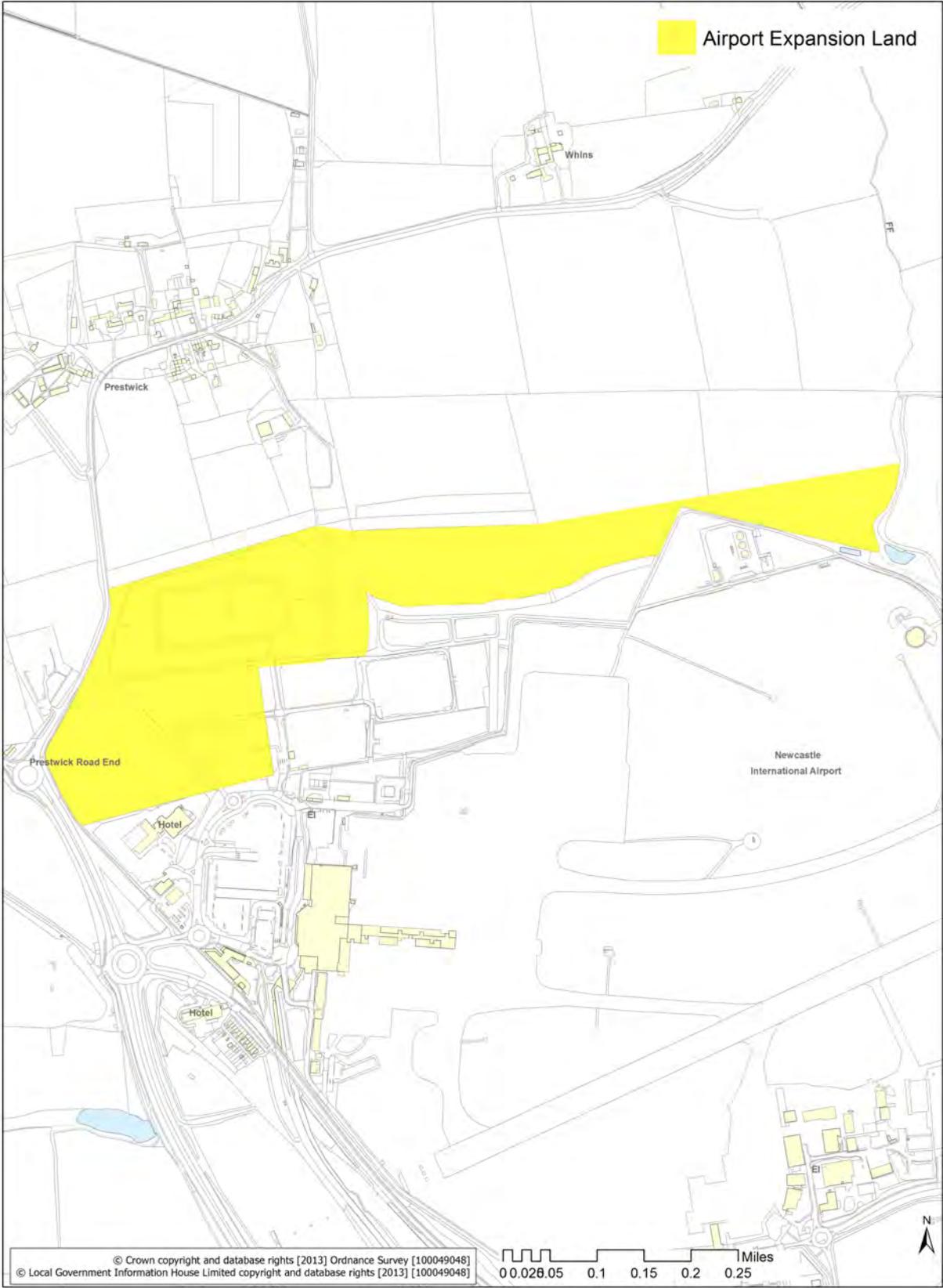
In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the Council will support the sustainable development of Newcastle International Airport.

In order to allow for future sustainable growth of the airport and ancillary uses directly related to the functioning of the airport 15 hectares of expansion land is allocated to the north of Newcastle International Airport. This will accommodate possible growth for passenger or freight facilities and activities supplementary to the airport's operation.

9. Ensuring connectivity and infrastructure delivery

Figure 9.1 Newcastle Airport expansion land

Newcastle Airport



## 9. Ensuring connectivity and infrastructure delivery

### Ports and harbours

**9.41** Although ports are subject to a separate national policy statement, the Core Strategy is required to take account of their role within the County. There are 11 ports, harbours and beach launches in Northumberland.

**9.42** The Port of Blyth is the main functioning port in Northumberland, capable of handling large freight vessels. It is significant in the context of proposals to promote strategic economic uses around the Blyth Estuary, including in respect of renewable and offshore industries, for which the Port has already established its reputation.

**9.43** The second largest is Berwick-upon-Tweed. The port is important to the wider area and it is capable of handling larger freight vessels and has an important role in increasing exports and catering to the visitor economy.

**9.44** It is expected that both ports will continue to play a key role in the County's economy including in facilitating the sustainable transport of freight.

**9.45** Much of Northumberland's coastline, estuaries and inshore waters carry international, national and local designations, acknowledging the importance of their landscapes, rivers and seas and the biodiversity which they support. There is the Northumberland Coast AONB, North Northumberland Heritage Coast, European Marine Sites, SPAs, SACs, Ramsar sites, SSSIs, National Nature Reserves, and local designations.

**9.46** Further detail is provided in the Natural and Built Environment chapter. The development of port, harbour and beach launch facilities takes place within, and must therefore be sensitive to, these and other relevant designations.

**9.47** The Council will continue to work with Harbour Commissions, Trust Ports, the Marine Management Organisation and other statutory bodies to ensure that the development of port, harbour and beach launch facilities takes account of the sensitivity of the marine environment and related shoreline environmental issues. Developers should liaise with the Marine Management Organisation and Natural England where appropriate, and will have regard to the requirements of the Marine Policy Statement.

### **Policy 46**

#### **Ports, harbours and beach launch facilities**

In plan-making and assessing development proposals the Council will support:

- a. The expansion of port facilities to allow growth in sustainable sea based freight movement;
- b. The development of harbour and beach launch facilities to maintain and sustainably grow the fishing industry; and
- c. Appropriate leisure and tourism developments, provided that they will not adversely impact on the functioning of commercial port and harbour activities, including the fishing industry.

## 9. Ensuring connectivity and infrastructure delivery

Development of port, harbour and beach launch facilities will be planned and implemented, taking full account of the interaction between communities, the local economy and the environment. This will include careful consideration of the statutory purposes and sensitivity of, and potential impacts on the Northumberland Coast AONB, North Northumberland Heritage Coast, European Marine Sites, SPAs, SACs, Ramsar sites, SSSIs, National Nature Reserves, and local designations.

Development proposals for such facilities will be required to demonstrate that:

- d. The development would not result in a net loss of inter-tidal or sub-tidal habitat;
- e. The development would not impact on fish migration; and
- f. There will be no adverse impact on water quality during construction and during the operation of such facilities.

### Planning for mobile telecommunications infrastructure

**9.48** The Council supports the enhancement of telecommunications infrastructure across the County, provided it will not have significant adverse impacts on the environment or local communities, which would otherwise outweigh its social and economic benefits. The government is clear that local authorities should not impose a ban on new telecommunications development in certain areas, nor should they insist on minimum distances between new telecommunications development and existing development, such as housing or schools. Whilst perceived health concerns can be a material planning consideration, the government has advised<sup>(142)</sup> that the planning system is not the appropriate place for prescribing health safeguards<sup>(143)</sup>. Therefore, Policy 47 does not deal with health concerns.

**9.49** The policy on planning for mobile telecommunications should be read in conjunction with the Code of Best Practice on Mobile Network Development in England (2013)<sup>(144)</sup>.

### Policy 47

#### Planning for mobile telecommunications

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, infrastructure delivering mobile communications services will be supported, provided that the following criteria are met:

- a. The siting and appearance of the proposed apparatus and associated structures and access routes are located and designed to minimise their impact on the accessibility and visual amenity, character or appearance of the surrounding area;

142 Paragraph 46, National Planning Policy Framework (2012).

143 <http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/guides/mobilephonemasts/health>.

144 Code of Best Practice on Mobile Network Development in England (2013) is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-best-practice-on-mobile-phone-network-development>

## 9. Ensuring connectivity and infrastructure delivery

- b. Where apparatus and associated structures are located on a building they should be sited and designed to minimise their impact on the external appearance of the host building;
- c. Where a new mast is proposed, the applicant should demonstrate that the possibility of erecting apparatus on existing buildings, sites, masts or other structures has been explored and found not to be feasible; and
- d. The development should avoid adverse impacts on areas of ecological interest, areas of landscape importance, archaeological sites, conservation areas, all heritage assets and their settings.

### Planning for broadband infrastructure

**9.50** Better connectivity can help businesses, particularly those in rural areas, to grow and remain competitive. It can also facilitate learning and skills development at home, as well as allowing access to community and other services online.

**9.51** The iNorthumberland fibre broadband roll out is a £18.9m project funded by Department of Culture Media and Sport (via BDUK), Northumberland County Council, European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and BT.

**9.52** The policy context for broadband services in Northumberland is set by the Council's Local Broadband Plan<sup>(145)</sup>. This document details the strategy for upgrading the broadband network in the County. The first phase of the iNorthumberland programme was for all relevant premises to have access to a minimum and consistent service of between 2Mbits and 10Mbits and that at least 95% of homes and businesses in Northumberland will have access to a superfast broadband service (at least 25Mbits) by 2018 and finally 100% by 2020.

**9.53** Facilitation of superfast broadband across the County will increase the competitiveness of Northumberland businesses and provide opportunities for home-working. Facilitating broadband connectivity can also help to reduce the need to travel, through the provision of access to online services. There is still, however, a need to ensure that any potential adverse impacts of such infrastructure on the environment and communities are minimised. There is potential for other options such as wireless and satellite technology in areas where high speed fibre broadband is not possible.

**9.54** Whilst the Core Strategy can provide a positive policy context for the roll-out of broadband services across the county, as a land-use planning document, it is unable to dictate the speed at which services are rolled out, nor can it dictate the minimum speed of service. The Core Strategy, therefore, should be read in conjunction with the Local Broadband Plan.

**9.55** Investment in superfast broadband will have a positive economic impact by enabling businesses, particularly those which are knowledge or ICT-based, to thrive in the County. It is also likely to be beneficial to the wider public, particularly those in more remote rural areas who will be able to access a range of services and facilities online, which may reduce

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145 The Local Broadband Plan for Northumberland is available at:  
<http://www.inorthumberland.org.uk/about/important-documents/>

## 9. Ensuring connectivity and infrastructure delivery

the need to travel. The potential environmental impact is largely dependent on the exact location and design of infrastructure, however, the effects will be minimised through the criteria set out in Policy 48.

### **Policy 48**

#### **Planning for broadband infrastructure**

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the Council will support:

- a. The development of broadband infrastructure and the enhancement of broadband coverage across the County for the benefit of businesses, residents and visitors; and
- b. The sharing of infrastructure, for example ducts and poles, between utilities in order to minimise disruption, reduce installation costs and increase the viability of service provision.

The development should avoid adverse impacts on areas of ecological interest, areas of landscape importance, archaeological sites, conservation areas or buildings of architectural or historic interest and their settings. Proposals for new broadband infrastructure should identify how any adverse impacts on the environment and communities can be mitigated.

### 10. Community well-being

**10.1** One of the overarching objectives of this plan is to build resilient communities, supporting health, social and cultural well-being for all. Investment in community development and community infrastructure requires cross sector input and action from a range of agencies and partnerships and through the activities of community and voluntary sectors. The planning system has a key role:

- In coordinating and influencing such action;
- Guarding against the loss of valued facilities and services;
- Planning positively for new or improved provision that can enhance the sustainability of communities; and
- In promoting quality places, which can improve well-being and encourage active, healthy lifestyles.

**10.2** There are a number of services and amenities that could be described as 'community facilities' or 'community infrastructure'. This chapter focuses on facilities such as local shops<sup>(146)</sup>, meeting places, health care, educational, public houses, places of worship and community halls and centres. It also covers recreation, which includes sport and play, as well as less formal activities such as walking, visiting parks and exploring wildlife. Finally, it looks at the ways in which open spaces, normally within or adjoining built up areas can be interconnected and linked with the countryside and natural environment through 'Green Infrastructure', which is similarly an important part of the fabric of communities.

#### Community services and facilities

**10.3** Community facilities and services are an important part of creating, maintaining and enhancing sustainable communities and a sense of place. They play an important role in facilitating social interaction and inclusive communities and assisting the community to meet its day-to-day needs. Policy 49 seeks to ensure important and valued community facilities that provide for the health and well-being, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs of the community are protected and not lost unless there is no longer community need for the facility. It also supports the provision of new facilities, particularly where this would address deficiencies in provision. Given the important role of community facilities, Policy 49 also requires new development to provide or make contributions to community facilities as part of the development unless the developer can clearly demonstrate that this would not be financially viable.

**10.4** Responses to the previous consultations raised a number of issues in respect of community facilities and infrastructure, such as in relation to healthcare including access to GP services, school places and community amenities including public houses. While many of these issues cannot be directly addressed through the Core Strategy, they are being addressed, where appropriate, as part of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

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146 Shops in commercial centres and larger village centres are not included as these are covered in Chapter 5.

## 10. Community well-being

**10.5** The role of Neighbourhood Plans has also been referred to in the comments received in response to the Full Draft Plan. The Core Strategy recognises that Neighbourhood Plans have an important opportunity to identify the community facilities that are particularly valued by the communities preparing those plans and Policy 49 provides a strategic framework for this.

**10.6** One particular issue that has arisen during the preparation of the Core Strategy is the loss of public houses. Public houses can have a key role as a community facility. In Northumberland many public houses provide a place for social interaction within a community, are an important part of a local economy, and are integral to the physical and cultural heritage of the County. In recognition of these values, the Council will support the provision and retention of public houses where they can be demonstrated to enhance the sustainability of local communities.

**10.7** Potential also exists for the shared use of facilities, including the use of education facilities by the wider community, which can be beneficial in terms of maximising the availability and access to community facilities and reducing the need for additional separate facilities. This issue was highlighted in the responses to the Full Draft Plan and as a result has been included in the policy.

### **Policy 49**

#### **Community services and facilities**

In plan making and assessing development proposals, community services and facilities that provide for the health and well-being, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs of the community should be retained and wherever possible improvements facilitated to the quality, accessibility and levels of provision by:

- a. Strongly resisting the loss of community services and facilities, unless an appropriate alternative is provided or there is demonstrable evidence that there is no longer a community need for the facility and suitable alternative uses have been considered;
- b. Supporting the development of new community services and facilities where deficiencies in provision would be addressed and provided that unacceptable adverse effects on the environment and the local community can be avoided or mitigated;
- c. Supporting the shared use of facilities, including the wider use of educational facilities; and
- d. Ensuring that, where community facilities are listed as an asset of community value, this will be regarded as a material consideration in the determination of a planning application.

Taking into account viability, new development will be required to provide or contribute to community facilities as part of the development or, if appropriate, off-site where no facilities exist or where existing facilities are deficient.

### Open space and facilities for sport and recreation

#### Provision and maintenance of recreational open space

**10.8** Good quality open space, sport and recreational facilities provide recreational benefits for communities and help to promote social inclusion, community cohesion, health and well-being. Many open spaces also make an important contribution to the character and appearance of the built and natural environment. Ensuring the right level of open space provision is, therefore, an important planning consideration. New areas of housing need new open space, sport and play provision unless there is a surplus of accessible existing facilities.

**10.9** Town and Parish Councils now manage, maintain and resource, the provision of purely local services and facilities. Many of the Northumberland's outdoor assets, such as allotments and play areas, fall into this category. Larger types of outdoor facilities, such as playing fields, parks and cemeteries, may serve more than a single parish or town. These can be transferred from the County Council to Town and Parish Council management through negotiation and agreement, if they are accepted as being local to that Parish. As a result, Town and Parish Councils are an important stakeholder in this type of recreational provision.

**10.10** Through consultation the policy approach has evolved and now comprises a more integrated, evidence-based way of ensuring necessary open space provision. On the whole, this was supported during recent consultations and is carried forward in the policy below, clearly tying provision sought to what is needed for the development and what is viable.

#### Identifying what recreational open space is there and what is needed

**10.11** The range of recreational open space assets was measured through the 'Northumberland Playing Pitch Strategy' and the 'Northumberland PPG17 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment', May 2011, in the following categories:

- Parks and gardens;
- Natural and semi-natural green space;
- Amenity green space;
- Outdoor sports facilities;
- Provision for children and young people;
- Allotments; and
- Cemeteries and churchyards.

**10.12** There were found to be over 4,000 hectares of accessible open space in over 1,000 separate facilities, equating to 13.4 hectares per 1,000 people. While this sounds high, when considered against the standards that have traditionally been applied<sup>(147)</sup>, the assessment showed a significant imbalance in the quantity of provision across

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147 For example the former National Playing Fields Association (now 'Fields in Trust' – 'FIT') used to recommend a six acre standard (2½ hectare) per thousand head of population and continues to produce recommended levels and standards of provision for different types of housing area. Also, Natural England recommends reference to National Access to Natural Greenspace Standards, which deal with those aspects of open space that have natural, as well as recreational value.

## 10. Community well-being

Northumberland, such that some areas would have a severe shortage, if nationally recommended standards were applied, while others might be judged to have an over-provision.

**10.13** It is important to note that the NPPF now encourages the use of localised standards. It is also necessary to understand that shortages cannot be assessed solely on the basis of a quantitative assessment that groups together all types of sports field or all types of children's play. Different activities will be better provided for than others. The quality of the provision is also important: the existence of decent changing facilities, proper field drainage or good accessibility can have a major impact on how a particular facility actually contributes to overall provision. The Northumberland Playing Pitch Strategy found deficiencies for some sports, particularly mini soccer, youth football, cricket, rugby and hockey. While it recommended that all community accessible provision should be rated as 'Good' or above, its evidence showed that, across Northumberland, over a third of pitches fell below this level.

**10.14** The policy approach is more flexible, such that provision ought not only be based on the Playing Pitch Strategy and Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment, but account would also be taken of up-to-date local evidence on need. This approach has been supported through both consultation and in the Sustainability Appraisal, which considered a tailored, community-led approach to be positive for health and well-being. The proposed policy is underpinned by local standards based on updated County-wide assessments and local evidence.

**10.15** Another key consideration for the assessment is the need to identify specific gaps in provision. Past assessment has identified relatively few significant missing facilities. Shortfalls tend to be in terms of smaller absent features, or qualitative issues such as poor accessibility or ancillary facilities.

**10.16** Work is currently on-going to update the Northumberland Playing Pitch Strategy in partnership with Sport England and the relevant pitch sport National Governing Bodies. This refreshed Playing Pitch Strategy will be finalised in 2016 which means the findings of the updated assessments are not available to inform this version of the Core Strategy. If the updated Playing Pitch Strategy identifies that the policy approach in the Core Strategy needs to be amended, an early review will be undertaken to address the relevant recommendations.

**10.17** The Northumberland Sports Facilities Strategy (2010) found no significant gaps in major sports facilities in the County. For instance:

- Swimming pools and sports centres, located in the larger towns with catchment areas that meant that unmet demand was limited to more thinly populated areas remote from these towns; and
- Northumberland was found to be relatively well off for some facilities such as golf courses and fitness centres.

**10.18** However, there was found to be a shortage of smaller scale facilities, especially synthetic turf pitches and accessible indoor spaces in some areas. The Strategy also pointed out that current facilities need to be maintained to a high standard that maximises community use and replaced when they reach the end of their useful life. A new leisure

and sports centre and library facility is currently under construction in Ashington, renovation work is taking place at the facility in Cramlington and the Council has also announced an intention to provide new leisure centre facilities in Morpeth and Ponteland.

### Strategy for recreational open space

**10.19** In accordance with the NPPF the Core Strategy has to guard against the unnecessary loss of facilities by referring to the evidence on where open space sites are most in need of protection and/or improvement. The two studies mentioned earlier identified such assets and this evidence will be reviewed and monitored as appropriate.

**10.20** The Core Strategy also needs to secure new open space and related facilities, including for sport, play and less formal recreation, reflecting local evidence and standards. For existing, improved or new provision, encouragement is given to their dual-use, including those in educational use, along with qualitative improvements, including where this allows for more intensive use of the facilities concerned. This should reflect, not only where new residential areas are being developed, but also changing demography generally, changing participation levels and any known gaps in existing provision.

**10.21** Furthermore, there is a need to consider the tiering of settlements proposed elsewhere in this Core Strategy. For example if a large new sports field complex is required, which would serve a Main Town a nearby Service Centre and some other villages, the appropriate location would be the town. The evidence base studies suggested hierarchies for facilities and, while the recommendations do not entirely match the tiering of settlement in this document, due consideration should be paid to them, or any future revisions to this part of the evidence base<sup>(148)</sup>.

**10.22** It is proposed that the Delivery Document will set out more detail on the planning application considerations and facilities to be safeguarded. Neighbourhood Plans will also have an important role in providing local detail where this is considered to be appropriate.

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148 See for example Northumberland County Council, May 2011. Playing Pitch Strategy, Table 5.6, pages 122-123.

## 10. Community well-being

### Policy 50

#### Open space and facilities for sport and recreation

In plan making and assessing development proposals, the provision of sports facilities, recreational open space for outdoor sport, children's play, and less formal recreational activity will be sought, as necessary for the development. The need and demand for the provision will be assessed in accordance with the relevant evidence, applying locally defined standards where necessary.

Consideration will be given to how development proposals:

- a. Enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments by protecting and enhancing existing recreational facilities and services and /or providing new ones;
- b. Guard against the unnecessary loss of recreational facilities and services by considering up to date evidence, local need and the replacement of facilities and services when they reach the end of their useful life;
- c. Ensure that new and established recreational facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable, and they are retained for the benefit of the community; and
- d. Encourage and facilitate the increased use of facilities, including the shared use of playing space in educational establishments.

Consideration will also be given to the following:

- e. Where the development is large enough, that provision is on-site unless this is demonstrated by the applicant to be impracticable;
- f. That any off-site provision is on an agreed site or, if none has yet been identified, has a level of accessibility considered reasonable for the facility being provided;
- g. That the future use and maintenance arrangements have been secured, taking full account of the views of Town and Parish Councils or others who may be responsible for the facilities, once in place; and
- h. Where it is argued that the provision would compromise the viability of the development, that this can be satisfactorily demonstrated.

Development proposals that would result in the loss of land or buildings used for recreational use will not be permitted unless:

- i. They would be replaced by an area of equivalent or better quantity and quality, in a suitable location; or
- ii. An excess of provision in quantitative and qualitative terms is clearly demonstrated.

### Connecting it all together – Green Infrastructure

**10.23** 'Green Infrastructure' is a term used to promote the consideration of green spaces; as part of an integrated network of green areas and strips, connecting natural habitats, human activities and town and countryside and not as isolated blocks of land providing for particular sport, play or other recreational needs. Bringing about a meaningful green infrastructure across Northumberland is a central aspiration of this plan. The approach reflects both: the Department of Health White Paper<sup>(149)</sup>, which recognises the importance of the quality of the environment and availability of green space on people's health and well-being; and the Natural Environment White Paper, which seeks to reconnect people and nature. This section of the plan brings together the above policy on open space and the ecosystem approach set out in Chapter 8.

**10.24** Across Northumberland and reaching into adjoining authority areas, 'green infrastructure' is a network of multi-functional, natural and managed open space<sup>(150)</sup> which:

- Helps sustainable planning - by addressing global climate change and providing wide ranging ecosystem services, such as reduced greenhouse gas emissions through carbon storage or reduced car use through walking and cycling provision;
- Supports networks which link habitats and biodiversity sites - preventing fragmentation or isolation of habitats;
- Protects and enhances natural, historic and built assets and links between them;
- Connects people with their environment and heritage - creating a sense of place and identity or helping people develop an attachment to their environment;
- Improves public health locally - making high quality green space available to everyone;
- Helps people to develop new skills and responsibilities through environmental and heritage volunteering;
- Helps to get more children learning outdoors - removing barriers and increasing schools' abilities to teach outdoors;
- Balances the potential of green infrastructure to support economic growth and sustainable tourism with the protection of vulnerable environmental and heritage assets; and
- Enables Local Green Space designation - empowering communities to protect local environments that are important to them.

**10.25** Northumberland's strategic green infrastructure includes the international and national natural designations included in Table 8.1, key moorlands, forests, river valleys and many other features. It also includes what may be termed the "blue infrastructure" – i.e. rivers, ponds and other water bodies including the sea itself. Together, these represent an overlying network of assets, some linear, some covering wide areas, which bring a range of quality of life benefits for local communities. However, the network can never be regarded as complete as long as there are disconnects between natural, green areas and as long as there are opportunities to add to the network. Green infrastructure does not stop at local authority boundaries. The Council continues to work with neighbouring authorities to ensure that strategic green infrastructure assets are aligned.

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149 Department of Health, July 2012. White Paper, Caring for our future: reforming care and support. London: HMSO.

150 The NPPF defines open space as including all open space of public value, including areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

## 10. Community well-being

**10.26** Maintaining and enhancing well-planned green infrastructure networks, by creating new assets and links or new functions for existing green spaces, will significantly improve the existing attraction of Northumberland as a place in which to live and work, visit or invest. However, for successful integration and multi-functionality, green infrastructure needs to be planned at all levels or scales. The Core Strategy identifies 'strategic green infrastructure' that sets the strategic framework for developing 'local green infrastructure' such as village greens / Local Green Spaces, bridleways, street trees or amenity planting. Local green infrastructure may be identified through subsequent plans, including Neighbourhood Plans or assessing development proposals<sup>(151)</sup>. Where Neighbourhood Plans are not in place, or where they do not provide the detail, the Delivery Document will provide detail on the local green infrastructure network and identify relevant features.

**10.27** As well as scale differences between strategic and local green infrastructure it is important to recognise differences in the scope of green infrastructure provision between rural and urban areas. Northumberland's more urban south east has significant local green assets but a lack of overall connectivity, while in the rural areas an apparent abundance of open countryside can mask an actual lack of multi-functionality and public access.

**10.28** All aspects of green infrastructure planning should be based on sound evidence, such as ecological data from the Northumberland Biodiversity Action Plan or information from the Historic Environment Record. Figure 10.1 is based on the Council's green infrastructure evidence base studies and shows Northumberland's strategic green infrastructure network.

**10.29** As mentioned above, Parish and Town Councils, through Neighbourhood Plans, can identify green areas of particular importance to them for special protection as Local Green Space. Designation will prevent new development in the area other than in very special circumstances.

**10.30** The identification of Local Green Space needs to be consistent with planned sustainable development and investment in homes, jobs and other services; the NPPF states that Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space and should only be considered where:

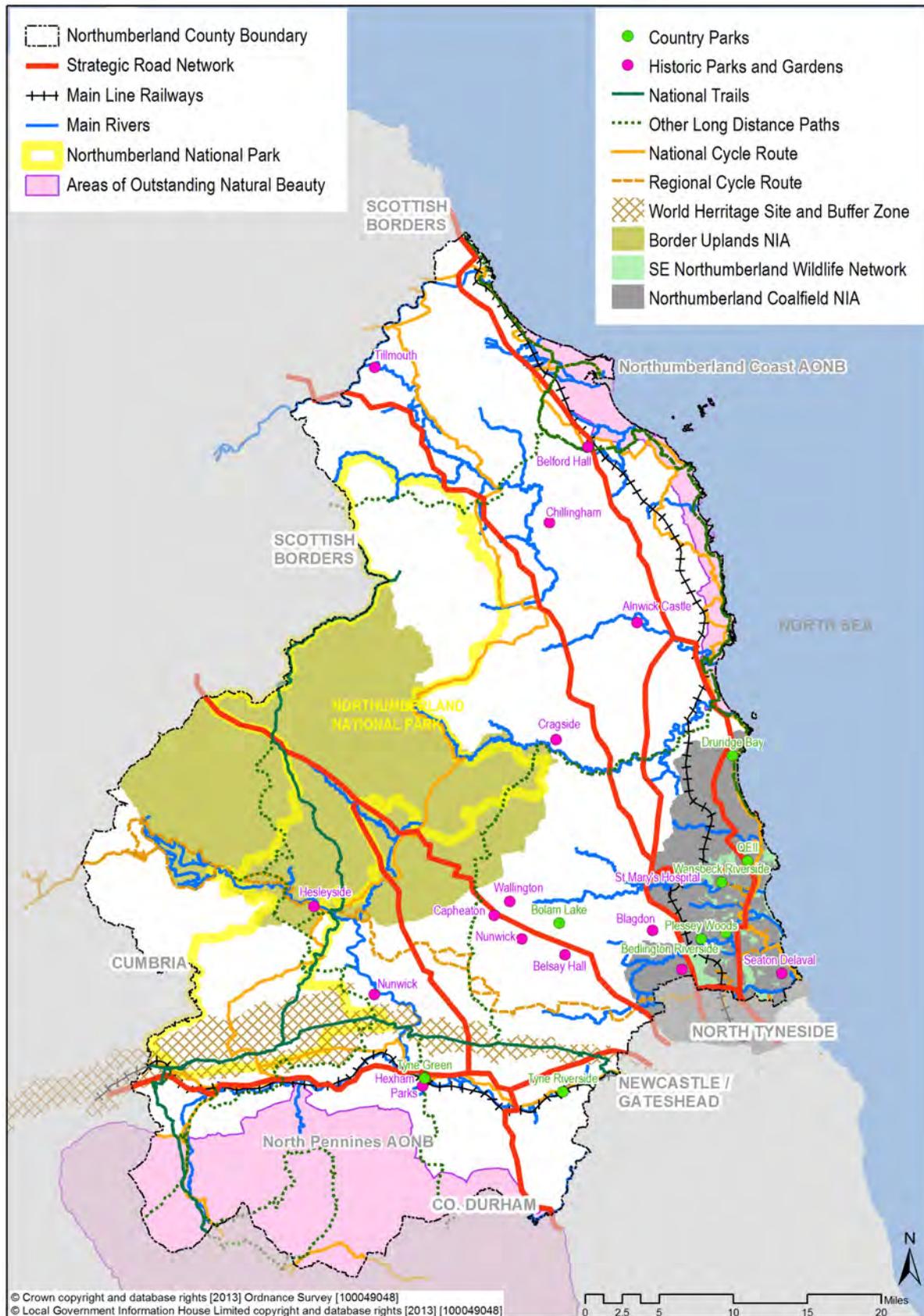
- It is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- It is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- It is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

**10.31** Responses at previous stages of the Core Strategy showed a majority as supporting this proactive approach to protecting and extending green networks. It therefore remains the policy approach to integrate the provision of green infrastructure and its protection and enhancement into place shaping and place making; and improve public access and links between green spaces within the County and beyond its boundaries.

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151 Landscape Institute, September 2011. Local Green Infrastructure - Helping communities make the most of their landscape. London.

Figure 10.1 Strategic green infrastructure sites and corridors



### Policy 51

#### Green infrastructure

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the contribution of strategic and local green infrastructure to the health and well-being of Northumberland's communities and visitors, as well as its economy, will be recognised, promoted and enhanced.

Development proposals should seek to protect and, where appropriate, improve and extend Northumberland's green infrastructure. When determining planning applications, consideration will be given to how development proposals:

- a. Protect and enhance strategic and/or local green infrastructure assets, provide high quality links between existing assets including links with green infrastructure networks in adjacent authority areas and/or provide additional uses for multi-functionality;
- b. Secure improved access to green infrastructure, including rights of way, the network of cycle routes and high quality provision for the widest possible range of ages, abilities and interests where this would not have an unacceptable adverse effect on biodiversity and environmental and heritage assets;
- c. Improve the potential green infrastructure to support economic growth and sustainable tourism without unacceptable adverse effects on environmental and heritage assets;
- d. Create a sense of place by fully integrating high quality, green infrastructure into the plan or proposal design to reflect locally distinctive character having regard to rural and urban character, open space, connective corridors and links with the wider countryside;
- e. Integrate green infrastructure and sustainable drainage;
- f. Consider the management and maintenance of new and existing green infrastructure throughout and beyond the plan period; and
- g. Provide opportunities for communities to protect local environments that are important to them, for example through Local Green Space or Local Nature reserve designations.

### 11. Managing natural resources

#### Minerals

**11.1** Minerals are important resources; they are the raw materials which are necessary to provide the infrastructure, buildings, goods and energy that both society and the economy needs, therefore supporting sustainable economic growth. The minerals industry in Northumberland is also an important source of employment. Minerals therefore contribute to the delivery of the Core Strategy objective to deliver a thriving and competitive Northumberland economy.

**11.2** The most significant minerals in Northumberland are:

- Carboniferous limestone, igneous rock and sand and gravel for aggregate uses; and
- Coal for use in energy generation.

**11.3** Other important minerals in Northumberland include building stone, brick-making clays (including fireclays, coal measures mudstones, brick shales and glacial clay).

**11.4** There are also other mineral resources found in Northumberland which are not currently extracted, these include:

- Fluorspar, witherite and barite, which occur in veins with lead and zinc ores; and
- Conventional hydrocarbons, shale gas and gas from coal seams and workings.

**11.5** The policies within the draft Core Strategy aim to deliver the strategic objective to manage the prudent use of Northumberland's natural resources, which includes minerals, while minimising the adverse impacts of their extraction and transportation on both communities and the environment by seeking to ensure that:

- These finite resources are not unnecessarily sterilised;
- Land is made available to ensure a steady and adequate supply of minerals; and
- Extraction, as well as the associated processing and transportation, does not have unacceptable adverse impacts on the environment and local communities.

#### Environmental criteria for considering minerals proposals

**11.6** The NPPF states that Local Plans should set out environmental criteria against which planning applications for minerals extraction will be assessed so as to ensure that proposals do not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the natural and historic environment and on human health.

**11.7** The Council acknowledges that the environmental effects arising from minerals development are not always negative. Minerals developments can bring environmental benefits, particularly through high quality restoration and after-use. Nonetheless, a major concern for local communities is the potential for unacceptable adverse impacts on residential amenity and the local environment as a result of minerals extraction, processing and transportation.

## 11. Managing natural resources

**11.8** Policy 52 therefore requires applicants to provide sufficient information in support of their planning application to ensure a full and robust assessment can be made of the likely environmental effects of the proposals. Information should also be provided on the control, mitigation and monitoring measures that will be utilised to address the effects identified.

**11.9** The Sustainability Appraisal recognises that the draft policy was likely to result in positive effects through ensuring adverse impacts on local communities and the environment are minimised. The feedback received from the Full Draft Plan consultation indicated some general support for the policy and only minor changes have been made to address some of the detailed comments made and to improve clarity.

### Policy 52

#### Environmental criteria for assessing minerals proposals

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, mineral extraction will be permitted where the applicant can demonstrate that the social, economic and environmental benefits which accrue from the workings, outweigh any adverse impacts on local communities and the environment. In considering applications, appropriate weight will be given to potential effects on:

- a. Local amenity – applicants will be required to demonstrate that there is appropriate separation between the site and dwellings and other sensitive uses, to prevent unacceptable levels of noise, dust, vibration, air pollution and harmful visual impact;
- b. Landscape character and sensitivity – applicants will be required to demonstrate that the proposal can be effectively and appropriately integrated with its surroundings and the character of the landscape, particularly as a result of changes to landform and topography both during and after extraction;
- c. The conservation and enhancement of nature conservation and geological sites, including internationally, nationally and locally designated sites, priority habitats and protected and priority species – applicants will be required to demonstrate that their proposal will deliver a net gain for biodiversity where possible through the creation of priority habitats and by contributing to the creation of a coherent and resilient ecological network and that there will be no unacceptable adverse effects on national or international nature conservation designations or irreplaceable habitats;
- d. The North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the adjoining Northumberland National Park and their settings – applicants will be required to demonstrate that the proposals do not have unacceptable adverse effects on the special qualities and the statutory purposes of these designations;
- e. Cultural heritage, including known and unknown archaeological features, designated and undesignated heritage assets and their settings – applicants should demonstrate that the proposals will not result in unacceptable harm to heritage assets;
- f. Soils and agricultural land quality – applicants should demonstrate that the soil resource is managed in a sustainable way and where proposals affect best and

most versatile agricultural land applicants should demonstrate there is no suitable alternative of lower quality agricultural land that provides the same benefits in terms of other environmental considerations, the land could be restored to its previous agricultural land quality or there is an overriding need for the development;

- g. The capacity and suitability of the transport network, including numbers of movements, site access arrangements, and impacts on non-motorised users – The transport of minerals using rail and water is encouraged and where road transport is proposed applicants should demonstrate that transport by rail or water is not practicable or feasible;
- h. The use of public rights of way – where disruption to a public right of way is unavoidable applicants will be required to demonstrate how the proposals make provision for the diversion of routes or for the creation of an alternative route during both minerals extraction and restoration that are convenient and safe and, wherever possible, take opportunities to enhance public rights of way;
- i. Flood risk – applicants should demonstrate that the proposals do not have an unacceptable adverse impact on flood flows or storage capacity and do not increase the risk of flooding at other locations;
- j. Ground and surface water quality, flow and water abstraction – applicants should consider the potential for the proposal to affect the flow, quality and quantity of ground and surface water supplies and include measures to prevent water pollution;
- k. Light pollution – applicants should demonstrate the proposals incorporate measures to control light pollution;
- l. Land stability – applicants should demonstrate that the operation and restoration of the site does not create land instability and the quarry slopes and storage mounds are designed so as not to create instability, and;
- m. Aviation safety – where proposals are within aerodrome safeguarding zones, applicants should demonstrate that the proposals do not give rise to new or increased hazards to aviation.

The criteria listed above should be considered both individually and cumulatively. In assessing cumulative impact, particular regard will be had to:

- n. The combination of effects from an individual site;
- o. The combination of effects from one or more sites in a locality; and
- p. The effects over an extended period of time either from an individual site or a number of sites in a locality, whilst recognising that mineral resources can only be extracted where they occur, the benefits from extending existing sites rather than opening up new areas to working and the desirability of comprehensively working resources in an area to avoid sterilisation.

### Benefits of minerals extraction

**11.10** The extraction of minerals can provide a number of national, local and community benefits. The NPPF highlights that minerals are essential to support sustainable economic growth and quality of life and goes on to state great weight should be given to these benefits when determining planning applications. It is important that there is sufficient supply of material to provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods that the country needs.

## 11. Managing natural resources

**11.11** Minerals extraction can provide economic benefits by contributing to high and stable levels of economic growth and by providing employment opportunities, environmental enhancements through high quality restoration, opportunities to deal with areas of contaminated or derelict land and areas of unstable ground resulting particularly from the legacy of underground coal mining and the recovery of a resource to avoid sterilisation by non-mineral development.

**11.12** The benefits need to be given great weight in the decision making process and balanced against the environmental effects (see Policy 52) arising from the mineral extraction, transportation and processing. Policy 53 identifies the benefits that shall be given weight when determining planning applications. The intention of this policy is to provide clearer guidance on the matters that will be taken into account when assessing the benefits of a proposal for mineral extraction. The criteria in Policy 53 are not intended to be an exhaustive list of the benefits of minerals extraction but seek to identify the key matters. Other benefits that are material planning considerations and that are not listed in Policy 53 will be considered where applicants outline these in an application.

### **Policy 53**

#### **Criteria for assessing the benefits of minerals proposals**

In plan making and assessing proposals for minerals development, great weight will be given to the benefits of minerals extraction.

In assessing the benefits of individual proposals for minerals extraction, the following matters will be considered:

- a. The economic benefits of the proposal both nationally and locally, including contribution to the wider economy and the maintenance of employment and the creation of new employment opportunities;
- b. The contribution the extraction of the mineral will make to a steady and adequate supply of that material both locally and nationally;
- c. Environmental enhancements, including those delivered through the restoration of the site following extraction and the after-use of the site and outside of the operational area;
- d. The avoidance of a mineral resource being sterilised by non-mineral development;
- e. In the case of prior extraction, the contribution this can make enabling a non-mineral development taking place;
- f. The contribution towards the reclamation of areas of derelict or contaminated land and/or the remediation of underground coal mining legacy issues; and
- g. The use of rail and water transport where this method is used instead of road transport.

Other benefits that are material planning considerations and that are not listed above will be considered where applicants provide evidence of these in support of a planning application.

### Mineral and landfill site restoration and after-use

**11.13** It is essential that mineral and landfill sites are properly restored at the earliest opportunity and the after-use is appropriate to the site involved. Therefore the proposals for the restoration of the site are a key consideration in assessing the acceptability of proposals for mineral extraction or landfill. Good site restoration and aftercare has the potential to enhance the environment and contribute to the achievement of wider policy objectives, including the objective of the Core Strategy which seeks to protect and enhance Northumberland's distinctive and valued environment, and ensure that it is experienced and valued by residents and visitors. Applicants should address site restoration and after-use at an early stage in the planning process and are encouraged to engage with the Council and local communities prior to applications being submitted.

**11.14** The overarching strategy for mineral and landfill site restoration and after-use in Northumberland is to deliver environmental and community benefits by providing environmental enhancements that maximise opportunities for nature conservation, landscape enhancements and informal outdoor recreation.

**11.15** It may not be possible to deliver all aspirations in all circumstances and this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis having regard to the opportunities and constraints that are present, the characteristics of the site and surrounding area, the use of the site prior to working and local community aspirations. It is, however, recognised that the majority of minerals sites in Northumberland lie in the open countryside and acceptable after-uses will, therefore, be restricted to agriculture, forestry, informal recreation and nature conservation in most circumstances. After-use proposals involving built development, such as housing and business uses, will be assessed against the relevant policies in the development plan. These types of after-uses may be particularly relevant on sites well-related to existing settlements and where the mineral extraction has supported the remediation of derelict and/or contaminated land.

**11.16** All proposals are required to make provision for the after-care and maintenance of the restored site for a period of not less than five years. However, it will be appropriate to extend the period for after-care and maintenance in circumstances where a period of more than five years is required for the after-use to become established or a particularly innovative restoration and after-use is proposed. For example, if wildlife habitats are created they can take much longer than the standard five-year after-care period to become established and provision for the longer-term after-care and management of these habitats will be important in these circumstances. In these circumstances the applicant will normally be expected to make provision for a further period of aftercare and management beyond the standard five year period.

**11.17** The Sustainability Appraisal indicated that the policy may have positive effects against a number of objectives. The responses to the Full Draft Plan consultation generally supported the opportunities for after-use identified following site restoration but concerns were raised from the minerals industry that this was overly restrictive on the potential after-uses that would be acceptable. However, it is considered that the policy has some flexibility to allow for alternatives where appropriate whilst also still delivering the main aspirations of net gains for biodiversity and improved opportunities for informal recreation.

## 11. Managing natural resources

### Policy 54

#### Mineral and landfill site restoration and after-use

In plan-making and assessing development proposals the strategy for the restoration of mineral extraction and landfill sites in Northumberland is to ensure that:

- a. High quality restoration and aftercare takes place in accordance with current industry best practice at the earliest opportunity; and
- b. The proposed restoration and after-use of the site delivers environmental and community benefits through environmental enhancements.

Having regard to: opportunities and constraints; local community aspirations; the landscape character of the local area; the setting of the site and its characteristics prior to working; and opportunities to link to wider area enhancements or initiatives, proposals for mineral extraction and minerals site restoration should:

- c. Make provision for the restoration of the site as soon as practicable and, where it is practical and feasible, include provision for the phased restoration and working of the site;
- d. Deliver net-gains for biodiversity following restoration by contributing to priority habitat creation and local ecological networks, having particular regard to the biodiversity action plan and the biodiversity strategy for England;
- e. Deliver, where appropriate, improved public access and/or public open space, including links to the surrounding green infrastructure and expansion of the public rights of way network, whilst taking great care to minimise disturbance to wildlife;
- f. Protect soil resources by ensuring that they are retained, conserved and handled in line with best practice during site extraction operations and during restoration and in the case of mineral development affecting best and most versatile agricultural land, the land is capable of being restored back to best and most versatile agricultural land; and
- g. When creating wetland habitats take account of the requirement to manage the risk of birds striking aircraft when within Aerodrome Safeguarding Zones and include elements to assist in flood alleviation.

Planning permission will only be granted for mineral extraction or landfill where the applicant is able to demonstrate that:

- h. Appropriate provision has been made for the reclamation and after-use of the site, with proposals for minerals extraction accompanied by sufficient detail to demonstrate that the proposed restoration scheme is practically achievable and which show the final proposed landform, the proposed after-use and how the soil resource and overburden will be managed.
- i. The implementation and completion of the proposed restoration and after-use is feasible;
- j. Provision has been made for the aftercare and maintenance of the restored site for a period of not less than five years to ensure the land is capable of sustaining the approved after-use or after-uses. The aftercare period should be extended beyond the normal five year aftercare period where a period of more than five

- years is required for the after-use to become established or a particularly innovative restoration and after-use is proposed; and
- k. Sufficient safeguards are in place to ensure the adequate restoration and aftercare of the site from the commencement of development until completion of restoration and aftercare. In exceptional circumstances, such as long-term schemes where no progressive restoration is proposed, proposals where innovative techniques are to be used or where there is reliable evidence of financial failure, a financial bond or other financial guarantee shall be sought to underpin this.

### Safeguarding mineral resources

**11.18** The NPPF advocates that known minerals resources should not be needlessly sterilised by development either above the resource or near to it. Local plans are therefore required to define 'Minerals Safeguarding Areas' (MSAs), MSA designation does not convey any presumption that working will take place. MSAs are defined around the following mineral resources:

- Carboniferous limestone;
- Clay (including brick clay, brick shale and fireclay);
- Coal;
- Igneous rock;
- Sandstone; and
- Sand and gravel.

**11.19** In line with advice on best practice, the MSAs for Northumberland will cover the whole of the resource area, include known mineral resources beneath existing settlements and overlap with other planning and environmental designations. The MSAs also extend beyond the boundary of the resource to create a buffer thereby protecting the potential extraction of the mineral from development near the resource.

**11.20** The Sustainability Appraisal indicates that the draft policy will have a positive impact in terms of protecting natural resources from unnecessary sterilisation. In comparison to the draft policy in the Full Draft Plan amendments to the policy criterion identifying those types of non-mineral development that are exempt from the provisions of safeguarding have been made to incorporate these criteria in criterion (l(i)) in order to improve clarity.

### Policy 55

#### Safeguarding mineral resources

Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSAs) are identified in Appendix E around the following mineral resources:

- a. Carboniferous limestone;
- b. Clay (including brick clay, brick shale and fireclay);
- c. Coal;
- d. Igneous rock;

## 11. Managing natural resources

- e. Sand and gravel; and
- f. Sandstone.

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, these resources will be protected from unnecessary sterilisation by non-mineral development.

Applications for non-mineral related development in a Mineral Safeguarding Area are required to include an assessment of the effect of the proposed development on the mineral resource beneath or adjacent to the site of the development. Planning permission will not be granted for non-mineral development which would lead to the unnecessary sterilisation of mineral resources within a Mineral Safeguarding Area unless:

- g. The applicant can demonstrate that the mineral concerned is not of economic value;
- h. The mineral can be extracted without unacceptable adverse effects on residential amenity and the natural and historic environment prior to the non-mineral development, recognising that prior extraction has different characteristics to longer-term mineral extraction;
- i. The development is temporary in nature and will not impact on the potential for mineral extraction within a timescale in which the mineral is likely to be needed;
- j. There are no other reasonable alternative options for the proposed development which would avoid or minimise the sterilisation of minerals; or
- k. The overall social, economic or environmental benefits of the proposed development outweigh the potential loss of the mineral resource.
- l. It constitutes non-mineral development that is exempt from the safeguarding provisions. Exempt non-mineral development comprises:
  - i. Householder development, which includes extensions, alterations or improvements to existing dwellings, the erection of domestic garages, outbuildings and garden walls or fences;
  - ii. An advertisement;
  - iii. Reserved matters applications following the grant of outline planning permission;
  - iv. Applications to change the use of an existing building, except where the change is to a residential dwelling (use class C3) and other sensitive uses such as schools (use class D1), residential care homes, hospitals, nursing homes, boarding schools, residential colleges and training centres (use class C2);
  - v. Applications to remove or amend a condition attached to an existing planning permission;
  - vi. Works to trees;
  - vii. Prior notifications submitted in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 2, parts 6 and 7 of the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 2015;
  - viii. An application for a Certificate of Lawfulness of Existing Use or Development (CLEUD);

- ix. An application for a Certificate of Lawfulness of Proposed Use or Development (CLOPUD);
- x. Non-material amendments.

### Coal

**11.21** Northumberland has a long history of coal extraction and continues to make a significant contribution to national coal supply from surface mines. Given the potentially adverse effects of surface coal mining on local communities and the environment, the Core Strategy has a key role in managing future extraction by providing a policy to assess the acceptability of proposals.

**11.22** The coal resource in Northumberland is found across extensive areas of the County and is shown in Figure 11.1. The resource has been divided into 'principal resource areas'<sup>(152)</sup> and 'subsidiary resource areas'<sup>(153)</sup>. The principal resource areas represent the most important resource areas in Northumberland due to the closely-spaced nature of the coal seams and the quality of the coal found in these areas.

**11.23** All proposals for coal extraction in Northumberland will be assessed against the key policy test for coal extraction, which states that proposals will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the proposal is environmentally acceptable, or can be made so by planning conditions or obligations; or if not, it provides national, local or community benefits which clearly outweigh the likely impacts to justify the grant of planning permission.

**11.24** The criteria in Policy 52 will be used to assess environmental acceptability of the proposals and the criteria in Policy 53 will be used to assess the benefits arising from the proposals. In addition, Policy 56 identifies the key environmental issues within the principal resource areas that are particularly relevant to assessing acceptability of proposals in these areas.

**11.25** The principal resource areas have been divided into sub-areas, recognising the characteristics of these sub-areas and the specific issues associated with coal extraction in these areas. The key matters identified have been informed by the Landscape Character Assessment, the Key Land Use Impact Study, the Environmental Considerations and Mineral Resources Study and feedback received during both the Issues and Options, Preferred Options (Stage 1) and Full Draft Plan consultations. Proposals in the subsidiary resource areas will be principally determined against the key test for coal extraction in Policy 56 and the criteria in Policy 52. The policy does not indicate areas where coal extraction may be acceptable and it is proposed that because this is a site specific matter this will be considered through the Delivery Document to allow more detailed work to be carried out.

152 The 'Principal resource areas' comprise closely-spaced coals within the Coal Measures.

153 The 'Subsidiary resource areas' comprise much more widely-spaced coals in Lower Carboniferous.

## 11. Managing natural resources

### Policy 56

#### Coal

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the strategy for coal extraction is only to permit proposals where it can be demonstrated by the applicant that it is environmentally acceptable, or can be made so by planning conditions or obligations; or if not, if provides national, local or community benefits which clearly outweigh the likely impacts.

Within each of the following sub-areas, proposals will be required to address the following key matters:

- a. North of Morpeth and Ashington and south of Amble:
  - i. The cumulative effects arising from the proposals in the context of an area that has experienced widespread, large-scale surface coal extraction over a number of decades;
  - ii. The effects of the proposal on the enhancement or restoration of the character of the landscape in this area;
  - iii. The effects on the conservation and enhancement of the nature conservation interest and landscape character along the Druridge Bay coastal strip; and
  - iv. The impact on the openness of the Green Belt around Morpeth;
- b. Ashington, Blyth, Cramlington and Seaton Delaval:
  - i. The extent to which the proposals contribute to the enhancement of the landscape in this area;
  - ii. The effects on maintaining the openness of the countryside between the settlements, including the impact on the openness of the Green Belt to the south of Blyth, Cramlington and around Seaton Delaval;
  - iii. The effects on efforts to attract inward investment to the area, including effects on the quality of the environment around key employment sites; and
  - iv. The effects on the historic features and historic landscape to the east of Seaton Delaval around Seaton Delaval Hall.
- c. Ponteland, Stannington and south of Morpeth:
  - i. The extent to which the proposals contribute to the enhancement of the landscape in this area;
  - ii. The impact on the openness of the Green Belt to the south and east of Ponteland, around Stannington and around Morpeth;
  - iii. The effects on the nature conservation interests at Stannington Vale and along the River Blyth and at Prestwick Carr;
  - iv. The effects on the historic features and landscapes at Blagdon and St Mary's Hospital; and
  - v. The cumulative effects from surface coal extraction in the adjoining Newcastle Metropolitan Borough area.

d. Tyne/Derwent Watershed:

- i. The visibility of proposals from surrounding areas, particularly from the Tyne Valley, the North Pennines AONB and areas within and adjoining the Derwent Valley within County Durham;
- ii. The impact on the openness of the Green Belt between Whittonstall, Stocksfield, Prudhoe and around Hedley on the Hill; and
- iii. The effects on areas of ancient woodland and local wildlife sites in the north of the area and along the Derwent Valley.

e. Midgeholme outlier:

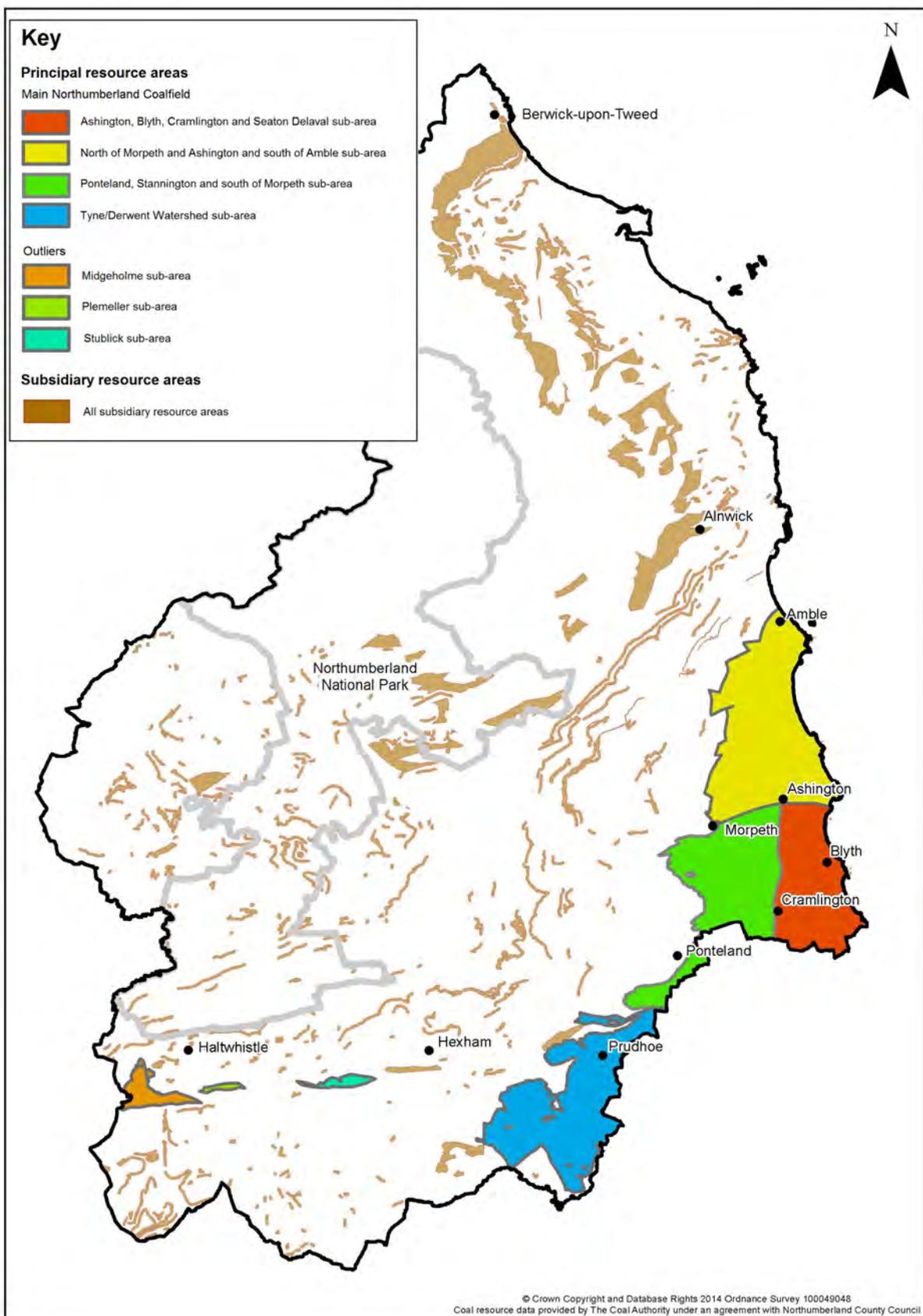
- i. The effects on the setting of the adjacent North Pennines AONB;
- ii. The impact on the nature conservation areas that are found to the south and east of the resource area; and
- iii. The effects on the adjoining areas within Cumbria and any cumulative effects from surface coal extraction in the area of the Midgeholme coalfield within Cumbria.

f. Plenmeller outlier and Stublick outlier:

- i. The effects on the special qualities and the statutory purposes of the North Pennines AONB, with development for coal extraction subject to the policy tests for major development in a nationally important landscape; and
- ii. The effects on the nationally and international important nature conservation sites within the North Pennines.

# 11. Managing natural resources

Figure 11.1 Coal resource areas in Northumberland



### Aggregate minerals

**11.26** Aggregates are hard, granular materials used either on their own or with other materials for concrete, mortar, roadstone, asphalt, railway ballast, drainage courses and bulk fill. The principal aggregate minerals in Northumberland are Carboniferous limestone, igneous rock, and sand and gravel. Aggregates can also be produced from recycled material, typically recycled road planings and construction and demolition waste, and from secondary materials, which arise as a by-product of an industrial process or other quarrying operations.

**11.27** The key igneous rock resource is the Whin Sill, located around Belford and Alnwick and to the north of Hexham. The Carboniferous limestone resources are associated with the Whin Sill and are also principally found in the south and west of the County to the north east of Hexham. The principal sand and gravel resources are found along the Tyne Valley and in the Coquet, Breamish, Glen and Till valleys.

**11.28** The NPPF requires the preparation of an annual Local Aggregate Assessment (LAA) to assist in identifying the options for the supply of aggregates from the County, based on average sales over the previous ten years and an analysis of other supply options. The LAA for Northumberland has been prepared jointly with Durham County Council, Northumberland National Park Authority and the five Tyne and Wear authorities. The LAA indicates that the average annual sales over a ten year period for materials from Northumberland are 538,000 tonnes of sand and gravel and 1.73 million tonnes of crushed rock. The LAA recommends that annual provision should be made for 593,000 tonnes of sand and gravel and 1.87 million tonnes of crushed rock. This recommended provision is greater than the ten year sales average in recognition of the proposals and aspirations in emerging and adopted Local Plans in North East England to grow the number of houses built, which will have an influence on the requirements for construction materials.

**11.29** In respect to crushed rock supply, the LAA indicates that Northumberland has a large landbank of reserves with planning permission and that these reserves could meet the provision indicated by the LAA up to and beyond the end of the plan period. Notwithstanding this, the proposed policy approach allows for the release of additional reserves to maintain supply and productive capacity and ensure a balance between supply areas in the south and west of Northumberland and the north and east of Northumberland. The requirement for some flexibility in the policy approach and in the consideration of planning applications is supported by the LAA as:

- The current planning permissions for five of the quarries producing crushed rock in Northumberland have planning permissions that expire before the end of the plan period;
- The reserves with planning permissions for extraction within a number of the quarries are projected to be exhausted by the end of the plan period; and
- A large proportion of the permitted reserves are contained within a single site.

**11.30** In respect to sand and gravel supply, based on the level of provision recommended in the LAA, current reserves with planning permission will provide for around 13 years of production from the end of 2013. The LAA also highlights that seven of the sand and gravel quarries in Northumberland have planning permissions that expire before the end of the plan period. The proposed policy approach is, therefore, to make provision for the release of additional sand and gravel to maintain an adequate landbank and productive capacity

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for later in the plan period and ensure a balance between supply areas in the south and west of Northumberland and the north and east of Northumberland. Further work will be carried out to identify suitable areas for sand and gravel extraction in the Delivery Document.

### **Policy 57**

#### **Aggregate minerals**

In plan-making and assessing development proposals the strategy for aggregate mineral extraction is to:

- a. Make land available to provide a steady and adequate supply of aggregates to meet identified needs by making provision for the annual equivalent of 593,000 tonnes of sand and gravel and 1.87 million tonnes of crushed rock;
- b. Maintain a landbank of permitted reserves of at least seven years for sand and gravel and at least 10 years for crushed rock;
- c. Encourage the use of recycled and secondary aggregates by supporting proposals that maximise the use of secondary and recycled aggregates;
- d. Give priority to the extension of existing sites where it can be demonstrated that the proposal would not result in unacceptable adverse environmental, social and economic effects;
- e. Release reserves of crushed rock through the extensions to existing sites and new quarries where it can be demonstrated that:
  - i. The proposal would help to maintain productive capacity to meet the required provision set out in criterion (a) of this policy;
  - ii. The proposal would assist in maintaining the balance between supply areas in the south and west of Northumberland and the north and east of Northumberland;
  - iii. The proposal would not result in unacceptable adverse environmental, social and economic effects; and
  - iv. Provision has been made for the timely restoration and subsequent aftercare of the site.
- f. Make provision for the release of additional sand and gravel reserves to meet needs over the latter part of the plan period through the identification of preferred areas and locational criteria in the Delivery Document. Proposals should demonstrate that:
  - i. They would help to maintain productive capacity to meet the required provision set out in criteria (a) of this policy;
  - ii. They would assist in maintaining the balance between supply areas in the south and west of Northumberland and the north and east of Northumberland;
  - iii. They would not result in unacceptable adverse environmental, social and economic effects; and
  - iv. Provision has been made for the timely restoration and subsequent aftercare of the site.

### Clays

**11.31** Northumberland is an important source of clay, which is principally used as a raw material in the manufacture of bricks, pipes and tiles. The resources which are found in Northumberland include fireclays, coal measures mudstone, brick shale and glacial clays.

**11.32** Fireclay is particularly valued for its use in the manufacture of buff-coloured bricks and the extent of this mineral largely coincides with the coal resource. Fireclay deposits in Northumberland are relatively thin, which means that extraction on its own is not economically viable and it is extracted concurrently with coal at surface coal sites. The Core Strategy will plan for the continuation of supply of fireclay to brickworks by supporting its extraction and recovery concurrently with coal. Given the economics associated with extraction and the relationship with coal, it is not possible to identify a landbank as required by the NPPF across Northumberland.

**11.33** Glacial clay has previously been extracted from the Swarland Brickworks site at Thrunton but has now ceased, along with the manufacture of bricks at the adjacent brickworks. Significant reserves of clay with planning permission for extraction remain at the site and it is proposed to safeguard this resource.

**11.34** The strategy for brick-making clays is, therefore, to encourage the extraction of clay concurrently with coal and in accordance the coal policy, to safeguard the permitted reserves at the Swarland Brickworks site and provide criteria to consider proposals for new extraction sites should proposals come forward over the plan period. Where clay is extracted as an ancillary mineral, any proposals for the stockpiling of material that cannot be used by brickworks at the time of extraction will be considered favourably where they comply with the criteria set out in Policies 52 and 54 and it does not delay site restoration.

### Policy 58

#### Clays

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the strategy for the extraction of brick-making clays is to plan for a steady and adequate supply to meet demand by:

- a. Supporting the extraction of brick-making clays, particularly fireclays, concurrently with coal where the proposals meet the policy tests for coal extraction and site restoration can take place in a timely manner;
- b. Requiring the efficient use of the clay resource where it can be extracted concurrently with coal and ensuring resources are not unnecessarily sterilised;
- c. Safeguarding the clay reserves at the Swarland Brickworks Site, Thrunton;
- d. Permitting proposals for new clay extraction sites where:
  - i. The proposals would enable a 25 year stock of reserves to be maintained;
  - ii. The need for the clay cannot be met from existing reserves with planning permission, or a site closer to a brickworks;

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- iii. It can be demonstrated that the proposal would not result in unacceptable adverse environmental, social and economic effects; and
  - iv. Provision has been made for the timely restoration and subsequent aftercare of the site.
- e. Permitting proposals for the stockpiling of clay extracted as an ancillary mineral where it can be demonstrated that the proposal would not result in unacceptable adverse environmental, social and economic effects and does not delay site restoration.

### Natural building and roofing stone

**11.35** Sandstone from Northumberland is mainly used as a building material and has been quarried in the County for many years. Its use makes an important contribution to defining the character and appearance of the County's towns, villages, castles, country houses and farm steadings. Many of the building stone quarries in Northumberland are small-scale and are only worked intermittently, responding to demand from specific building or restoration projects.

**11.36** It is difficult to predict future demand for building stone and consequent quarrying activity over the plan period as most of the demand arises from specific building or restoration projects where the material with those characteristics is specified. The Core Strategy will however seek to ensure that a steady, adequate and diverse supply of building stone is maintained over the plan period.

**11.37** The strategy for natural building and roofing stone is that existing quarries will primarily meet demand during the plan period, with proposals for extensions to existing quarries (including historic quarries which do not have a current planning permission), and for new quarries, being permitted where this would help maintain a steady, adequate and diverse supply of materials and complies with the environmental safeguards set out in Policy 52.

### Policy 59

#### Natural building and roofing stone

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the strategy for natural building and roofing stone is to plan for its steady and adequate supply to meet demand primarily by:

- a. Supporting the continuation of the provision of building and roofing stone from existing quarries to contribute to supply requirements; and
- b. Permitting proposals for extensions to existing quarries, including historic quarries which do not have a current planning permission, and the development of new quarries where:
  - i. Proposals demonstrate that it could help to maintain a steady, adequate and diverse supply of building stone;

- ii. It can be demonstrated that the proposal would not result in unacceptable environmental, social and economic effects; and
- iii. Provision has been made for the timely restoration and subsequent aftercare of the site.

### Conventional and unconventional oil and gas

**11.38** The policy for oil and gas extraction covers both conventional and unconventional hydrocarbons. Conventional oil and gas is where the reservoir is sandstone or limestone and unconventional hydrocarbons refers to oil and gas that comes from sources such as shale or coal seams which act as the reservoirs.

**11.39** In terms of conventional oil and gas, the Carboniferous rocks in Northumberland are identified as having energy generating potential but this potential has not been realised during previous exploration for a viable resource. There are currently no licences for exploration, appraisal or production in Northumberland.

**11.40** Northumberland also has potential for the recovery of gas from coal seams and coal mines and underground coal gasification. The prospects for exploiting these technologies within Northumberland are currently considered to be poor, due to the extensive previous working of the coal resource, and the methane content is considered to be too low to support commercial extraction. There is, however, the potential for underground coal gasification off the South East Northumberland coast, which is outside the area covered by this plan. This could result in proposals for onshore infrastructure to support the production boreholes offshore.

**11.41** The geology of Northumberland has also been identified as having the potential for shale gas, which is able to be extracted using hydraulic fracturing (commonly referred to as 'fracking'). This potential resource is currently untested and it is not known whether an extractable resource is present in Northumberland.

**11.42** The exploration, appraisal or production phase of oil and gas extraction can only take place in areas where the Department of Energy and Climate Change have first issued a license. An operator must then obtain planning permission from the Mineral Planning Authority. However, a number of matters related to oil and gas development are regulated by other agencies, such as the Environment Agency and Health and Safety Executive. Mineral Planning Authorities should not duplicate other regulatory regimes and should assume that these regulatory regimes operate as intended. The policies for oil and gas therefore focus on those matters of relevance to planning.

**11.43** The proposed policy approach for oil and gas extraction is to set out a criteria-based policy to assess proposals which may come forward during the plan period. This is considered appropriate given the uncertainties regarding the future prospects for oil and gas extraction in Northumberland. Many of the planning issues associated with oil and gas development, such as potential pollution of land, air and water, disturbance from noise, visual impact and transportation issues, are similar to the environmental issues that proposals for other types of minerals raise and these matters will be assessed against the requirements of Policy 52. Nonetheless, there are some specific planning matters that are relevant to oil and gas development proposals, including the need for exploration, appraisal

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and production phases of hydrocarbon development, which are covered in Policy 60. Policy 60 has been amended from the draft policy in the Full Draft Plan to clarify the criteria and reflect further detail that has been provided through National Planning Practice Guidance and best practice elsewhere.

### Policy 60

#### Conventional and unconventional oil and gas

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the strategy for the exploration, appraisal and production of conventional and unconventional oil and gas is to:

- a. Support proposals for exploration and/or appraisal where the applicant can demonstrate that:
  - i. The site and the associated equipment and facilities are appropriately sited to ensure the least impact and there is no less sensitive location that could be reasonably utilised;
  - ii. There would be no adverse impact on the underlying integrity of the geological structure;
  - iii. The proposal would not result in unacceptable environmental, social and economic effects;
  - iv. Operations are for an agreed, temporary length of time; and
  - v. Provision has been made for the timely restoration and subsequent aftercare of the site, whether or not oil or gas is found.
- b. Support proposals for production where the applicant can demonstrate that:
  - i. The site and the associated equipment and facilities are appropriately sited to ensure the least impact and there is no less sensitive location that could be reasonably utilised;
  - ii. There would be no adverse impact on the underlying integrity of the geological structure;
  - iii. The proposal is supported by a full appraisal programme;
  - iv. The proposal would facilitate the full development of the resource;
  - v. The proposal would not result in unacceptable environmental, social and economic effects; and
  - vi. Provision has been made for the timely restoration and subsequent aftercare of the site.

### Peat

**11.44** Peat has traditionally been extracted from Northumberland for use in horticulture and as a fuel. The NPPF is clear that local plans should neither identify new sites nor extensions to existing sites for extraction. This is in line with wider Government policy, which seeks to protect peat habitats because of their nature conservation importance and their carbon storage role.

**11.45** In the Core Strategy Full Draft Plan it was proposed that no specific policy for peat extraction would be included given the strong and clear national planning policy context for peat extraction. It is now proposed to amend this approach to reflect further detail that has been provided through National Planning Practice Guidance and emerging best practice. In line with the NPPF the approach is not to allow new sites for peat extraction and extensions to existing sites. Time extensions to previously worked peat extraction sites would be allowed where the policy criteria are met with the merits of a proposal considered on a case-by-case basis having specific regard to the effects on nature conservation and climate change.

### Policy 61

#### Peat

In plan making and assessing development proposals, the strategy for peat extraction is to not permit proposals for new sites or extensions to existing sites in order to protect peat habitats for their nature conservation value and their role as a carbon store.

Time extensions to previously worked sites will be granted planning permission where the applicant can demonstrate that the proposal:

- a. Is necessary to enable appropriate restoration of the site and only peat physically required to implement that restoration is removed;
- b. Provides enhancements for biodiversity and local ecological networks;
- c. Would not result in unacceptable environmental, social and economic effects; and
- d. The proposal will deliver clear benefits.

#### Metalliferous and vein minerals

**11.46** The North Pennine Orefield extends into the south west of Northumberland. The industrial minerals, fluorspar, witherite and barite occur in veins with lead and zinc ores, and have been the principal minerals produced across the wider North Pennines in the latter part of the twentieth century. There has been no recent extraction in Northumberland.

**11.47** Given that the occurrence of these resources in Northumberland overlaps with the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which extends into the neighbouring areas of County Durham and Cumbria, the proposed strategy for metalliferous and vein minerals is to consider proposals against the overarching policy for the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the tests for major development within this area. The overlap of the resource with nationally and internationally important nature conservation designations in the North Pennines means that the effects on these designations will also be a key consideration in determining the acceptability of proposals. Proposals will also be guided by the overarching policies for minerals.

#### Safeguarding minerals infrastructure

**11.48** The NPPF requires Local Plans to safeguard existing, planned and potential sites for important minerals related infrastructure. This includes:

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- Minerals transportation infrastructure, such as rail heads, rail links to quarries, wharfage and associated storage, handling and processing facilities for the bulk transport of minerals by rail, sea or inland waterways;
- Sites for concrete batching and the manufacture of other concrete products;
- Sites for the manufacture of coated materials; and
- Sites for the handling, processing and distribution of substitute, recycled and secondary aggregate material.

**11.49** The most important sites to safeguard in the context of Northumberland are the sites that are used or have the potential to be used to support the transportation of minerals by rail and water. Unlike the other sites listed above, the potential location for these facilities is more limited and there is less flexibility in terms of where these sites can be located due to their need to be connected to the existing rail network and navigable waterways, usually at ports and harbours. The safeguarding of these sites is also particularly important if the use of rail and water for the sustainable transportation of minerals is to be encouraged. It is, therefore, proposed to safeguard those sites identified in Policy 62 and Appendix F. The other types of mineral related infrastructure listed in the above paragraph will be identified and safeguarded through the Northumberland Local Plan Delivery Document.

### Policy 62

#### Safeguarding minerals related infrastructure

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the minerals related infrastructure identified below and in any subsequent Development Plan Document will be safeguarded from unnecessary loss to non-mineral related development on the site or within its vicinity.

Wharfs	Railheads	Rail links to mineral sites
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Battleship Wharf, Cambois</li> <li>• Tweed Dock, Berwick-upon-Tweed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Butterwell, Linton</li> <li>• Steadsburn, Widdrington</li> <li>• Belford (Easington) Quarry</li> <li>• Potential rail depot for Cragmill Quarry, Belford</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• East Coast Main Line to the Butterwell Disposal Point to Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Railway Line at Ashington</li> <li>• Rail links to the Port of Blyth</li> </ul>

Planning permission will not be granted for non-minerals related development which would result in the unnecessary loss of the infrastructure, unless it can be demonstrated that:

- a. The proposal for non-mineral development will not prevent or prejudice the current or future use of the site; or
- b. The site is no longer needed for mineral handling, processing, storage and transport; or
- c. Alternative capacity for mineral storage, processing and transport can be provided and delivered sustainably at an alternative site.

### Waste

**11.50** Waste is defined as material or an object which is no longer wanted and requires management. However, rather than being treated as something that needs to be disposed of, the Core Strategy recognises that 'waste' is an important and valuable resource. The Core Strategy, therefore, has an important role in providing opportunities for a network of facilities that will assist in continuing to move waste management in Northumberland up the 'waste hierarchy' (see Figure 11.2) and assist in recovering these resources rather than disposing of them. This will help to deliver the strategic outcome of the Core Strategy which aims to manage the prudent use of Northumberland's natural resources while producing less waste minimising adverse impacts on both communities and the environment when managing waste.

**11.51** The waste management sector also provides opportunities for economic growth and employment through the development of new and enhanced facilities for waste re-use, recycling and recovery.

**Figure 11.2 Waste hierarchy**



Source: National planning policy for waste

### The amount of waste which we need to plan for

**11.52** Households and businesses in Northumberland produce a range of wastes that require management. It is important to understand the amount of waste generated and requiring management. Tables 11.1 and 11.2 set out the tonnages of municipal waste (local authority collected waste) and commercial and industrial waste that are forecast to arise over the plan period and how these are likely to be managed.

**11.53** It is recognised that the amount of municipal waste (local authority collected waste) currently collected is less than forecast and that this pattern of reduction is likely to continue over the plan period.

**11.54** The forecasts show some increase in the arisings over the plan period. This is due to a projected increase in the number of households in Northumberland over this period, which in turn is projected to result in an overall increase in arisings despite a decrease in the waste produced per person. There is a similar situation for commercial and industrial waste where there is a projected increase in arisings to reflect economic growth ambitions. It is projected that 8% of the amount of local authority collected waste

## 11. Managing natural resources

will be managed by landfill over the plan period; the percentage has reduced significantly from the tonnages managed by landfill prior to 2009, which were in excess of 100,000 tonnes per year.

**Table 11.1 Summary of projected arisings and management of local authority collected waste from Northumberland for selected years to 2029/30<sup>(i)</sup>**

Year	Projected waste arising (tonnes)	Waste recycled (tonnes) <sup>(ii)</sup>	Waste recovered (tonnes) <sup>(iii)</sup>	Residual waste to landfill (tonnes)
2014/15	208,760	83,504	192,059	16,701
2019/20	220,113	92,447	202,504	17,609
2024/25	232,081	99,795	213,515	18,566
2029/30	244,698	110,114	225,122	19,576

- i. Figures taken from Northumberland County Council's municipal waste management contract.
- ii. Includes reuse, recycling and composting.
- iii. Includes reuse, recycling, composting and energy recovery.

**Table 11.2 Summary of projected arisings and management of commercial and industrial waste for Northumberland for selected years to 2029/30<sup>(i)</sup>**

Year	Projected arisings (tonnes)	Estimated reuse, recycling and recovery (tonnes)	Estimated waste for disposal (tonnes)
2014/15	208,000	148,000	60,000
2019/20	202,000	164,000	38,000
2024/25	197,000	160,000	37,000
2029/30	193,000	157,000	36,000

- i. Figures taken from North East Waste Forecasting Study.

**Table 11.3 Summary of projected arisings and management of hazardous waste for Northumberland for selected years to 2029/30<sup>(i)</sup>**

Year	Projected arisings (tonnes)	Estimated reuse, recycling and recovery (tonnes)	Estimated waste for disposal (tonnes)
2014/15	21,000	18,000	3,000
2019/20	20,000	18,000	3,000
2024/25	20,000	17,000	3,000
2029/30	19,000	17,000	3,000

- i. Figures taken from the North East Waste Forecasting Study.

**11.55** Work has been undertaken in partnership with Durham County Council and four of the Tyne and Wear authorities to gather information on the generation of low level radioactive wastes in Northumberland. The study highlighted that the volumes of low level radioactive wastes generated in Northumberland are low compared with the quantities generated nationally and as the majority of such material can be managed alongside municipal waste and commercial and industrial waste it was recommended that local provision of specialist facilities for this waste stream is not required. The low level of local arisings is also unlikely to reach a critical mass upon which the development of specialist local facilities could be based.

### **Waste prevention and minimisation**

**11.56** Waste prevention and minimisation is at the top of the waste hierarchy and means not producing waste in the first place. If waste is not produced, this reduces the amount of waste that requires processing and/or disposal.

**11.57** There are a number of ways the amount of waste can be reduced. Many of the tools to do this are outside of the planning system and therefore cannot be directly controlled by policy in the Core Strategy. One way the Core Strategy can help is to ensure that waste associated with new development is reduced as much as possible. Policy 2 encourages waste generated during construction to be minimised and space provided in development for waste to be separated for re-use and recycling.

### **Provision for waste reuse, recycling and recovery capacity**

**11.58** It is recognised that Northumberland already has a well-established and spatially distributed network of waste management facilities with significant capacity. There will, however, be opportunities over the plan period to improve recycling and recovery rates, particularly with respect to residual commercial and industrial waste. In respect of local authority collected waste, the Municipal Waste Management Strategy identifies a long-term aspiration to provide household waste recovery centres to serve the Coquet valley, North Tyne valley and Amble areas, where access to facilities is currently poor. The Municipal Waste Management Strategy also identifies a need to replace the Seghill facility (which has now closed) in the Cramlington area. Funding to deliver these facilities is unlikely to become available but it remains an aspiration to improve the provision of household waste recovery centres, which should be acknowledged in the Core Strategy.

**11.59** The preferred spatial strategy for the provision of new or enhanced waste recycling and recovery facilities is to focus provision on Northumberland's Main Towns and Service Centres. These locations represent the principal sources of waste generation in the County, given the size of their populations, their critical masses of commercial and industrial activity and focus for new development. Because of a concentration of existing facilities and good transport links, including rail links, West Sleekburn area is recognised as a strategically important location for waste management.

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**11.60** The development of waste recycling and recovery facilities outside these locations, in smaller settlements, will generally be smaller-scale facilities<sup>(154)</sup>, which will be supported where it can be demonstrated that they are located reasonably close to the source of the waste; and/or is to manage waste arising in a local catchment; and the transport network is adequate to accommodate the proposed import and export of material from the site.

**11.61** The preferred strategy also sets out a sequential approach to selecting sites with the on-site management of wastes and the co-location with existing uses preferred ahead of other locations and greenfield sites the least preferred location. The policy recognises that sites identified for employment uses in the plan will be suitable for new or enhanced waste management facilities where the design is compatible with its location, is enclosed within a building, the proposal addresses any potential transport impacts and there are no unacceptable adverse effects on amenity or the natural and historic environment. This approach recognises that modern, well designed and well managed facilities contained within buildings are indistinguishable from other industrial uses. The draft policy in the Core Strategy Full Draft Plan proposed to 'designate' industrial estates that would be suitable to accommodate waste management uses but it is now proposed that specific industrial estates are not identified. This recognises that the individual industrial estates in Northumberland are not homogenous and there are variations in the type and characteristics of the development proposals, which means a proposal may be acceptable on one part of a particular industrial estate but not acceptable on another part of the same estate.

**11.62** On-farm locations will be most appropriate for the treatment of organic and agricultural wastes, including anaerobic digestion and composting. In addition, some waste management techniques, such as open windrow composting, can operate in an outdoor location and this is recognised in the policy.

**11.63** The principles for the location of new or enhanced waste management facilities and the scope of the criteria for assessing proposals were generally supported in feedback from the Full Draft Plan consultation. Some of the responses did, however, make detailed points on the scope of individual criteria. Changes have also been made to the sequential approach whereby the use of employment sites would be considered alongside previously developed land and redundant agricultural and forestry buildings to ensure consistency with national planning policy for waste.

**11.64** The Sustainability Appraisal recognised that this approach would have a positive effect in terms of locating facilities close to the main sources of waste generation in Northumberland, minimising the distances waste is transported. It also recommended that policy criteria would also ensure environmental effects, including those on local communities, are acceptable.

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154 In a Northumberland context a small-scale facility is considered to have an annual capacity of less than 10,000 tonnes.

### Policy 63

#### Provision for waste re-use, recycling and recovery

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the spatial strategy for the provision of new waste management facilities is to:

- a. Focus new development within or close to Northumberland's Main Towns and Service Centres;
- b. Recognise the West Sleekburn area as a strategically important location for waste management in Northumberland; and
- c. Support proposals outside these areas where they support the provision of an accessible network of local facilities and have suitable connections to the transport network.

The strategy for the provision of new waste management facilities is to locate their development in the following order of preference:

- d. On-site management of waste where it arises;
- e. Co-location of sites with an existing waste management use and with complementary activities, including the extension of existing facilities, where it can be demonstrated by the applicant that there are no unacceptable adverse cumulative environmental effects from site operations or the transportation of waste;
- f. Sites identified for employment uses, previously developed land, active quarries for managing inert construction and demolition waste or redundant agricultural and forestry buildings and their curtilages; and
- g. Greenfield sites, the use of which shall be controlled in accordance with the principles in the plan.

Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

- h. The design is compatible with its location in terms of its siting, scale, mass, form and landscaping;
- i. The facility is fully contained within buildings or enclosed structures, unless it can be demonstrated that any unacceptable adverse environmental effects can be effectively mitigated and/or it is a facility that genuinely requires an outdoor location;
- j. The proposal is well related to the transport network and, where practical, located and designed to enable transport by rail or water. Where road transport is proposed the applicant shall demonstrate that there would be no unacceptable adverse effects on the surrounding highway network and infrastructure capacity, or such effects can be suitably mitigated through improvement measures;
- k. The proposal helps to support a reduction in the distance waste is transported for management, whilst recognising the economics may mean facilities have to operate over large catchments;
- l. The proposal would not result in unacceptable adverse effects on the natural and historic environment, sensitive receptors or residential amenity; and
- m. The proposal would not give rise to unacceptable adverse cumulative effects.

## 11. Managing natural resources

### Waste disposal

**11.65** In accordance with the waste hierarchy, waste disposal is viewed as the last option for managing waste. However, waste disposal will remain necessary over the plan period to manage waste which is not currently recyclable, including residues remaining after recycling and recovery has occurred. The projections of the tonnages of residual wastes requiring disposal over the plan period are presented in Table 11.1 and 11.2.

**11.66** Landfill sites are split into three categories: non-hazardous landfill, hazardous landfill and inert landfill. By definition non-hazardous and hazardous landfill sites are non-inert. In Northumberland there is one non-hazardous landfill site at Ellington Road near Ashington. This site is recognised as a strategically important site for the disposal of residual waste arising in Northumberland and also from Newcastle and North Tyneside. The strategic role of this site will continue during the plan period due to its remaining capacity.

**11.67** The preferred approach for waste disposal is to seek to minimise the volumes of waste disposed in this way, maximise the levels of recycling and recovery and plan for a reducing amount of disposal. The preferred approach recognises the strategic role of the Ellington Road landfill site and sets criteria to assess proposals which come forward over the plan period. For inert waste disposal, the preferred approach is to maximise construction and demolition waste recycling and where this is not feasible to encourage the positive use of material for the restoration of mineral extraction sites or for land reclamation and improvement schemes.

**11.68** The Sustainability Appraisal identified some uncertainty in relation to this approach as it would be dependent on the location of any proposals. The Sustainability Appraisal recommended that the policy approach needed to have safeguards to mitigate any significant adverse impact on the environment and local communities.

### Policy 64

#### Waste disposal

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the strategy for hazardous and non-hazardous waste disposal is to:

- a. Seek to minimise waste managed by landfill and maximise the use of solutions higher up the waste hierarchy;
- b. Focus disposal and any further disposal capacity over the plan period at Ellington Road Landfill Site. Alternative locations will be considered where it can be demonstrated that these are more sustainable, particularly in terms of their proximity to the main sources of waste arisings, their transport connections and environmental acceptability; and
- c. Encourage the positive use of inert waste material through the restoration of mineral extraction sites and for land reclamation and improvement schemes, where it is possible to do so.

Proposals for additional disposal capacity will be permitted where:

- d. It can be demonstrated by the applicant that the waste cannot be practically managed using solutions higher up the waste hierarchy;
- e. It can be demonstrated by the applicant that the proposal would not have an unacceptable adverse effect on local communities, sensitive receptors and the natural and historic environment;
- f. The proposal would not result in the creation of excessive capacity which would lead to the unnecessary import of waste from outside Northumberland, whilst recognising that the economics and the specialist nature of some facilities may mean they operate over larger than local catchments;
- g. The proposal is well related to the transport network and, where practical, located and designed to enable transport by rail or water. Where road transport is proposed the applicant shall demonstrate that there would be no unacceptable adverse effects on the surrounding highway network and infrastructure capacity, or such effects can be suitably mitigated through improvement measures;
- h. It makes provision for the capture and use of landfill gas for energy generation, where the proposal involves the disposal of non-inert waste; and
- i. The proposal is supported by a detailed restoration and aftercare scheme.

### Renewable and low carbon energy

**11.69** Increasing the amount of energy from renewable and low carbon technologies will help to make sure the UK has a secure energy supply, reduce greenhouse gas emissions to slow down climate change and stimulate investment in new jobs and businesses. The planning process has an important role in the delivery of new renewable and local carbon energy infrastructure in locations where the local environmental impact is acceptable. One of the Strategic Objectives of the Core Strategy seeks to make Northumberland resilient to climate change and contribute to mitigating its effects.

**11.70** The NPPF states that all communities have a responsibility to help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy. However, the need for renewable and low carbon energy does not automatically override environmental considerations, such as landscape, heritage and local amenity, and the planning concerns of local communities. One of the Strategic Objectives of the Core Strategy seeks to manage the prudent use of Northumberland's natural resources, including energy, while minimising adverse impacts on communities and the environment.

**11.71** Northumberland has the potential to provide renewable energy from a number of sources, such as onshore wind (where substantial provision has already been made), solar, biomass, hydro and anaerobic digestion. The Core Strategy and subsequent planning decisions therefore need to balance the generation of renewable and low carbon energy with the need to protect Northumberland's environment and communities from any significant adverse impacts associated with development.

### Assessing proposals for renewable and low carbon energy development

**11.72** Reflecting current national planning policy, the approach to renewable and low carbon energy in Northumberland is to provide a positive policy framework recognising that it can make a valuable contribution to slowing down climate change, meeting energy needs and improving energy security. Criteria-based policies are proposed which set out

## 11. Managing natural resources

that renewable and low carbon energy proposals will be supported if applicants are able to demonstrate that the effects on the environment and local communities are acceptable. The NPPF advises Local Planning Authorities to consider identifying areas where this would help secure development of such resources. The Ministerial Statement issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on 18 June 2015 and the subsequent updates to the National Planning Policy Guidance states that local planning authorities should only grant planning permission for wind energy developments if the development site is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in a local or neighbourhood plan.

**11.73** Earlier versions of the Core Strategy proposed a criteria-based approach and did not identify any suitable areas for onshore wind energy development. It is proposed that suitable areas for wind energy development are not identified in the Core Strategy because the Core Strategy has now progressed to an advanced stage and identifying such areas would result in considerable delay to its submission for public examination owing to the detailed work that would be needed to support their identification. However, in light of the Ministerial Statement and the amendments to the National Planning Practice Guidance, work has commenced to consider the identification of suitable areas and any such areas would be progressed through the preparation of a specific Development Plan Document. It is considered that the proposed approach in the Core Strategy is in line with the requirements of the NPPF and also takes account of the feedback received through the Issues and Options, Preferred Options (stage 1) and Full Draft Plan consultations where the criteria-based approach was supported.

**11.74** An overarching policy on renewable and low carbon energy development is proposed (Policy 65). Although specific policies have been included for assessing onshore wind energy and solar farms because of the scale of potential development, the overarching policy is applicable to the consideration of all proposals for renewable and low carbon energy development. Proposals for renewable and low carbon energy will also be assessed in the context of the other policies in the plan, including those relating to the landscape and the natural, built and historic environment.

**11.75** The Council acknowledges that Northumberland has a range of energy resources and that the County has already made a significant contribution in the delivery of renewable energy, particularly through wind energy schemes. Given the scale of renewable energy development already constructed, or with planning consent, additional schemes have the potential to further impact on the special character of the County. The Council considers there is a limit to the scale of development that can be accommodated across Northumberland in general and in some local areas in particular, without significantly adversely affecting the special landscapes and cultural heritage of Northumberland, as well as the amenity of its residents.

**11.76** The criteria within the policy, therefore, seek to protect those environmental and cultural assets that are important to Northumberland, its communities, economy and visitors. The matters in the policy will be applicable to all proposals but the level of information required in support of a planning application will be proportional to the scale of the proposal, its location and its potential effects.

**11.77** Feedback on the Full Draft Plan (2014) consultation was generally supportive of the approach set out in the overarching policy. In summary the feedback highlighted:

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- Consideration about whether the policy provides a positive strategy for the development of renewable energy as required by the NPPF;
- The importance of recognising the economic benefits of renewable energy proposals;
- The importance of ensuring that the criteria for assessing cumulative impacts are robust;
- The need to ensure the balancing of impacts and benefits is reflected in the policy;
- Clarification on the approach to community-led schemes.

**11.78** To add more detail to the renewable energy policies a supplementary planning document will be prepared. It is intended that this document will include more guidance on the requirements of the policies including issues relating to landscape sensitivities and capacity, important viewpoints, cumulative impact and community led initiatives.

### Policy 65

#### Renewable and low carbon energy development

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the strategy for the development of renewable energy and low carbon energy development is to support and encourage proposals in appropriate locations in order to contribute to energy generation and a reduction in emissions of greenhouse gases. Support will be given to renewable and low carbon energy developments where there is clear evidence that proposals are community-led and supported.

Through the development management process, applications will be supported where it has been demonstrated that the environmental, social and economic benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh any adverse effects, individually or cumulatively, on local communities and the environment. In considering applications, appropriate weight will be given to the following:

- a. Landscape character and sensitivity and the sensitivity of visual receptors;
- b. The special qualities and the statutory purposes of the Northumberland National Park, North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- c. Internationally, nationally and locally designated nature conservation and geological sites and features, and protected habitats and species;
- d. Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site and other internationally, nationally and locally designated heritage assets and their settings and non-designated heritage assets;
- e. Air, and ground and surface water quality;
- f. Hydrology, water supply and any associated flood risk;
- g. Highways and traffic flow, transport networks, Public Rights of Way and non-motorised users, including the effects upon well-used recreational routes such as the National Trails, long distance routes and the national cycle network;
- h. Amenity due to noise, odour, dust, vibration or visual impact;
- i. The openness of the Green Belt and whether very special circumstances have been demonstrated to justify otherwise inappropriate development;
- j. The impact of any new grid connection lines and any ancillary infrastructure and buildings associated with the development;

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- k. That appropriate provision has been provided for decommissioning and removal of temporary operations once they have ceased;
- l. The predicted output of the proposal; and
- m. The economic benefits of the proposal.

All proposals need to consider cumulative impact. When identifying cumulative landscape and visual impacts, considerations include: direct and indirect effects as well as temporary and permanent impacts. When assessing the significance of landscape and visual impacts a number of criteria should be considered, including: the sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptor and the magnitude or size of the predicted change.

### Onshore wind energy

**11.79** Onshore wind energy is now an established and common technology for generating renewable energy in the UK. The availability of this technology for deployment, the availability of financial incentives and the presence of a wind resource in Northumberland has resulted in considerable development pressure for onshore wind farms in Northumberland in recent years.

**11.80** Given the pressure for development across Northumberland and recognising that there are a number of planning issues which are specific to wind turbine development, a criteria based policy for this technology has been developed to help guide and assess proposals that may come forward over the plan period. The criteria in Policy 66 are in addition to those criteria that are identified in Policy 65, which apply to all renewable energy proposals. Applicants are required to submit sufficient information in support of their planning application to allow a full and robust assessment of the likely effects of the proposal. The level of information required will reflect the scale and nature of the proposal<sup>(155)</sup>.

**11.81** The Council received a significant level of response to draft policy criteria for wind energy development that were proposed during early consultations on the emerging Core Strategy. The policy was amended and feedback on the Full Draft Plan (2014) consultation has recognised the changes that have been made. In summary the feedback highlighted:

- Concerns about whether the policy provides a positive strategy for the development of renewable energy as required by the NPPF;
- The need to clarify the approach to wind turbine development in the AONBs;
- The importance of ensuring that the criteria for assessing cumulative impacts are robust;
- The need to ensure the balancing of impacts and benefits is reflected in the policy.

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155 Further detail on the information required to be submitted as part of a wind farm application will be included in the list used by development management to validate applications. If the required information is not submitted as part of the application, the application will not be classed as valid and will not be determined until it is made valid. Information in the validation list can include, for example, requirements for landscape visualisations and how these are prepared.

**11.82** One of the main concerns expressed through the consultation process was the impact of wind turbines on the landscape of Northumberland, which is recognised as an important asset of the County. The Council has recognised that onshore wind turbines represent a significant force for change on the landscape of Northumberland.

**11.83** The Council has undertaken a study to understand the landscape and visual effects of the current operational wind farms in Northumberland. The conclusions of this study work recognise the importance of considering the effects on long and medium range views from and to iconic landscapes and heritage assets and the outlooks for heritage assets. This is recognised in the policy. The study also made recommendations for additional guidance on the planning application process which will be addressed in the SPD that is to be prepared.

**11.84** Another area of concern identified during the consultation process has been the potential impact of wind farm development on the tourism economy in Northumberland. Northumberland's landscape, natural and historic environment and tranquillity are a key for draw for visitors. Inappropriate wind turbine developments have the potential to adversely affect these assets and could therefore impact on the tourism economy, if people are dissuaded from visiting/ returning. In light of the concerns expressed, the Council commissioned two pieces of work<sup>(156)</sup> to help understand the effects of onshore wind farms on tourism to inform the policy in the Core Strategy.

**11.85** A visitor perception study was undertaken using an online survey to identify potential visitor views on whether the existence of wind farms has an impact on their decision to come to a rural area, and to Northumberland in particular. The other element comprised:

- An extensive desk based review of research studies which assess the effects of onshore wind farms on tourism in the UK;
- A survey of Northumberland tourism related businesses looking at the impacts of wind farms in Northumberland;
- A review of the approach and findings of the Public Knowledge visitor perception survey; and
- A focus group with representatives of groups or organisations that are interested in and/ or concerned with the impacts of wind farms in Northumberland.

**11.86** The findings of the work are not conclusive. The study concluded that there is no evidence to suggest that the development of wind farms has either a significant negative or positive impact on tourism. This conclusion was partly based on a review of a number of other studies that had been carried out several years ago in settings different to Northumberland. The study did, however, highlight that some landscapes may be more sensitive to wind farm developments than others and that development could have localised negative effects in relation to tourism. It emphasises the need for developments to be well-sited in relation to the landscape setting and the tourism economy context of the locality. The draft policy recognises the considerations relating to the landscape and the natural and historic environment matters that are important for tourism. The protection of

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<sup>156</sup> The work involved a desk-based review of existing research studies that assess the effects of onshore wind farms on tourism, a survey a potential visitors views on wind turbines in Northumberland and a survey of tourism-related businesses in Northumberland.

## 11. Managing natural resources

these assets is also seen as being important in protecting and supporting the tourist sector. These studies are being published as part of the evidence base for the Pre-Submission Draft Plan.

**11.87** Across Northumberland a significant amount of wind farm development has either already taken place or has been consented therefore cumulative impact is a key issue and this is a matter that will require careful consideration. In considering cumulative impact account should be taken of existing development, including development under construction; approved development awaiting implementation; and proposals submitted as planning applications awaiting determination.

**11.88** The nature of the landscapes in the AONBs makes them vulnerable to the impacts of larger scale turbine developments. It may be possible to accommodate small scale developments that meet the needs of properties or businesses without unacceptable impacts on the special qualities of the AONBs. Small-scale in this context means a single turbine with a hub height of 25 metres or less. Proposals of this scale will still be assessed against the relevant policy criteria.

**11.89** The Ministerial Statement issued by Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on 18 June 2015 and the subsequent updates to the National Planning Policy Guidance states that local planning authorities should only grant planning permission for wind energy developments if:

- The development site is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in a local or neighbourhood plan; and
- Following consultation, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by affected local communities have been fully addressed and therefore has their backing.

**11.90** Whether a proposal has the backing of the affected local community is a planning judgement for the local planning authority. It is considered that the criteria in the policy will enable this judgement to be made. As referred to above consideration will be given to identifying areas suitable for wind energy and if it is considered to be appropriate to take this approach a Development Plan Document will be prepared to identify such areas.

### Policy 66

#### Onshore wind energy

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the development of single wind turbines or groupings of turbines will be supported where the applicant can demonstrate that the social, environmental and economic benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh any adverse impacts, both individually and cumulatively.

Through the development management process, applications will be supported where it has been demonstrated that:

- a. There is sufficient separation from the proposed wind turbines to protect residential amenity as a result of noise, shadow flicker and visual intrusion. To protect visual amenity, there will be a presumption against development within a distance of

six times the turbine blade tip height of residential properties unless it can be demonstrated that the presence of turbines would not have an unacceptable impact upon living conditions;

- b. The proposals have addressed any potential adverse effects on the safety of aviation operations and navigational systems;
- c. Potential interference to television and/or radio reception and information and telecommunications systems will be avoided and/or mitigated;
- d. The proposed site access arrangements and access routes will be suitable for the construction phase, including the delivery of turbine components and construction materials, the operational phase, and the decommissioning of the proposed wind farm;
- e. The proposed wind turbines are located appropriate distances from highways, and railway lines to provide a safe topple distance. A minimum topple distance of the turbine height plus 10% is recommended as a starting point;
- f. Provision has been made for the satisfactory decommissioning of the turbines and associated infrastructure once the operations have ceased and the site can be restored to a quality of at least its original condition;
- g. The proposal will not result in unacceptable harm to the character of the landscape and the landscape has capacity to accommodate the proposed development;
- h. There are no unacceptable adverse effects on long and medium range views to and from sensitive landscapes, such as the Cheviot Hills, Northumberland Sandstone Hills, Northumberland Coast AONB, North Pennines AONB, the Northumberland National Park and the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site, and lines of sight between iconic landscape and heritage sites and features, particularly where one or more feature is within the Northumberland Coast AONB, the North Pennines AONB or the adjoining Northumberland National Park;
- i. There are no unacceptable adverse effects on sensitive or well used viewpoints; and
- j. There are no unacceptable adverse effects on important recognised outlooks and views from or to heritage assets where these are predominantly unaffected by harmful visual intrusion.

Within the Northumberland Coast AONB and the North Pennines AONB there will be a presumption against proposals involving more than one turbine or proposals involving turbines with a hub height of over 25 metres.

All proposals need to consider cumulative impact. When identifying cumulative landscape and visual impacts, considerations include: direct and indirect effects as well as temporary and permanent impacts. When assessing the significance of impacts a number of criteria should be considered, including: the sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptor and the magnitude or size of the predicted change.

### Solar photovoltaic farms

**11.91** Solar farms are large-scale arrays of photovoltaic cells that convert sunlight into electricity. They are differentiated from micro-generation, the small-scale generation of energy by individuals or businesses to meet their own needs. Solar farms can cover large

## 11. Managing natural resources

areas of land, typically between one hectare and 100 hectares, and are usually developed in rural locations or on large brownfield sites. They can also be mounted on the roofs of existing buildings.

**11.92** A number of solar farms have recently been permitted in Northumberland and a number of further schemes are expected to come forward. Solar farms have therefore been identified as a technology where there is likely to be future development pressure. A criteria-based policy has been therefore been prepared to consider any proposals for solar farms in Northumberland that may come forward over the plan period.

**11.93** Feedback on the Full Draft Plan (2014) consultation was generally supportive of the approach set out in the policy. In summary the feedback highlighted:

- Concern about whether the policy provides a positive strategy for the development of renewable energy as required by the NPPF;
- The need to ensure the balancing of impacts and benefits is reflected in the policy;
- The importance of ensuring that the criteria for assessing cumulative impacts are robust; and
- The potential to give a stronger steer to using previously developed land and non-agricultural land.

**11.94** In line with the overarching approach to renewable and low carbon energy in Northumberland, the policy is supportive of the development of this renewable technology where it can be demonstrated that the proposals, whether individually or cumulatively do not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the natural and historic environment of Northumberland and local amenity.

**11.95** Key environmental considerations for solar photovoltaic farms relate to whether the use is an effective use of the land, landscape and visual impacts, which includes the impact of glint and glare on the landscape. In addition there could also be impacts on drainage, and archaeology. The sensitive siting of these developments and the use of well-planned screening as a means of mitigation are important in addressing these concerns. The use of previously developed sites, non-agricultural land that is not of high environmental value or poor quality land is encouraged. The nature of the proposals means that proposals can allow for continued agricultural use where applicable and also provide opportunities for biodiversity improvements, which are encouraged.

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#### Solar photovoltaic farms

In plan-making and assessing development proposals, the development of solar photovoltaic farms will be supported where the applicant can demonstrate that the proposals is an effective use of land and that the social, environmental and economic benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh any adverse impacts, both individually and cumulatively.

Through the development management process, applicants will need to provide evidence to demonstrate that:

## 11. Managing natural resources

- a. Where a proposal involves greenfield land, whether:
  - i. The proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary and poorer quality land has been used in preference to higher quality land; and
  - ii. The proposal allows for continued agricultural use where applicable and/ or encourages biodiversity improvements around solar arrays;
- b. The proposal, including the impact of security measures such as lights and fencing, will not result in harm to the character of the landscape and the landscape has capacity to accommodate the proposal;
- c. The extent to which there may be additional impacts if solar arrays follow the daily movement of the sun;
- d. The proposal includes measures to screen the site to mitigate any landscape and visual impacts;
- e. There are no unacceptable adverse effects on long and medium range views to and from sensitive landscapes, such as the Cheviot Hills, the Northumberland Sandstone Hills, Northumberland Coast AONB, North Pennines AONB, the Northumberland National Park and the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site, and lines of sight between iconic landscape and heritage sites and features, particularly where one or more feature is within the Northumberland Coast AONB, the North Pennines AONB or the adjoining Northumberland National Park;
- f. There are no unacceptable adverse effects on sensitive or well used viewpoints;
- g. There are no unacceptable adverse effects on important recognised outlooks and views to and from heritage assets where these are predominantly unaffected by harmful visual intrusion;
- h. The proposed site access arrangements and access routes are suitable for both the construction, the operational phase and the decommissioning of the proposal;
- i. The proposals have addressed any potential adverse effects on the safety of aviation operations and navigational systems; and
- j. Provision has been made for the decommissioning of the solar farm once the operations have ceased and the site can be restored to a quality of at least its original condition.

All proposals will need to consider cumulative impact. When identifying cumulative landscape and visual impacts, considerations include: direct and indirect effects as well as temporary and permanent impacts. When assessing the significance of impacts a number of criteria should be considered, including: the sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptor and the magnitude or size of the predicted change.

## 12. Implementation

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### 12. Implementation

**12.1** In order to ensure the Core Strategy's vision and objectives are realised, various mechanisms are in place to implement the policies and proposals of the plan.

**12.2** The most apparent means by which the Core Strategy is implemented is through the Development Management process. The policies within Core Strategy will be the starting point for the assessment of all planning applications. Upon adoption, the Local Planning Authority will use this Core Strategy, together with existing planning policy documents as a basis for making planning decisions.

**12.3** Where appropriate the Council will develop more detailed guidance through additional Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents.

**12.4** The Council is also working to support Town and Parish Councils who look to take up neighbourhood planning powers. Neighbourhood Plans contain locally distinctive planning policies, which will guide development decisions in accordance with community aspirations, subject to being in conformity with the strategic policies of the Development Plan and having regard to national policy and guidance. Collectively, alongside the Core Strategy, these documents will update existing planning policies and will form the basis for future planning decisions.

**12.5** Implementation of the Core Strategy however relies on more than the planning policy framework and the Development Management process. The partners involved are also more far reaching than the local planning authority and the Town and Parish Councils devising Neighbourhood Plans.

**12.6** Ultimately delivery relies on the development industry and the plans, policies and activities of other County Council and Town and Parish Council services, and a wide range of organisations, businesses and individuals. There are countless bodies with a direct or indirect role. These include the North East Combined Authority; the North East Local Enterprise Partnership; statutory bodies; organisations in the voluntary sector; private businesses; utility providers; and importantly the communities and individuals who live, work and visit Northumberland.

**12.7** The Core Strategy has been developed to complement many existing and emerging strategies, policies and projects at a national and local level, outwith the planning framework. These include the Northumberland Sustainable Community Strategy, Northumberland Economic Strategy, the North East Strategic Economic Plan and various initiatives such as the Council's Strategic Property Review and current regeneration proposals for Ashington.

**12.8** Effective and efficient implementation will depend upon continued management and coordination of activities and roles. Northumberland County Council has a key role to play in this regard. As well as delivering and supporting the development of a comprehensive planning policy framework, the Council will work with stakeholders to proactively support the delivery of sustainable development. This will include working with developers, landowners and the Northumberland Development Company Arch such as through joint ventures. It may also involve securing the prudent use of Council owned land and assets to facilitate the rationalisation of service provision (e.g. shared buildings for

leisure and customer services), and the delivery of appropriate development and supporting infrastructure. In exceptional circumstances the Council could use its powers of compulsory purchase to acquire land and premises, where it is in the public interest to do so.

**12.9** In the case of delivering development on large scale sites, the Council will seek to work with developers to prevent piecemeal development and ensure sites are developed comprehensively. Where appropriate masterplanning of sites will be encouraged and supported.

### **Policy 68**

#### **Implementation**

Northumberland County Council will work proactively to bring about the delivery of the Core Strategy. It will seek to:

- a. Align its own plans, strategies, programmes and investment priorities to deliver the Core Strategy;
- b. Collaborate to influence the plans, strategies, programmes and investment priorities of other public bodies, infrastructure providers and other organisations to seek alignment with the Core Strategy;
- c. Develop and consolidate a positive planning policy framework, which provides detailed policies and proposals in support of the Core Strategy;
- d. Support communities, via Town and Parish Councils, who wish to develop and implement Neighbourhood Plans or other planning tools, which are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Northumberland Local Plan and help shape the development of a local area in a positive way;
- e. Make use of its powers including where necessary land acquisition and compulsory purchase powers, to bring about development in line with the Core Strategy;
- f. Influence and use public and private funding opportunities to maximum effect to deliver the Core Strategy; and
- g. Monitor the achievement of the Core Strategy throughout its existence, implementing appropriate measures to address any policies or proposals that are underperforming or become obsolete.

### **Infrastructure, the Community Infrastructure Levy, planning conditions and obligations**

**12.10** In addition to the above measures, the Core Strategy can only be implemented if it can be supported by adequate infrastructure. The term infrastructure can be taken to include roads and other transport facilities, flood defences, schools and other educational facilities, medical facilities, sporting and recreational facilities and open spaces. This is not an exhaustive list and there may be a range of other services and facilities that could constitute 'infrastructure' needed to support the delivery of a particular development, or the wider the Core Strategy.

## 12. Implementation

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**12.11** The Council has been working collaboratively with a range of private sector bodies, utility and infrastructure providers, adjoining local authorities and other bodies to assess: the quality and capacity of strategic infrastructure, and its ability to meet forecast demands. The work has helped inform the Core Strategy, including in respect of the appropriate quantum and location of development.

**12.12** Implementation of the Core Strategy will depend on the provision of infrastructure in a timely manner. This is in turn reliant upon the coordinated activities and investment programmes of a number of agencies. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan is a mechanism for helping to ensure successful partnership working with all those involved, to work towards shared objectives and potentially improved efficiencies. Recognising that infrastructure investment planning is fluid, continually changing in light of varying priorities and funding availability, the IDP will be reviewed on an annual basis. Reviewing the IDP will be an important opportunity to re-engage with stakeholders.

**12.13** There is no phasing of growth prescribed in the Core Strategy. However the timing of delivering new or improved infrastructure could indirectly dictate or at least influence the phasing of new development over the plan period.

### Community Infrastructure Levy

**12.14** The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a local charge that local authorities can choose to impose on development. The Levy can be used to raise funds from developers undertaking new building projects to fund a wide range of infrastructure required to support development across the local authority area. CIL has been devised and introduced into legislation to implement successive government's intentions to ensure that development contributes to at least a reasonable proportion to the cost of infrastructure needed to support the Core Strategy.

**12.15** The Levy is viewed by the Council as a positive tool which can help support the delivery of the Core Strategy and more particularly unlock opportunities for growth. It can offer a fair, fast and transparent system for developers by giving certainty about development costs.

**12.16** Communities can also benefit directly from a share of the CIL, which would be given to Town and Parish Councils in those locations where development occurs. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies the funding required to deliver the infrastructure requirements of the Core Strategy. It identifies a range of funding opportunities; however, it is apparent that there is a funding gap.

**12.17** The potential introduction of a CIL would help address the identified funding gap. Should a CIL for Northumberland be pursued this would be subject to a separate consultation process and an independent examination. The latter would test the justification for introducing the levy and the appropriate level of charge based on appropriate available evidence. The CIL is based on the size and type of the new development and may also vary depending on development viability in different geographic locations. It is calculated as £ per sq. metre according to new floor space created. It can cover all development apart from householder extensions and a threshold level is set below which CIL is not charged. However, CIL can only be introduced where it is demonstrated that it is viable

to do so without threatening the delivery of the Core Strategy. The CIL has been provisionally appraised as part of the Core Strategy Viability Assessment. CIL cannot be used as a policy tool to influence how, whether or where development takes place.

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#### Planning for infrastructure

The delivery of infrastructure in a timely manner to support development, including necessary upgrading and repair, to facilitate implementation of the Core Strategy will be co-ordinated by the Council in partnership with infrastructure providers and regulators, grant funding agencies, the development industry and other delivery agencies.

Where there are known infrastructure capacity constraints and these are identified as critical in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) the Council will work with partners to find solutions to remove those constraints to ensure that development is delivered to meet the objectives and policies in the Core Strategy.

The timing and prioritisation of delivery of infrastructure will have regard to priority needs established through the IDP with the intention of securing timely delivery of new development to meet the objectives and policies set out in the Core Strategy. Developer contributions received through planning obligations and, if adopted, the Community Infrastructure Levy, will be applied having regard to those priorities established in the IDP and having regard to the availability of alternative sources of funding to deliver that infrastructure.

**12.18** Where infrastructure is not available or requires improvement or compensation due to the impact of a new development, planning permission will only be granted where suitable arrangements are in place. This could include improvement, provision and phasing of infrastructure, services and facilities to make the scheme acceptable in planning terms.

**12.19** Until the potential introduction of the CIL and to a lesser degree thereafter, the Council will continue to use Planning Obligations under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to prescribe, compensate, and/or mitigate the impact of a development. This will include securing provision of infrastructure, affordable housing, community facilities and a range of other measures necessary to accommodate growth and mitigate impacts of development where these are appropriate and meet necessary statutory tests. Planning Obligations will broadly be limited to site specific matters and affordable housing. Obligations could also be sought to secure ongoing management and maintenance arrangements where it is deemed appropriate.

**12.20** The Council will provide further more detailed policies and guidance in relation to planning obligations and potentially CIL. This will ensure the range and level of contributions are kept up to date in accordance with requirements, demand and need. The approach will ensure there is no overlap between planning obligations and the CIL (see below) and therefore no possibility of developers being double charged.

## 12. Implementation

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#### Planning conditions and obligations

Where planning obligations are necessary to make development acceptable, including through mitigation of unacceptable impacts, provision shall normally be secured through planning conditions. Where provision or improvement cannot be secured through conditions it will be secured as necessary by planning obligations in accordance with the Council's Protocol on S106 Planning Obligations.

Planning obligations will only be used where their effects are:

- Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- Directly related to the development; and
- Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development

Maintenance of infrastructure/facilities secured through development obligations will be ensured for a reasonable period following first use or occupation of the development. Where possible maintenance will be secured by planning condition; in other circumstances planning obligations will be used, particularly where this involves the payment of commuted sums.

Where necessary, the timing of provision of infrastructure will be linked directly to the phasing of development, taking account of viability. This will be secured either through planning conditions, or where this is not appropriate, by planning obligation, to ensure that the planned and necessary infrastructure is available to serve the development when it is first required.

### Monitoring

**12.21** The Council is committed to ensuring robust monitoring of the implementation of the Core Strategy. The aim will be to ensure the successful and timely delivery of the plan and to instigate appropriate actions or measures to address any ineffective policies and proposals.

**12.22** The Core Strategy has been devised in such a way to be flexible over the plan period. It can adjust to changes such as, the emergence of new Neighbourhood Plans, shifting demographics and variable economic conditions. However, there may be circumstances or unexpected external factors that render certain policies less effective or out of date. Monitoring will help identify any such issues and appropriate actions. Actions could include adjusting the implementation of the policies or a partial or full review of the Core Strategy or other supporting plans.

#### Monitoring and evaluation framework

**12.23** A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework has been developed which identifies indicators and targets for the implementation of the Core Strategy as a whole and to measure the implementation of specific policies. It also identifies triggers at which it is appropriate to address any issues emerging.

**12.24** The framework optimises the use of other monitoring systems the Local Planning Authority has such as Planning Application Monitoring. It also seeks to make use of other Council Departments and other organisations monitoring systems.

### Glossary

**Affordable housing:** Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers (as defined in section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008), for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency.

Affordable rented housing is let by local authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).

Intermediate housing is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.

Homes that do not meet the above definition of affordable housing, such as “low cost market” housing, may not be considered as affordable housing for planning purposes (see ‘Low Cost Market Housing’ definition).

**Affordable rented housing:** See ‘Affordable Housing’.

**Aggregates / aggregate minerals:** Hard, granular materials, including sand, gravel, crushed rock and other bulk materials used on their own or with the addition of cement, lime or a bituminous binder in the construction.

**Amenity:** A positive element or elements that contribute to the positive character of an area, such as lack of noise and disturbance, openness, landscape, townscape, opportunities for recreation etc.

**Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB):** An area with statutory national landscape designation, the primary purpose of which is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Northumberland has the Northumberland Coast AONB and part of the North Pennines AONB.

**Ashington Blyth and Tyne Railway Line:** This line connects Ashington with Tyneside via western Blyth and has a link to Morpeth. It is currently used as a goods-only line but there is a long and widely held ambition to reintroduce passenger services to the line.

**Asset of Community Value:** A local authority maintained list of land in its area that is land of community value. A building or other land would be of community value if in the Council's opinion, its main use contributes to the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community, and it is realistic for this to continue, (possibly involving a different community use of equal value). This is set out in section 87 of the Localism Act 2011.

**Biodiversity:** The whole variety of life encompassing all genetics, species and ecosystem variations, including plants and animals.

**Biomass:** A form of renewable energy which often refers to plant-based material and can include virgin wood, energy crops, and agricultural residues as well as some food and industrial waste.

**Blyth Estuary Strategic Employment Area:** Spanning the north and south banks of the River Blyth, this proposed strategic employment area will provide 189 hectares of available land, as a strategic allocation for specific emerging employment sectors, requiring large amounts of land.

**Brownfield land:** See 'Previously developed land'.

**Certificate of Lawfulness:** Applied for in order to check that a development or use (either existing or proposed) is (or would be) lawful.

**CIL:** – See 'Community Infrastructure Levy'.

**City-Region:** An area including and surrounding a major city or cluster of cities, generally defined in terms of the influence of the city – e.g. the area from which the city draws its labour force or attracts regular shoppers.

**Clean coal:** Technologies that may reduce emissions of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and other greenhouse gases associated with power generation from coal. This includes carbon capture and storage and coal gasification.

**Climate change:** Long-term changes in temperature, precipitation, wind and all other aspects of the Earth's climate. It is now accepted as partly attributable to increased carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions, such as those resulting from the burning of fossil fuels in vehicles, power stations, factories and homes.

**Climate change adaptation:** Adjustments to natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic factors or their effects, including from changes in rainfall and rising temperatures, which moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

**Climate change mitigation:** Action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

**Coalescence:** The situation where the built-up areas of two or more towns or villages spread out and merge with each other.

**Coastal change:** Physical change to the shoreline through erosion, coastal landslip, permanent inundation or coastal accretion.

**Combined Authority:** A formal structure to lead collaboration between local authorities on transport and economic growth, established through a Statutory Order agreed between the authorities involved (in this case the seven councils that make up the North-East Local Economic Partnership) and central Government.

**Commercial and industrial waste:** Controlled waste arising from premises, used wholly or mainly for industry and commerce of various kinds.

## Glossary

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**Commercial Centres:** The defined areas of town or service centres, within which most town centre uses (such as larger scale retail, leisure and office uses) should be concentrated. Sub-divided into main commercial centres, for the larger towns (containing a smaller 'Primary Shopping Area' for retail uses); and smaller commercial centres, for other main towns and some service centres, covering all town centre uses.

**Community Facilities:** Local services and facilities are those that benefit the community such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

**Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):** A levy allowing local authorities to raise funds from owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in their area.

**Community Right to Build Order:** An order made by the Local Planning Authority (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) that grants planning permission for a site-specific development proposal or classes of development.

**Comparison shopping:** The provision or purchase of items not bought on a frequent basis and where potential purchasers often wish to compare different goods or providers. Comparison goods are mainly durable and include clothing, footwear, household and recreational goods.

**Conditions (or 'Planning Conditions'):** Requirements attached to a planning permission to limit or direct the manner in which a development is carried out.

**Conservation Area:** Areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character, appearance or setting of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

**Construction and demolition waste:** Controlled waste arising from the construction, repair, maintenance and demolition of buildings and structures.

**Convenience shopping:** The provision or purchase of everyday essential items, such as food, drink, newspapers etc.

**Core Strategy:** A Development Plan Document setting out the spatial vision, objectives and key strategic policies for an area. This 'Pre-Submission Draft' stage follows the 'Issues and Options', 'Preferred Options' and 'Full Draft Plan' stages.

**Corporate Plan:** The Northumberland County Council Corporate Plan represents the Council's main strategic planning document and provides a clear statement of the Council's vision, strategic aims and policy priorities. The current Corporate Plan was approved in November 2013 and covers the period 2013-2017. Dark Sky Park: Designated by the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA), an International Dark Sky Park (IDSP) is land possessing an exceptional or distinguished quality of starry nights and a nocturnal environment that is specifically protected for its scientific, natural, educational, cultural heritage, and/or public enjoyment.

**De-allocation:** The removal of a planning allocation. De-allocation may be proposed if a planning allocation has existed in a local plan for many years but has never been implemented for reasons such as the land proving to be unsuitable for the proposed use or the location becoming less viable.

**Delivery Area:** Any of four areas defined for planning purposes for the Core Strategy, based on housing market areas, social, economic and cultural characteristics, as well as roles and relationships between towns and villages in Northumberland.

**Delivery Document:** The development plan document that will be prepared following the Core Strategy in order to set out more detailed policies, proposals and allocations the main purpose of which is to ensure that the Core Strategy policies are realised on the ground and update older local plan policies.

**Density (of development):** The amount of building within an area of land. For housing it is expressed as the number of dwellings per hectare.

**Designated area:** An area defined by a line on a map which, by virtue of statute, enjoys a degree of protection from development that would impact adversely on the wildlife, landscape or other natural asset within its boundary. There are also built heritage designations such as Conservation Areas.

**Development:** Defined under the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act as "the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operation in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any building or other land." Most forms of development require planning permission (see also "permitted development").

**Development management:** The process through which a local planning authority considers a planning application and whether it should be given permission.

**Development Plan:** The complete set of statutory land use policies and proposals for an area, used in making planning decisions. It includes adopted council development plan documents such as Local Plans, Core Strategies and neighbourhood plans.

**Duty to Cooperate:** Collaborative working with adjoining authorities, and other public bodies, regarding strategic issues which may have significant cross boundary impacts, during the preparation of Local Plans.

**Ecosystem approach:** An approach to planning that focuses on protecting and restoring the structure, function and processes of ecosystems as a whole, recognising that natural assets and human environments, traditionally planned for and managed separately, interact continually, in numerous ways and with cumulative impacts.

**Ecosystem services:** The benefits obtained from ecosystems, such as, food, water, flood and disease control and recreation.

**Employment land:** Land allocated / reserved for industrial and business use.

**Employment Land Review (ELR):** Study identifying the level of employment land required, considering past levels of employment land take up and other factors. It also identifies parts of the County with an over- or under-supply of employment land.

**Enterprise Zone:** An area where Central Government aided by Local Government wishes to stimulate development and investment through business rate relief, financing and regulation incentives, which may include simplified planning guidance specified in a Local Development Order.

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**Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA):** Undertaken to ensure that equality issues are taken into account throughout the Core Strategy process, and that it promotes equality and diversity and does not adversely affect or discriminate against any of the protected characteristics.

**European Geopark:** A defined area with a particular geological heritage that may also be archaeological, ecological, historical or cultural and where the development of geotourism may take place. The North Pennines AONB has been designated as such.

**European Marine Site (EMS):** A sub-tidal and/or inter-tidal area of European importance for marine and coastal habitats and species, including any area that is the subject of SAC or SPA status that is also covered by tidal water. The whole of the Northumberland coastal area north of Alnmouth forms part of the Berwickshire and North Northumberland EMS.

**Evening economy:** The representation in a town centre of facilities such as restaurants, bars and nightclubs, which would bring spending and vibrancy to the centre after normal shop opening hours.

**Evidence base:** The information and data gathered by local authorities and used to inform policy development.

**Five Year Housing Land Supply:** An identified supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to meet housing requirements over a specified five year period, collated annually.

**Geo-diversity:** The range of rocks, minerals, fossils, soils and landforms.

**Green Belt:** A land designation with the fundamental aim of preventing urban sprawl by keeping the land permanently open. The purposes of the Green Belt as specified in paragraph 80 of the NPPF are: to check the restricted sprawl of large built-up areas; prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and, assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

**Green Infrastructure:** A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

**Greenfield land or site:** Land which has never been built on before or where the remains of any structure or activity have blended into the landscape over time.

**Floorspace:** The floor area (on all floors) of a building or set of buildings. Gross floorspace includes areas ancillary to the main use. Net floorspace excludes ancillary areas.

**Groundwater:** An important part of the natural water cycle present underground, within strata known as aquifers.

**Gross Value Added (GVA):** An economic measure of the value of goods and services in an area, namely the value of output less the value of intermediate consumption.

**Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities:** (for planning purposes) Communities consisting of persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.

**Habitat:** An area or natural environment in which an organism, species or population normally lives. Habitats take many forms and should not be considered in isolation as they are linked and overlap with each other.

**Habitats Regulations:** A set of government regulations (currently the Habitats and Species Regulations 2010), which sets out requirements within England regarding the protection and enhancement of important natural assets, giving expression to various European Directives, international Conventions and national statutes.

**Hazardous waste:** Waste which has the potential to cause harm to human health or the environment, for example contaminated soil.

**Heritage Asset:** A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

**Heritage Coast:** Areas of largely undeveloped coastline which are managed to conserve their natural beauty and, where appropriate, to improve accessibility for visitors. Northumberland's Heritage Coast stretches from Druridge Bay to the Scottish border.

**Hinterland:** A term used to describe the area which falls within the influence of a town –especially the area from which the town draws most of the people who work there or use its services.

**Household:** A person living alone or a group of people living together at the same address and with common housekeeping.

**Housing Needs Survey:** A survey of households which assesses affordable housing needs across a defined area, looking at criteria such as housing conditions, overcrowding and household incomes and comparing these with housing costs and availability.

**Housing – Optional Technical Standards:** A new approach for the setting of technical standards for new housing. This rationalises the many differing existing standards into a simpler, streamlined system which will reduce burdens and help bring forward much needed new homes.

**Independent Examination:** The process by which an Independent Planning Inspector publicly examines a Development Plan Document to ensure that it is 'sound' in terms of factors such as the evidence on which it is based, national policy, consultations undertaken etc.

**Infill boundary:** A boundary drawn around part of the built-up area of a settlement that is washed over by the Green Belt, in order to reflect the fact that the area within the boundary contains opportunities for infill development which would not fit the description

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of 'limited infilling' but which would still be expected to preserve the openness of the Green Belt and not conflict with the purposes of including the settlement in Green Belt in the first place.

**Infill development:** Building on a relatively small site between existing buildings.

**Information and Communication Technologies (ICT):** (for planning purposes) Telecommunications networks such as telephone lines, mobile phone masts and broadband infrastructure.

**Infrastructure:** The physical entities (for example roads, railways, sewers, pipes, telecommunications lines) that are necessary for communities to function and move around.

**Infrastructure Delivery Plan:** This document will identify the infrastructure needed to support the delivery of the Core Strategy and how this will be funded, linked with other programmes and actually provided, as well as examining possible risks and associated contingency measures.

**iNorthumberland:** The iNorthumberland programme relates to the rollout of fibre broadband in Northumberland. The first phase of the programme aims to reach around 90% of homes by December 2015. The programme is being delivered by Northumberland County Council. The programme is funded by Department for Culture Media and Sport via BDUK, Northumberland County Council, European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Defra's Rural Community Broadband Fund and BT.

**Inset:** A term used to describe a town or village that is surrounded by the Green Belt but is not itself covered (or "washed over") by the Green Belt designation. This means that Green Belt restrictions do not apply within the settlement concerned in the area defined by the inset boundary.

**Intermediate housing:** See 'Affordable Housing'.

**Knowledge-based industries:** Defined by the OECD/Work Foundation as high to medium tech manufacturing, finance, telecommunications, business services, education and health. However the knowledge-based economy may spread over into other sectors such as energy supply, retail and the cultural / creative industries.

**Landfill (including land raising):** The permanent disposal of residual waste into the ground, by the filling of man-made voids or similar features. The construction of land forms above ground level is called land raising.

**Landscape Character:** The distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently in a particular type of landscape. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement. The Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) identified 44 landscape character types, and 108 landscape character areas with similar characteristics within the plan area.

**Landscape sensitivity:** Normally refers to the ability of the landscape to absorb development, in relation to valued aspects of its character.

**Larger Village Centres:** Groupings of services at the centres of those villages that are defined as Service Centres, but which do not have defined Commercial Centres.

**Lifetime homes** Lifetime homes standards have been replaced by Housing – Optional Technical Standards. See ‘Housing – Optional Technical Standards’.

**Lifetime neighbourhoods** Places where most people would be able (and choose) to live and stay throughout their lives. They are safe places that offer everyone the best possible chance of health, well-being and social, economic and civic engagement regardless of their age, gender, culture or disability. They do not exclude people as they age, their circumstances change, nor as they become more frail, disabled or less mobile.

**Limited infilling:** Infill development which is particularly small in scale, occupying a small gap between buildings –on the scale of one or two, (rather than several) dwellings.

**Listed building:** A building of special architectural or historic interest. Graded I (highest quality), II\* or II.

**Local Development Order:** A mechanism to simplify planning guidance to encourage economic growth by allowing certain forms of development to be undertaken without the need for planning permission, subject to specified conditions and design guidance.

**Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP):** A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, established for the purpose of protecting and improving conditions for economic growth in an area. Also see 'North East Local Enterprise Partnership'.

**Local Green Space:** A designation that provides special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities. They can be identified through Local Plans or by communities in Neighbourhood Plans.

**Local Nature Partnership (LNP):** Local partnerships of organisations and communities with the role of helping the management of the natural environment as a system and to embed its value in local decisions, for the benefit of nature, people and the economy.

**Local Nature Reserve:** Non-statutory habitats of local significance designated by local authorities where protection and public understanding of nature conservation is encouraged.

**Local Plan:** The documents and maps that make up the plan for the future development of a local area such as Northumberland. In law, this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Current core strategies and other planning policies, under which the regulations would be considered to be development plan documents, form part of the Local Plan. The term also includes older planning documents prepared by the former Northumberland authorities which have been saved under the 2004 Act.

**Local Transport Plan (LTP):** The Council's fifteen year strategy for maintaining and improving highways and transport, including key goals and challenges and how these should be addressed through policies, programmes and schemes.

**Local Wildlife and Geological Site (LWGS):** A defined area within which there are habitats, wildlife or geology which is considered, locally, important to protect and manage. Includes sites formerly known as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs) and Sites of Biological Interest (SBIs).

## Glossary

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**Low Carbon Energy Generation:** Low carbon energy comes from processes or technologies that produce power with substantially lower amounts of carbon dioxide emissions than conventional fossil fuel power generation. Low carbon energy sources include wind power, solar power and hydropower.

**Low carbon sector:** Industries, processes and technologies, which can assist in reducing the release of carbon dioxide into the environment.

**Low Cost Market Housing:** Usually refers to new build dwellings that are sold for 100% owner occupation but at a price that is discounted from the price than they could be sold for on the open market. These are not part of the definition of affordable housing.

**Main Towns:** The most important settlements in Northumberland with a key housing, employment and service role across often wide areas. They were defined at the previous consultation stage, following an audit of services and facilities within the settlements across the county. They are Alnwick, Amble, Ashington, Bedlington, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Blyth, Cramlington, Haltwhistle, Hexham, Morpeth, Ponteland and Prudhoe.

**Major Developed Sites:** Sites within and washed over by the Green Belt, as currently defined, where there is a major development, (in use or abandoned), such as a hospital, military site, industrial or commercial buildings and where some additional leeway for development may be permitted under existing local plan policies, so long as the integrity of the Green Belt is retained.

**Management Plan:** A document setting out goals, methods and a programme of actions over a period of 3 to 5 years, covering areas where management of the environment is essential in order to retain the integrity of the area / assets within it. Areas with management plans include the two AONBs and the Hadrian's Wall WHS.

**Marine Management Organisation (MMO):** A public body established and given powers under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, which brings together key marine decision-making powers and delivery mechanisms. It acts as an "enabling marine regulator" to help marine industries grow wherever possible, while following the principles of better regulation.

**Masterplan:** A detailed plan setting out how a particular area is developed, mapping the phasing of the development, (i.e. the order in which different parts of the development are to be built) and setting out an action plan explaining how, when and by whom different requirements are triggered / funded.

**Material consideration:** A matter that should be taken into account in making a planning decision.

**Mineral resource:** A potential mineral deposit where the quality and quantity of material present has not necessarily been tested – see also "Resource Area"

**Minerals reserves:** Mineral deposits which have been tested to establish the quality and quantity of material present and which could be economically and technically exploited.

**Mineral Safeguarding Areas:** An area designated by the Minerals Planning Authority (i.e. the County Council), which covers known deposits of minerals which are desired to keep safeguarded from unnecessary sterilisation by non-mineral development.

**Municipal waste:** Household waste and any other waste, such as fly-tipped waste, food waste from restaurants etc. collected by the Waste Collection Authority (Northumberland County Council).

**National Character Area (NCA):** A Nationally Defined Landscape Character Area. Nine NCAs fall within Northumberland and form the basis for the defining of the Northumberland LCAs.

**National Nature Reserve (NNR):** Area designated with the aim of securing protection and appropriate management of the most important wildlife habitat, and to provide a resource for scientific research. All NNRs are Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

**National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):** A Government document that sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

**Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs):** Widely defined areas within which Local Nature Partnerships seek to bring about measurable improvements in nature conservation. Currently, there are two NIAs within Northumberland; the Northumberland Coalfield and Border Uplands.

**Neighbourhood Plan:** A plan by a Parish or Town Council – the "qualifying body" – for a particular neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004). Once it has been accepted by the local community through a Referendum, the neighbourhood plan will form part of the Development Plan.

**Network Rail GRIP:** The Guide to Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) describes how Network Rail manages and controls projects that enhance or renew the national rail network. It covers the project process from inception through to the post-implementation realisation of benefits. It divides a project into eight stages and examines the project at critical stages in its lifecycle to provide assurance that it can successfully progress to the next stage.

**North East Combined Authority (NECA):** A new legal body that brings together the seven councils which serve County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland.

**North East Independent Economic Review:** A critical review of the North East economy carried out by the North East Local Economic Partnership (LEP), in order to identify opportunities for and barriers to the boosting of employment and productivity.

**North East Local Economic Partnership (or 'NELEP'):** A business-led strategic organisation, spanning the North East, apart from the Tees valley area, responsible for promoting and developing economic growth and funded by the seven local authorities and Central Government.

**North East Strategic Economic Plan ('SEP'):** A strategic economic plan for the area of the North-East LEP, with the supplementary title "More and Better Jobs" and dated March 2014.

**Northumberland County Council:** The unitary authority for Northumberland as of 1 April 2009.

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**Northumberland County and National Park Joint Structure Plan:** A development plan document prepared by the former Northumberland County Council that covered strategic matters. Only one policy remains saved from that plan (Policy S5), defining the general extent of the Green Belt extension around Morpeth.

**Northumberland National Park:** Designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, the designation seeks to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park, and to promote opportunities for public understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities. The Park sits entirely within the boundary of Northumberland but is a separate local Planning authority area.

**Northumberland Dark Sky Park:** A defined area of the borders, encompassing Kielder Forest where efforts are made to prevent any additional light pollution and promote the area for this reason. It is currently the largest area of protected night sky in Europe.

**Obligation:** A Planning Obligation is a legally enforceable obligation, entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

**Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Catapult:** Based in Blyth and Glasgow, this is the UK's flagship technology innovation and research centre for offshore wind, wave and tidal energy. It is an independent, not-for-profit business that exists to accelerate the development of offshore wind, wave and tidal technologies.

**Open market residential development:** Housing for sale or rent on the open market, without any restrictions regarding occupation or price.

**Open Space:** Usually used in relation to built-up areas. Refers to all open areas of public value, which can offer opportunities for sport, and recreation, as well as a visual amenity and haven for wildlife. Public open space is where public access may or may not be formally established.

**Outstanding Universal Value (OUV):** Cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity.

**PDL:** See 'Previously Developed Land'.

**Permitted Development:** Certain limited or minor forms of development that may proceed (under Permitted Development Rights, applying the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order) without the need to make an application for planning permission.

**Phasing (housing):** How the building of housing is spread over time within a defined area or on a large housing site. The orderly development of housing can be achieved through a phasing plan – hence 'Phase 1', 'Phase 2' etc. of a development.

**Photovoltaics (PV):** A method of generating electrical power by converting sunlight into direct current electricity using certain semiconducting materials. A photovoltaic system employs solar panels composed of a number of solar cells to supply usable solar power. Groupings of solar panels are called solar farms.

**Planning Condition:** A condition imposed on a grant of planning permission (in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) or a condition included in a Local Development Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

**Planning Obligation:** A legally enforceable obligation, entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

**Portfolio of sites:** Normally referring to the range of employment sites across a defined area, covering the range of sizes and qualities of sites, the types of location they are in and what they are capable of accommodating.

**Previously Developed Land (PDL) or 'Brownfield' Land:** Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.

**Primary Shopping Area:** Defined area where retail development is concentrated (generally comprising the primary and secondary frontages). Primary frontages are likely to include a high proportion of retail uses which may include food, drinks, clothing, and household goods. Secondary frontages provide greater opportunities for a diversity of uses such as restaurants, cinemas, and businesses.

**Ramsar sites:** Wetlands of international importance, designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention.

**Regeneration:** The economic, social and environmental renewal and improvement of rural and urban areas.

**Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS):** The former regional tier of the development plan (the RSS for the North-East, 2008), which was abolished in 2013, using powers in the Localism Act 2011. Instead, Councils across the region now have a duty to cooperate on strategic planning issues.

**Registered Battlefields:** An area designated in the English Heritage Register of Historic Battlefields, the purpose of which is to offer them protection and to promote a better understanding of their historic significance.

**Registered Parks and Gardens (Historic Parks and Gardens):** An area designated by English Heritage for its value as a historic planned landscape or garden. As with Listed Buildings they can be graded I (highest quality), II\* or II.

**Renewable and low carbon energy:** Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of

## Glossary

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oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).

**Residual waste:** Waste remaining after materials for re-use, recycling and composting have been removed.

**Resource area:** An area within which a particular mineral, or energy resource occurs.

**Rural exception sites:** Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. Small numbers of market homes may be allowed at the local authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.

**Safeguarded land:** Undeveloped land on the outskirts of an inset settlement within the Green Belt. The safeguarded land is not itself designated as Green Belt but, instead, remains as a long term allocation or as "White Land" that is safeguarded for the future expansion needs of the settlement concerned.

**Safeguarding:** The protection of valuable areas of land from disturbance and/or development, due to the presence of natural assets, mineral resource or possible future proposals (such as a bypass line).

**Scenarios:** Different possible outcomes – in this case regarding the growth and health of communities – depending on different 'inputs' – in this case the amount of land allocated for housing and employment and the ability for those houses and workplaces to be delivered on the ground.

**Scheduled Monument:** Sites that contain deliberately created structures, features and remains that are of national importance and for which scheduling is the best means of protecting them.

**Sequential approach:** A planning principle that seeks to identify, allocate or develop certain types or locations of land before the consideration of others. For example, (for housing) low flood risk before higher; or prioritising brownfield land before greenfield; or (for shops and certainty types of services) preferring town centres before out of town locations.

**Service Centres:** The second tier of settlements, below Main Towns, which provide local services to their surrounding areas and have a housing and employment role. They were defined at the previous consultation stage, following an audit of services and facilities within the settlements across the county. They are Allendale, Belford, Bellingham, Corbridge, Haydon Bridge, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Rothbury, Seahouses, Seaton Delaval and Wooler.

**Setting:** The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

**Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI):** Defined area containing nationally important wildlife or geology designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

**Site thresholds (affordable housing):** The minimum size that a market housing site must be (in terms of its area or the number of dwellings proposed) in order to trigger a requirement for affordable housing to be provided as part of / in association with the development, (assuming that a local need for affordable housing has been identified in an up-to-date assessment). The provision is secured through a legal agreement following negotiation between the Council and the developer, which must take account of viability.

**Social rented housing:** See 'Affordable Housing'.

**Spatial Vision:** A brief description of how the area is envisioned to have changed by the end of the plan period, as a result of the policies being implemented.

**Special Areas of Conservation (SAC):** Areas given special protection under the European Union's Habitats Directive, which is transposed into UK law by the Habitats and Conservation of Species Regulations 2010.

**Special Protection Areas (SPA):** Areas which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds found within European Union countries. They are European designated sites, classified under the Birds Directive.

**Stalled sites (housing):** Sites that have planning permission for housing but where building has not started or has ceased. This may reflect the changing economic climate, whereby obligations previously secured, or certain planning conditions add to the cost of implementing the development to the point where it becomes unviable and is 'stalled'.

**Statement of Community Involvement (SCI):** The Council's approach to involving the community in the planning process and development management decisions.

**Sterilisation (minerals):** When development or land use changes prevent the possible future extraction of an underlying mineral resource.

**Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA):** An assessment of sites put forward as having potential for new housing, examining their constraints, marketability etc. and arriving at a possible yield of new houses (if any), with a view to achieving a five year supply of deliverable housing land.

**Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA):** An assessment of the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that an area (in this case Northumberland) is likely to need over the plan period in order to meet household and population projections, taking account of migration and demographic change.

**Strategic Land Review:** A document examining the availability of land in towns, villages or over wider areas, (through the SHLAA, Employment Land Review or other assessments), alongside the constraints to development, in order to reach conclusions on the capacity of the settlement to absorb development.

## Glossary

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**Strategic Road Network (SRN):** The trunk road network, managed by Highways England (formerly the Highways Agency). In Northumberland, this is the A1, A19 and A69.

**SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems):** A sequence of water management practices and facilities designed to drain surface water in a manner that will provide a more sustainable approach than more conventional practices, such as routing run-off through a pipe to a watercourse.

**Superfast Broadband:** Superfast broadband speeds are headline download speeds of greater than 24Mbps.

**Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs):** Non-statutory documents which add further detail to the policies in statutory documents such as the core strategy – e.g. providing guidance on design in general or on the development of specific sites. SPDs are capable of being a material consideration but do not form part of the development plan.

**Supply chain:** The sequence or network (across space and time) of people, businesses or other organisations involved in moving products or services from suppliers to customers. The customers may themselves be manufacturers or service industries supplying consumers with products or services.

**Sustainability Appraisal (SA):** The process of weighing and assessing policies for their global, national and local sustainability implications in relation to the environment, the economy and society, incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to comply with EU Directive 2001/42/EC.

**Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS):** A long-term programme of action, published on behalf of the community which reflects the needs and aspirations of the area. (The Northumberland SCS was published in May 2011).

**Sustainable development** Defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". The Government makes clear that sustainable development has economic, social and environmental dimensions which are further explained in the NPPF.

**Sustainable transport modes:** Any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, low and ultra low emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.

**Tenure (housing):** The ownership or rental status of dwellings – i.e. whether they are owner-occupied (owned outright / being bought with a mortgage), privately rented, rented from housing associations or rented from local authorities.

**Town centre uses:** The land uses that would normally be located in Commercial Centres of main towns and service centres, including retailing, a range of leisure uses and office uses.

**Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order:** The national statutory instrument that allows for certain types of development without the need to apply for planning permission – i.e. Permitted Development Rights.

**Viability Assessment:** Compares the likely broad value of planned development likely to come forward over the plan period with the likely costs and constraints, in order to understand the deliverability of the plan and provide certainty and sustainability.

**Village green (or town green):** Under the Commons Act 2006, a village or town green is defined as a local space within a village or other settlement that has been used by people over a period of time for recreational activities and has protected status.

**Washed-over:** A term that refers to any village or hamlet or grouping of buildings which is itself part of the Green Belt designation – i.e. 'washed-over' by the Green Belt rather than inset within it – by virtue of their open character and/or important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt. Green Belt restrictions apply within these places with the exception that limited infilling may be permitted within the built-up area, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including the settlement in Green Belt in the first place.

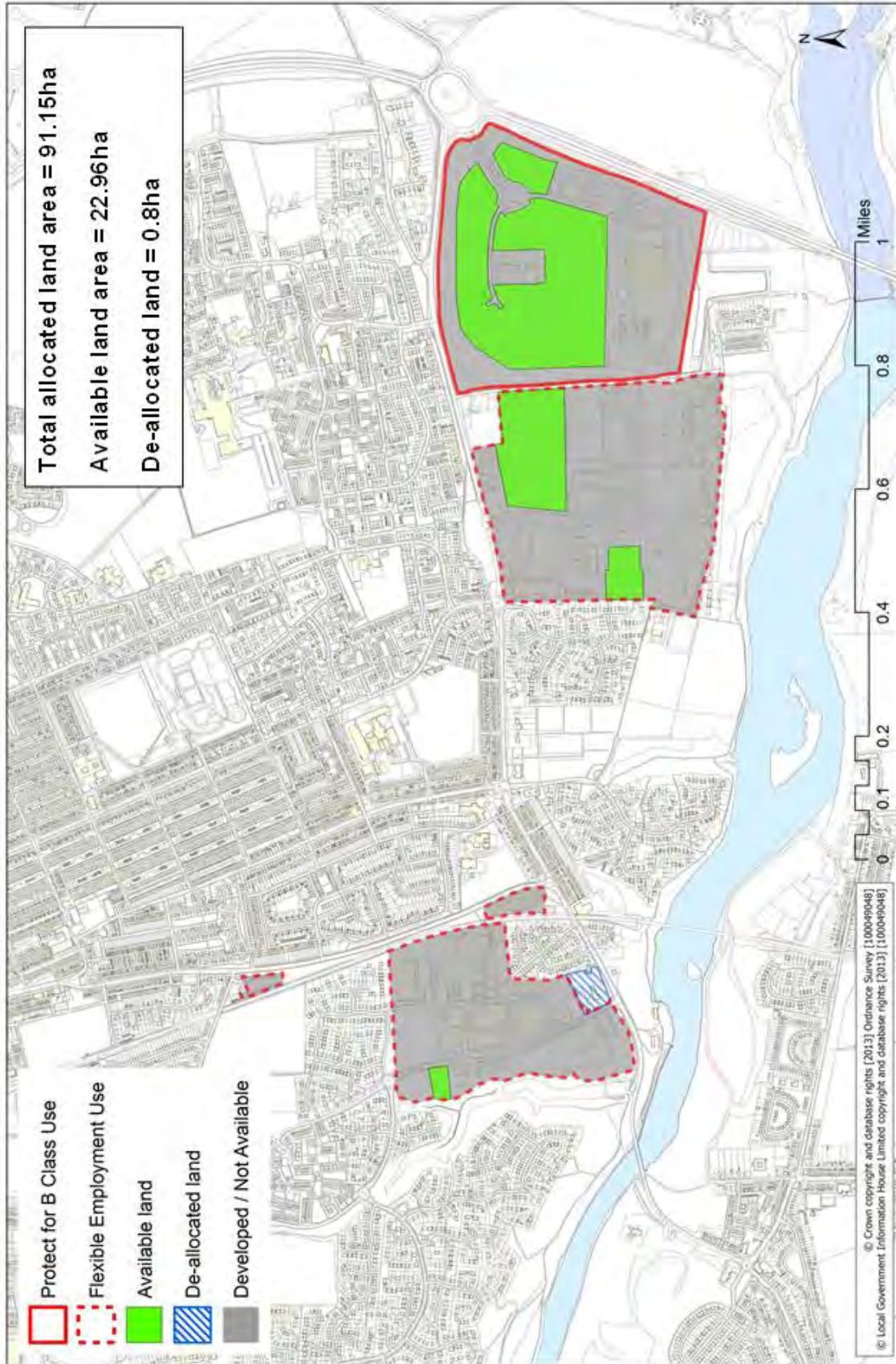
**Waste streams:** Sub-divisions of waste, such as household waste, commercial waste, hazardous waste etc., which will be dealt with in different ways.

**Windfall:** A site proposed for development without having first been identified or allocated through a local plan. Assumptions can be made as to how much these will contribute to overall development requirements and criteria-based policies can be set out to deal with them.

**World Heritage Site (WHS):** A cultural or natural site of outstanding universal value, designated by an international council of experts, Hadrian's Wall being the only example falling within Northumberland.



Ashington - South

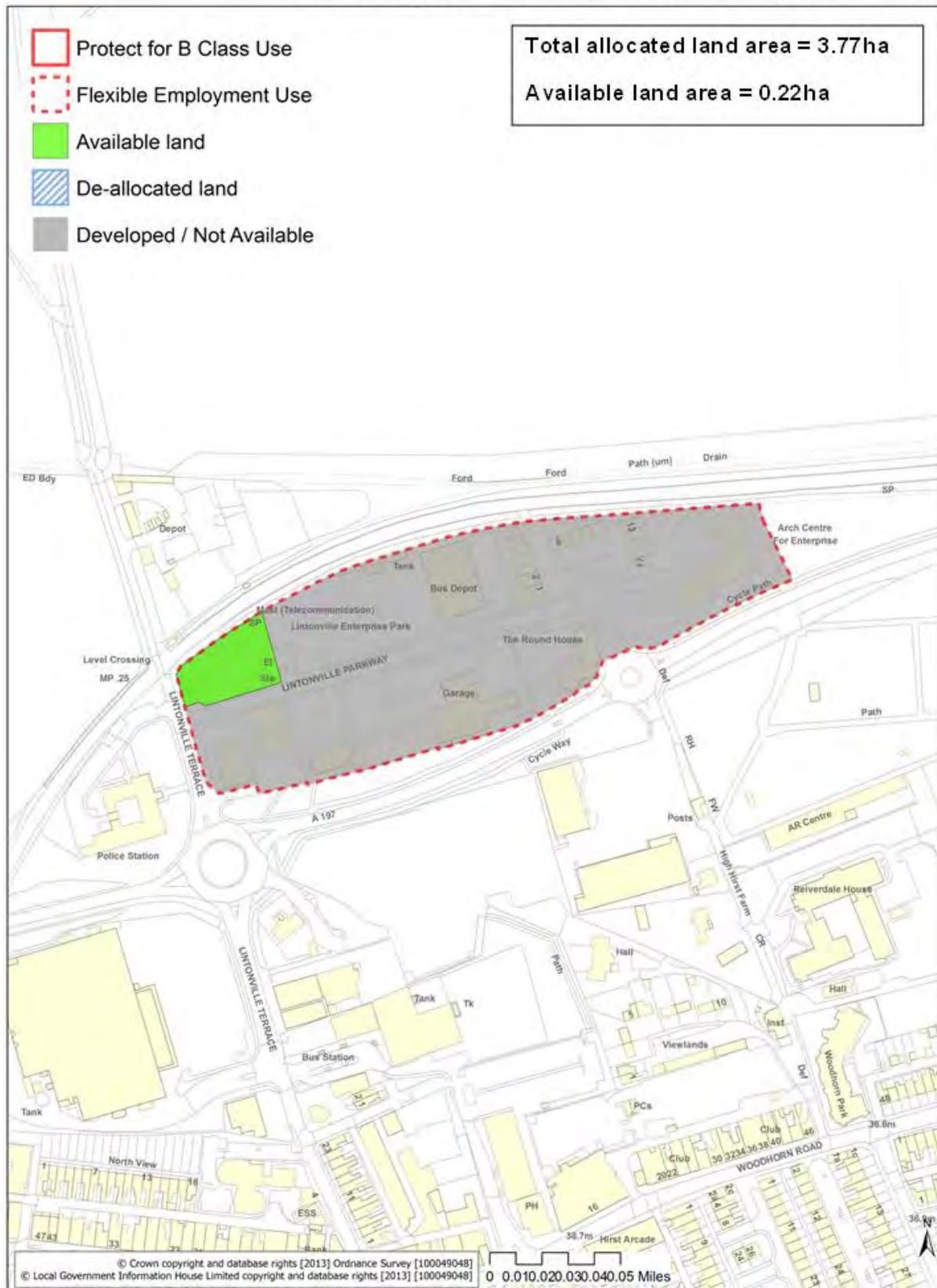


# Appendix A: Employment land portfolio

## Ashington - Wansbeck Business Park

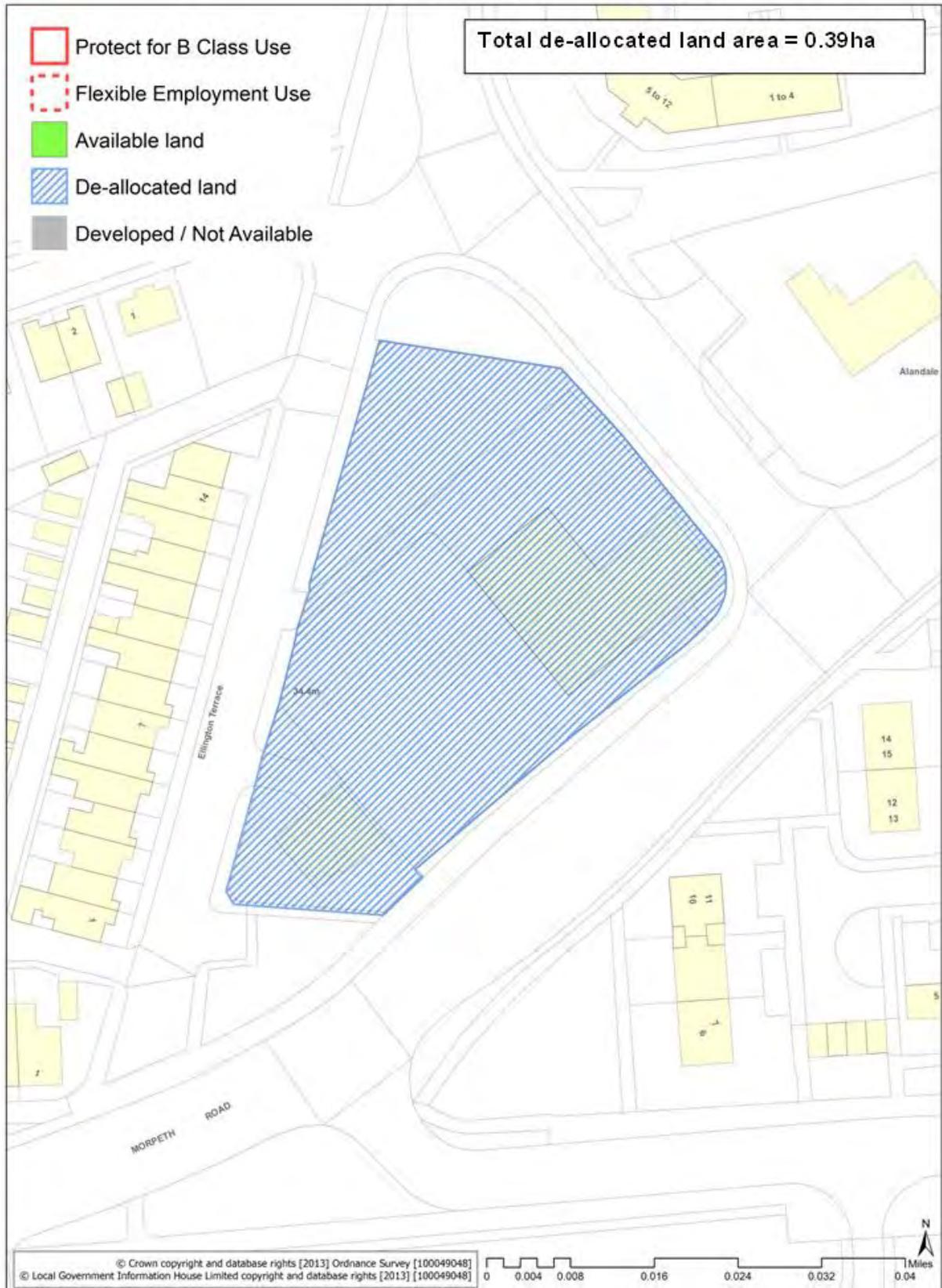


### Ashington - Lintonville Enterprise Park

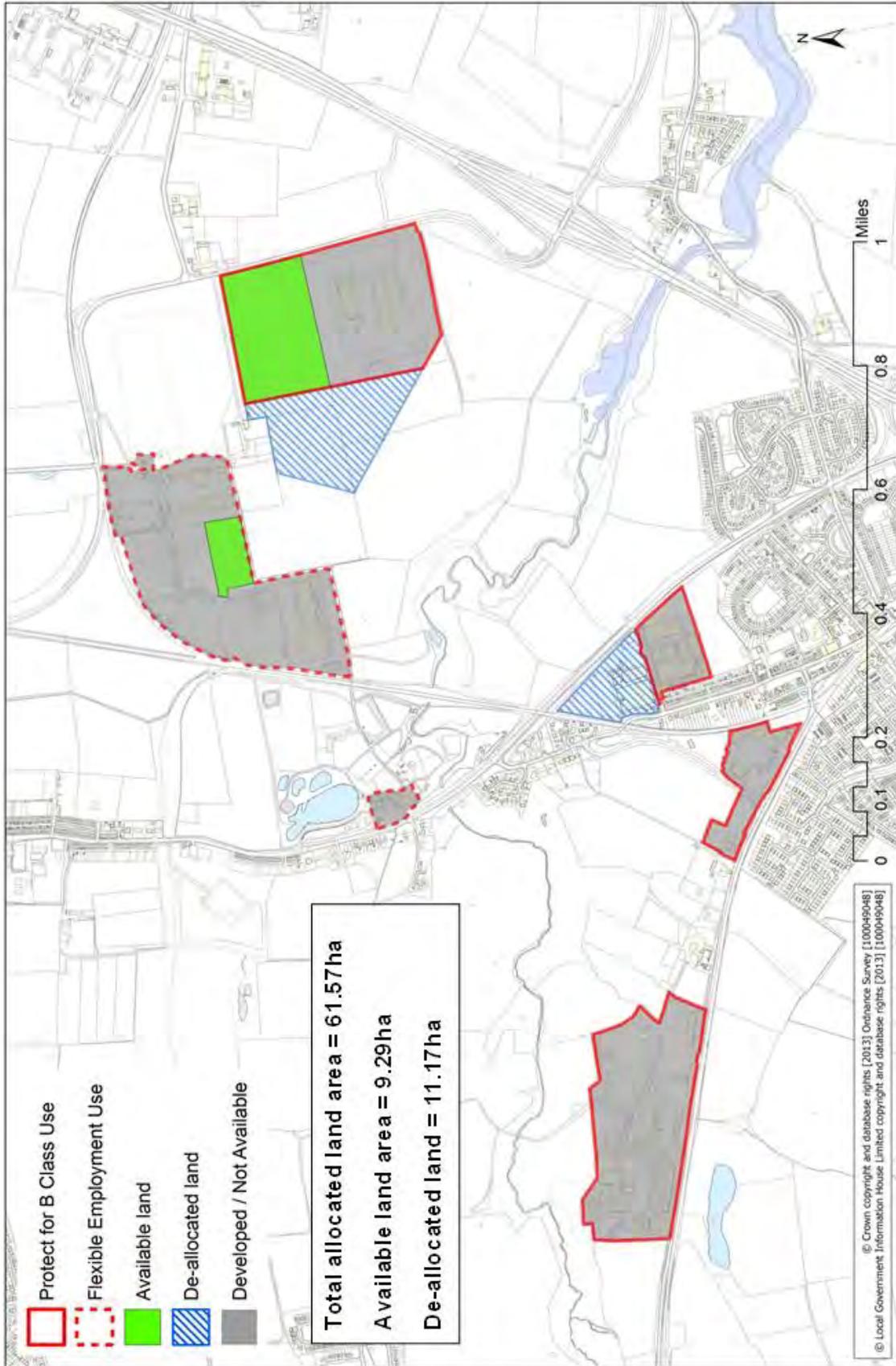


# Appendix A: Employment land portfolio

## Ashington - Ellington Road Ends

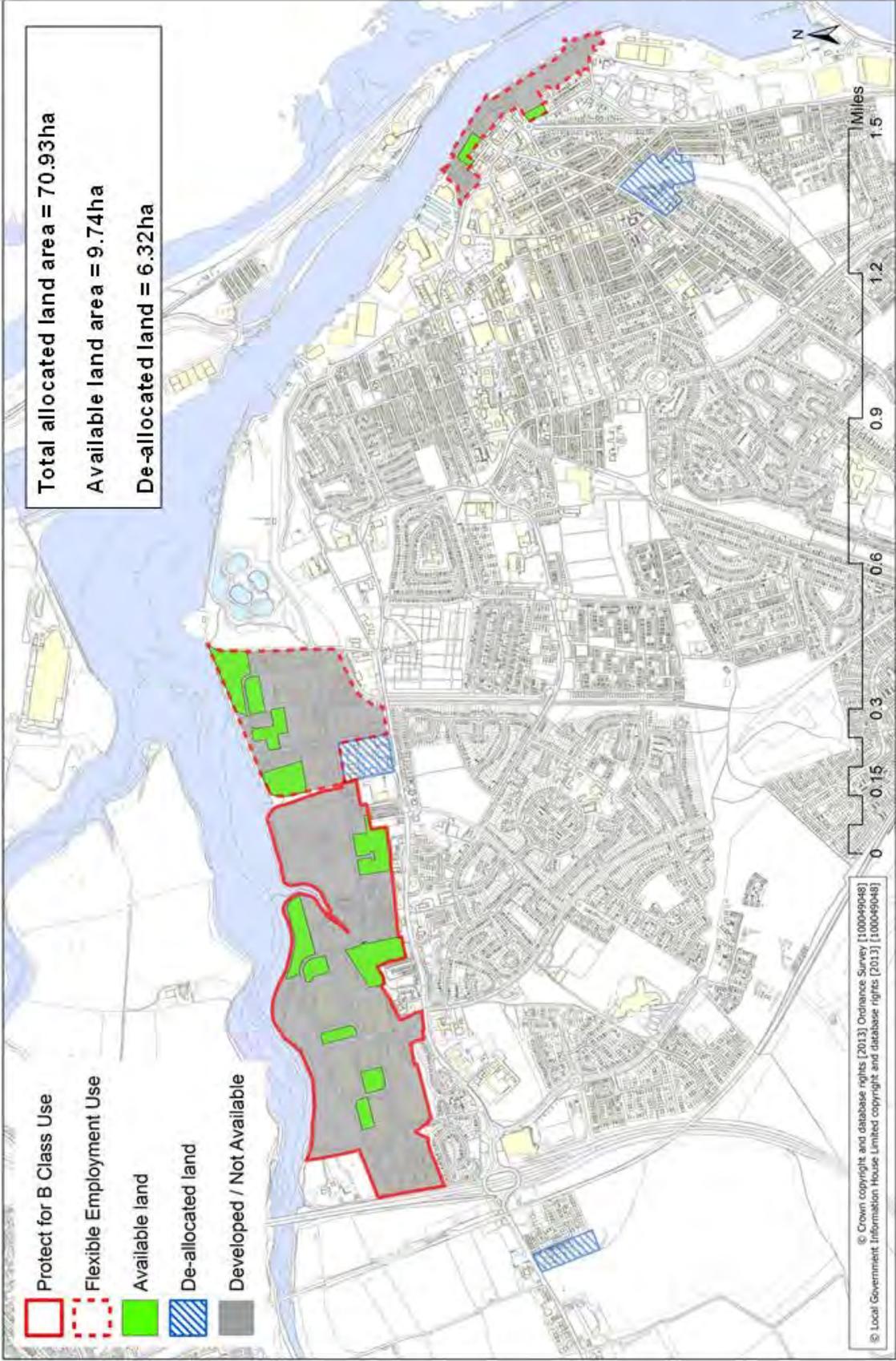


Bedlington/Sleekburn



Appendix A: Employment land portfolio

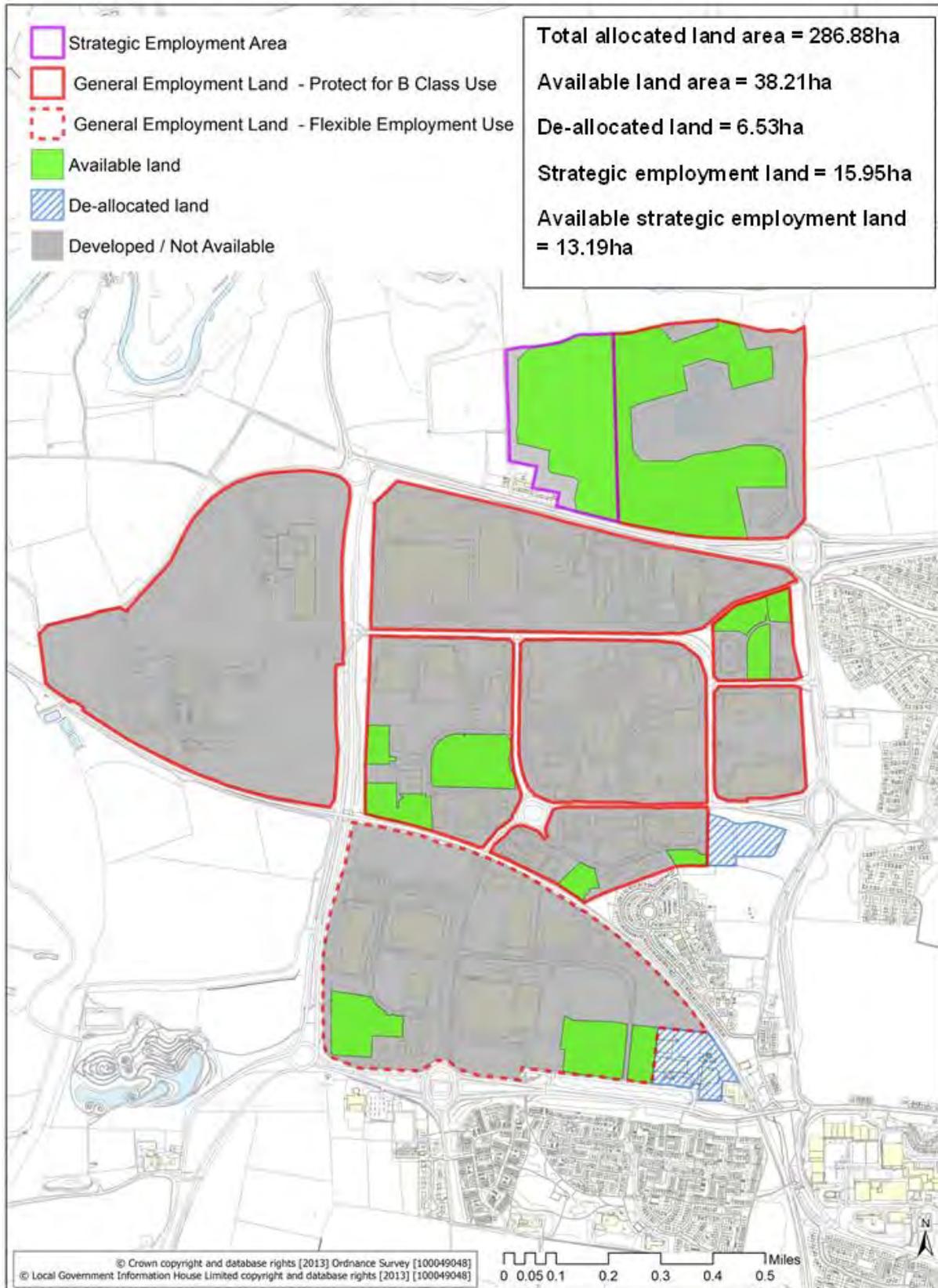
Blyth



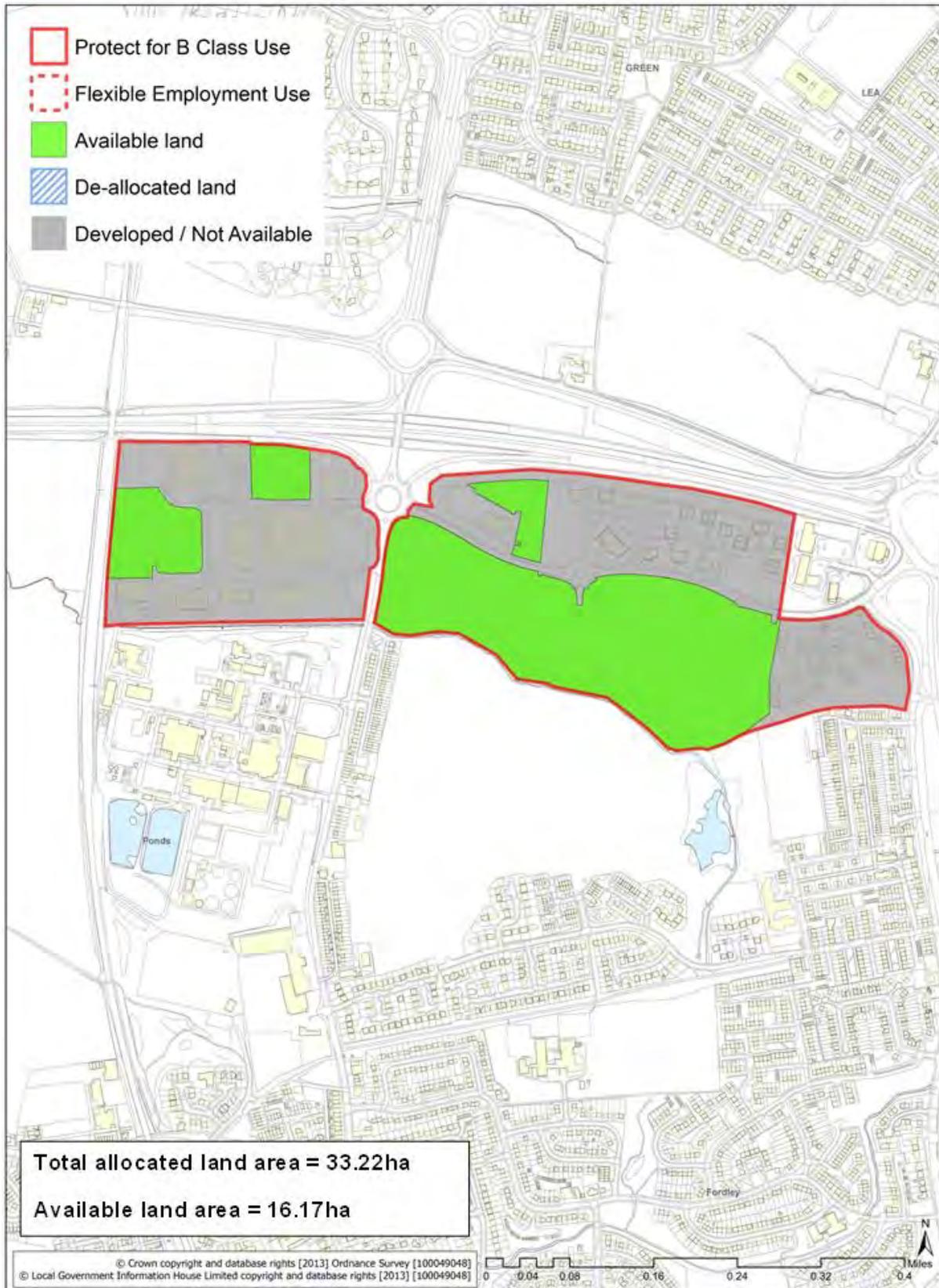
New Delaval



North West Cramlington

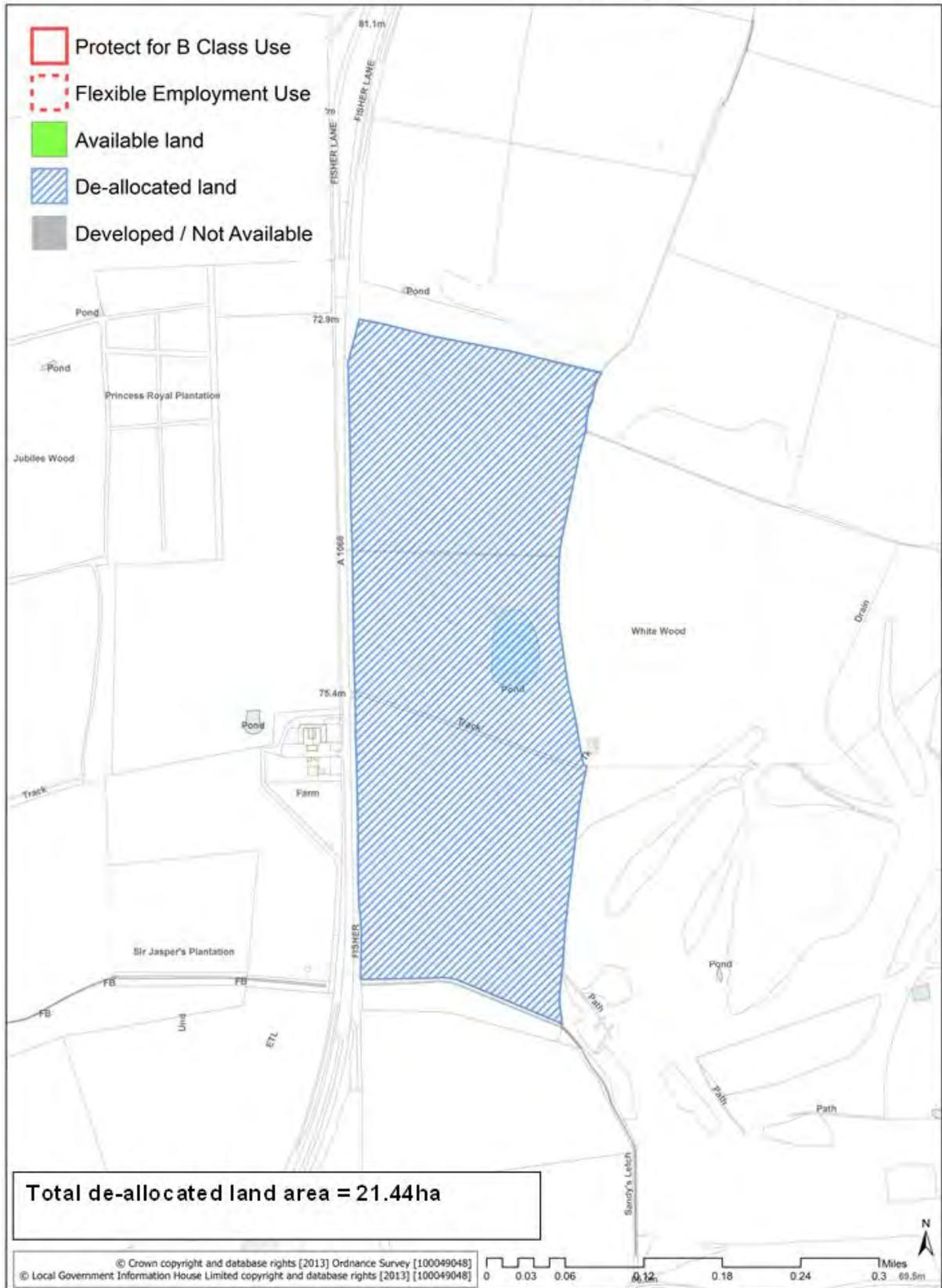


### Cramlington - Northumberland Business Park



# Appendix A: Employment land portfolio

## Cramlington - Fisher Lane



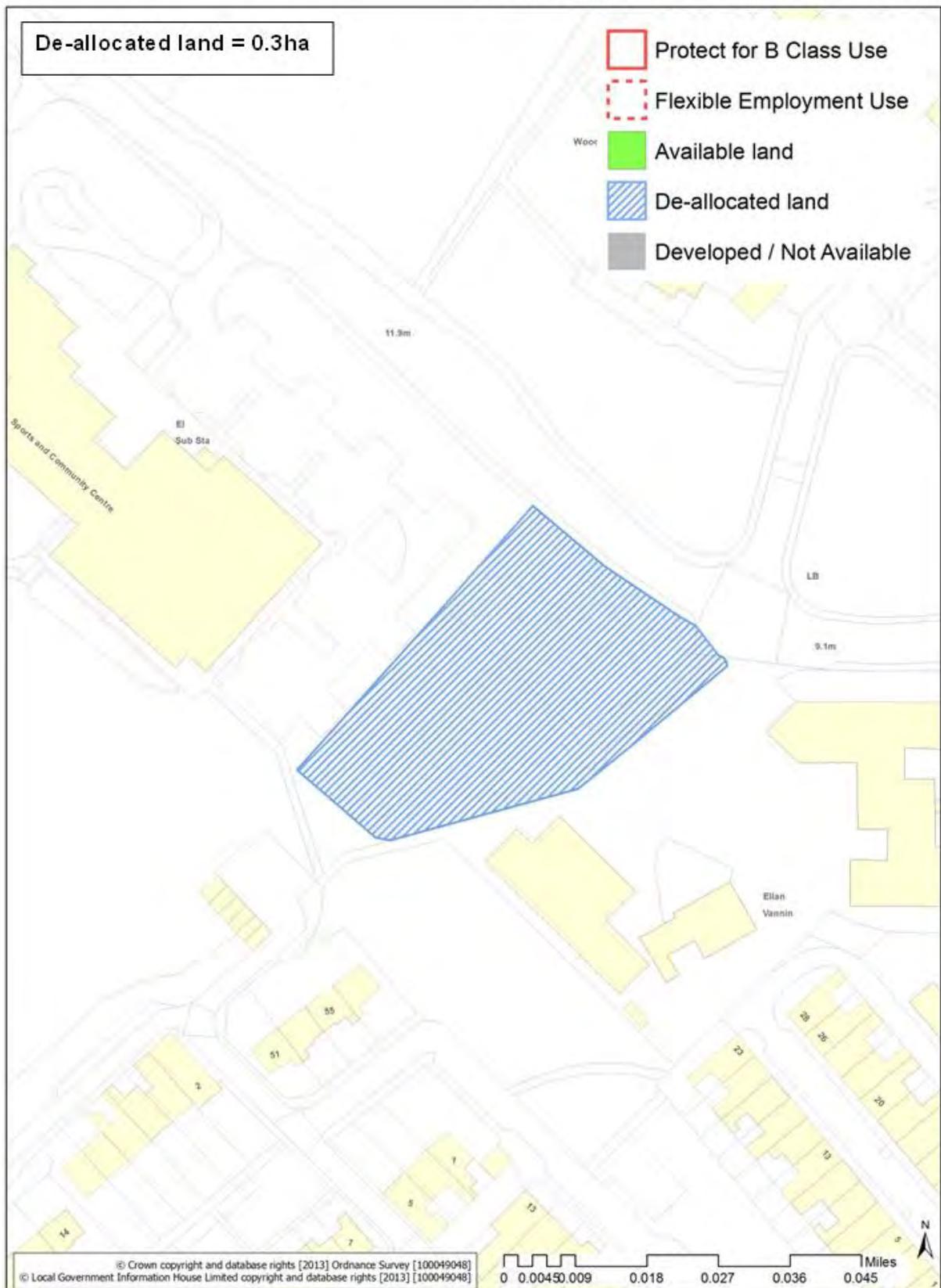
Cramlington - East Cramlington



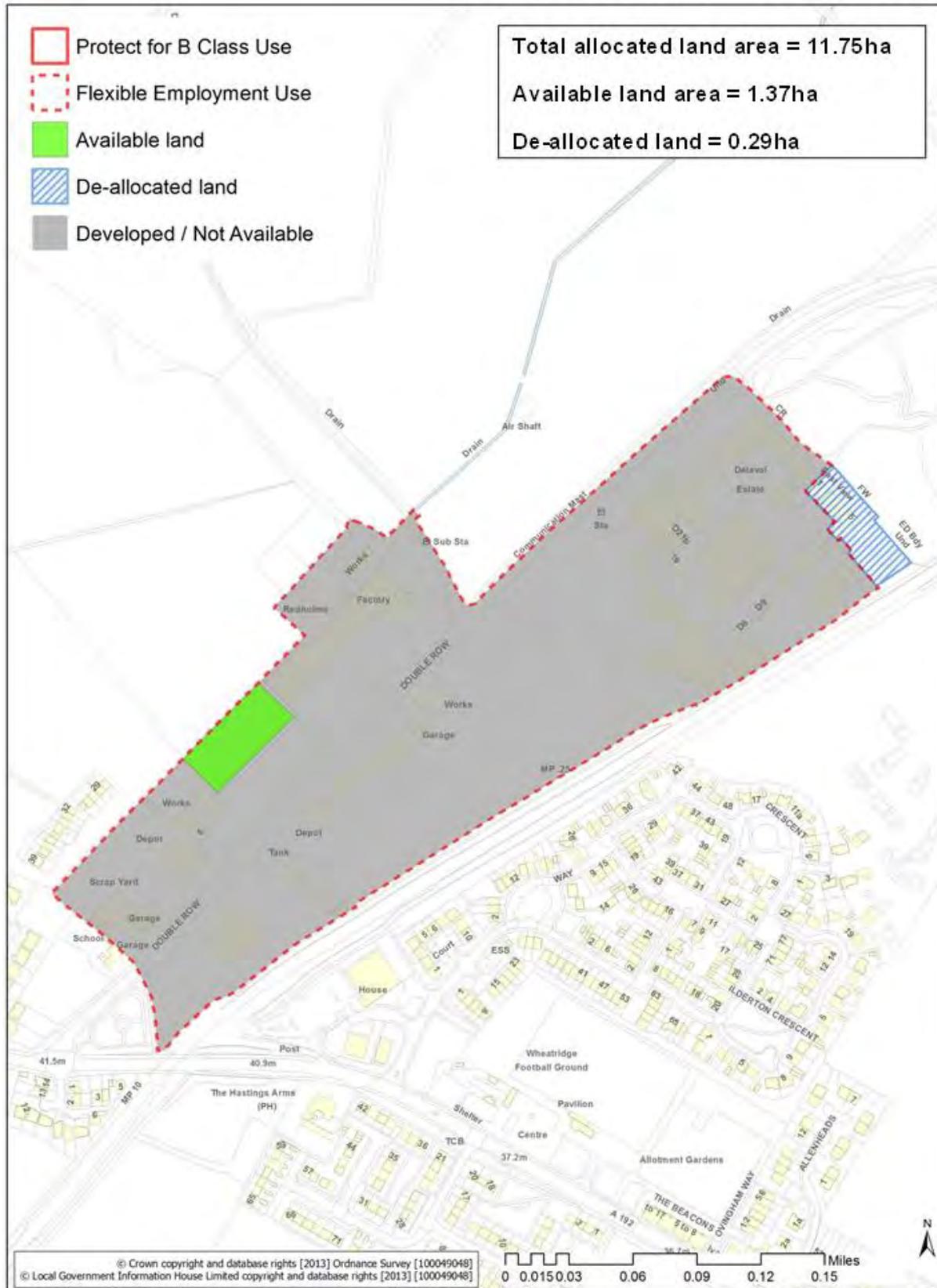
# Appendix A: Employment land portfolio

## South East Northumberland Delivery Area – Service Centres

### Newbiggin - Woodhorn Road



Seaton Delaval - Double Row



# Appendix A: Employment land portfolio

## Seaton Delaval - Avenue Row





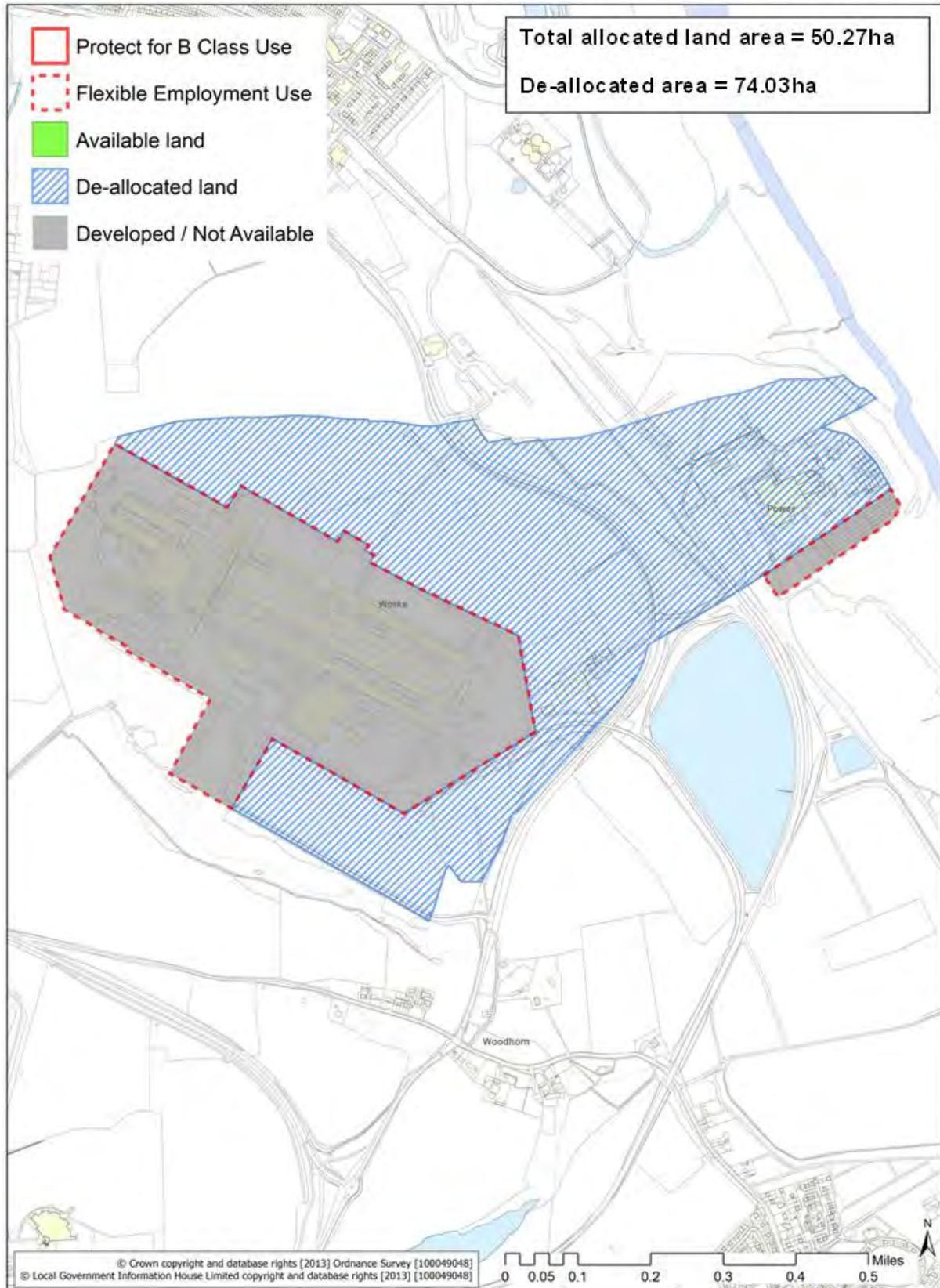


Hadston

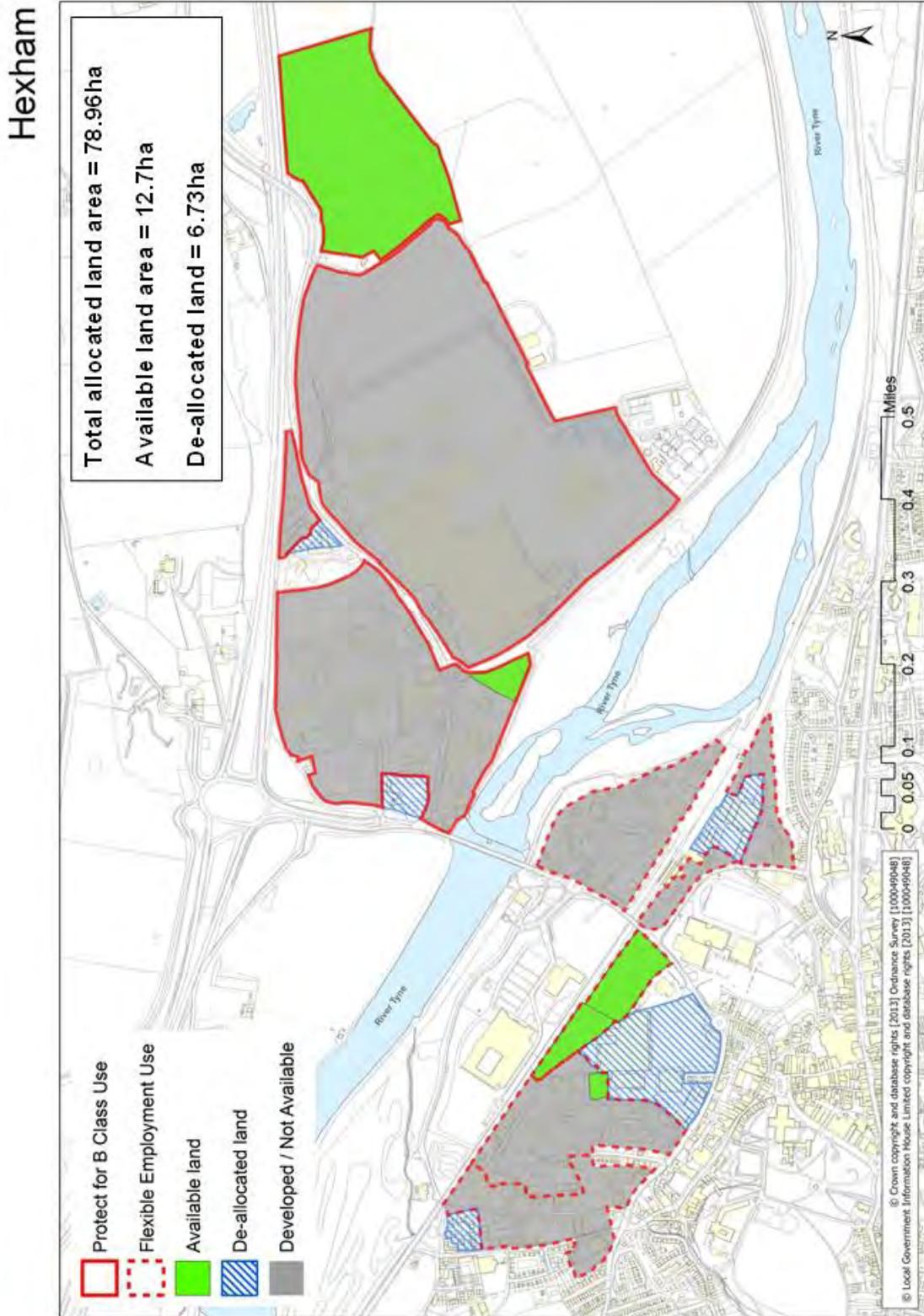




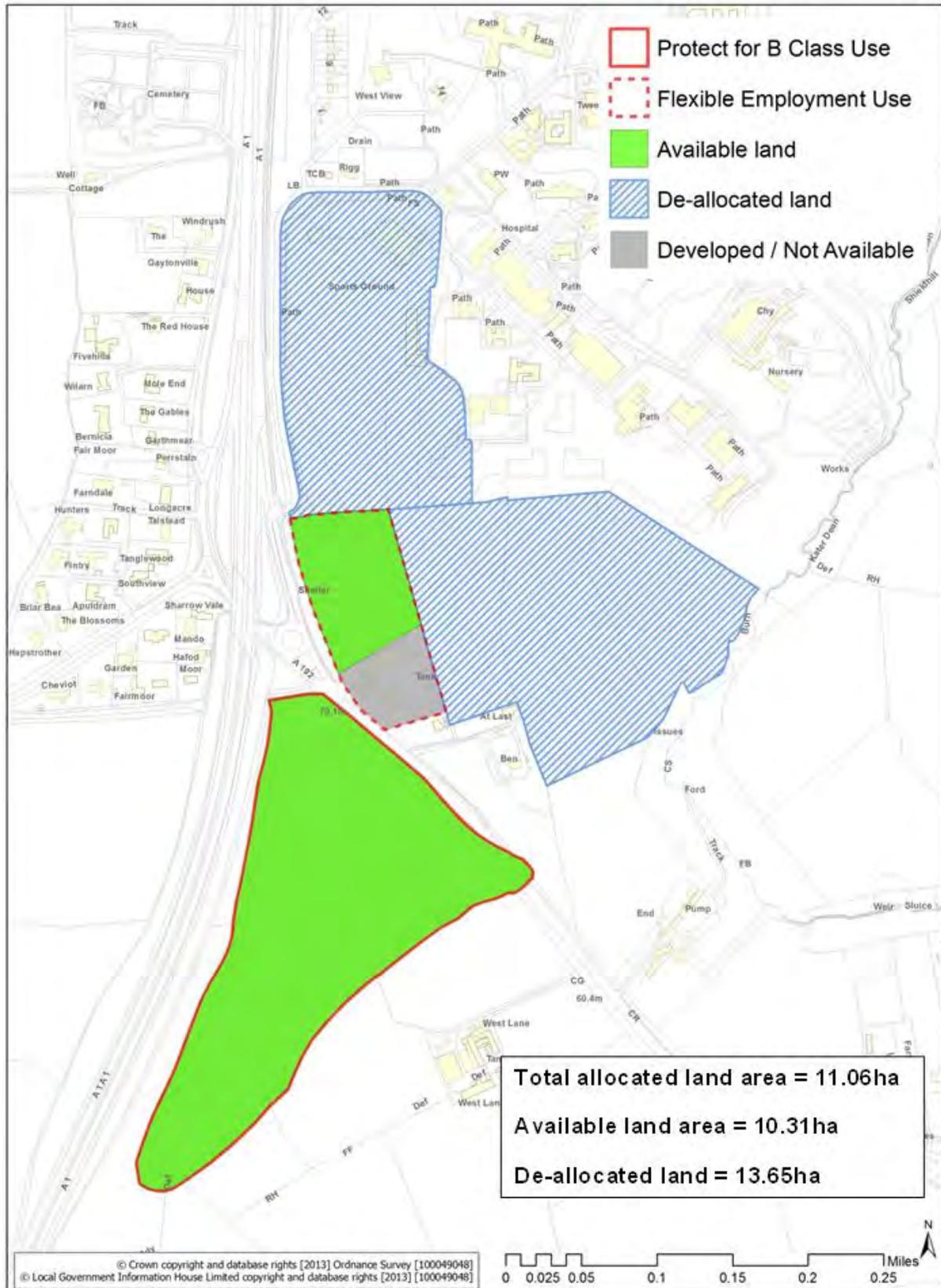
### Lynemouth - Former Alcan Site



Central Northumberland Delivery Area – Main Towns

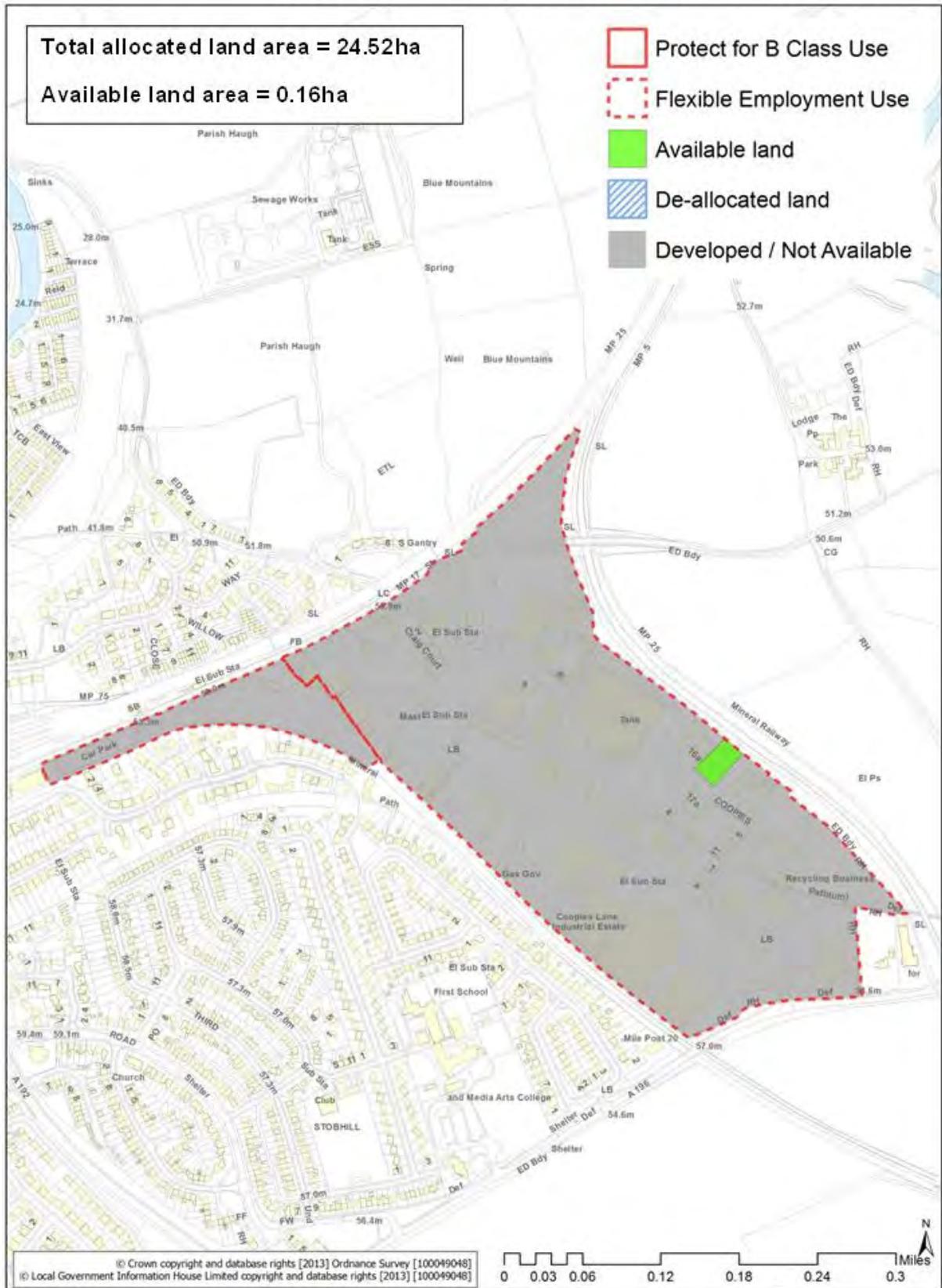


Morpeth - Fairmoor

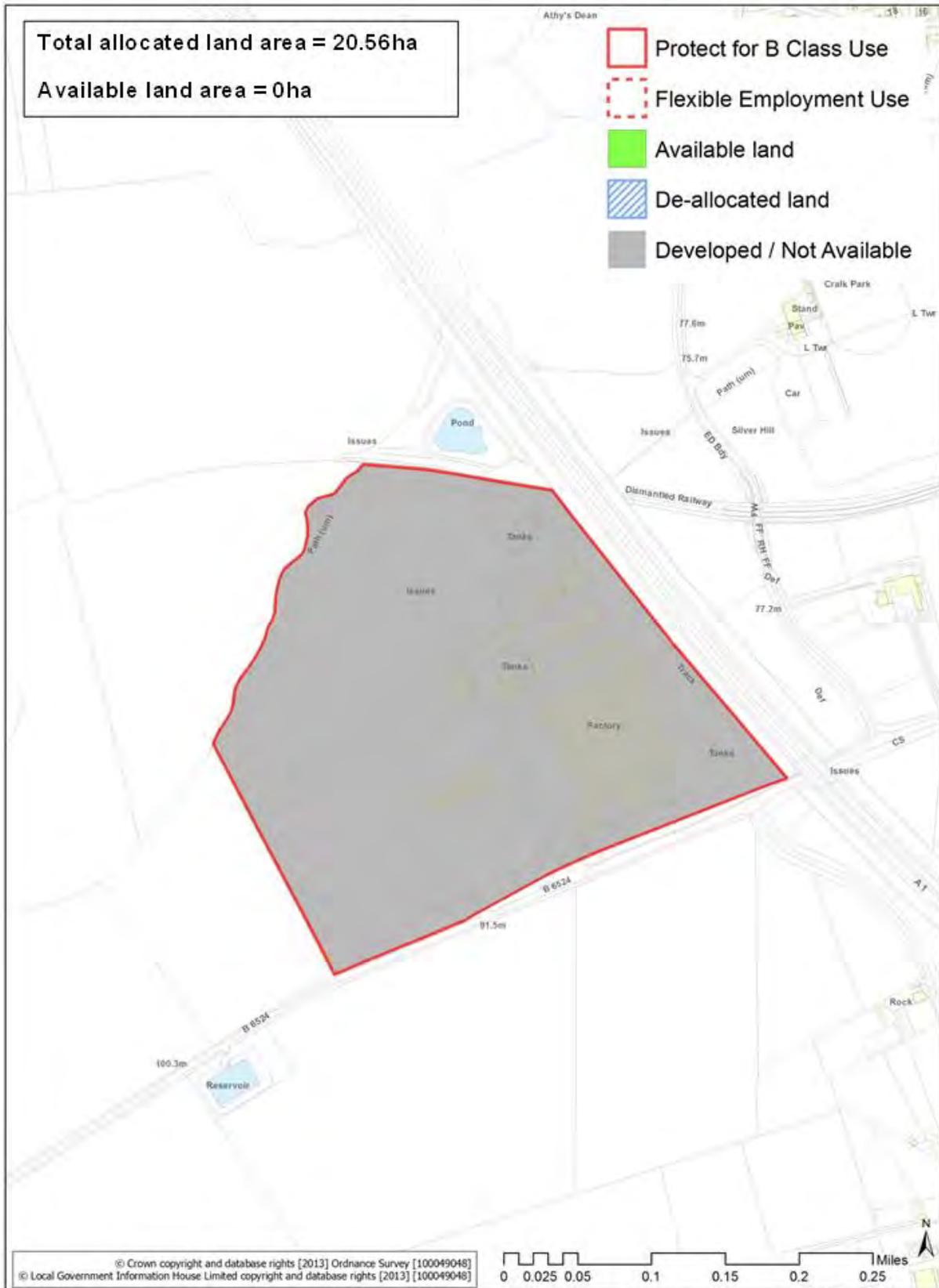


# Appendix A: Employment land portfolio

## Morpeth - Coopies Lane & Railway Yards

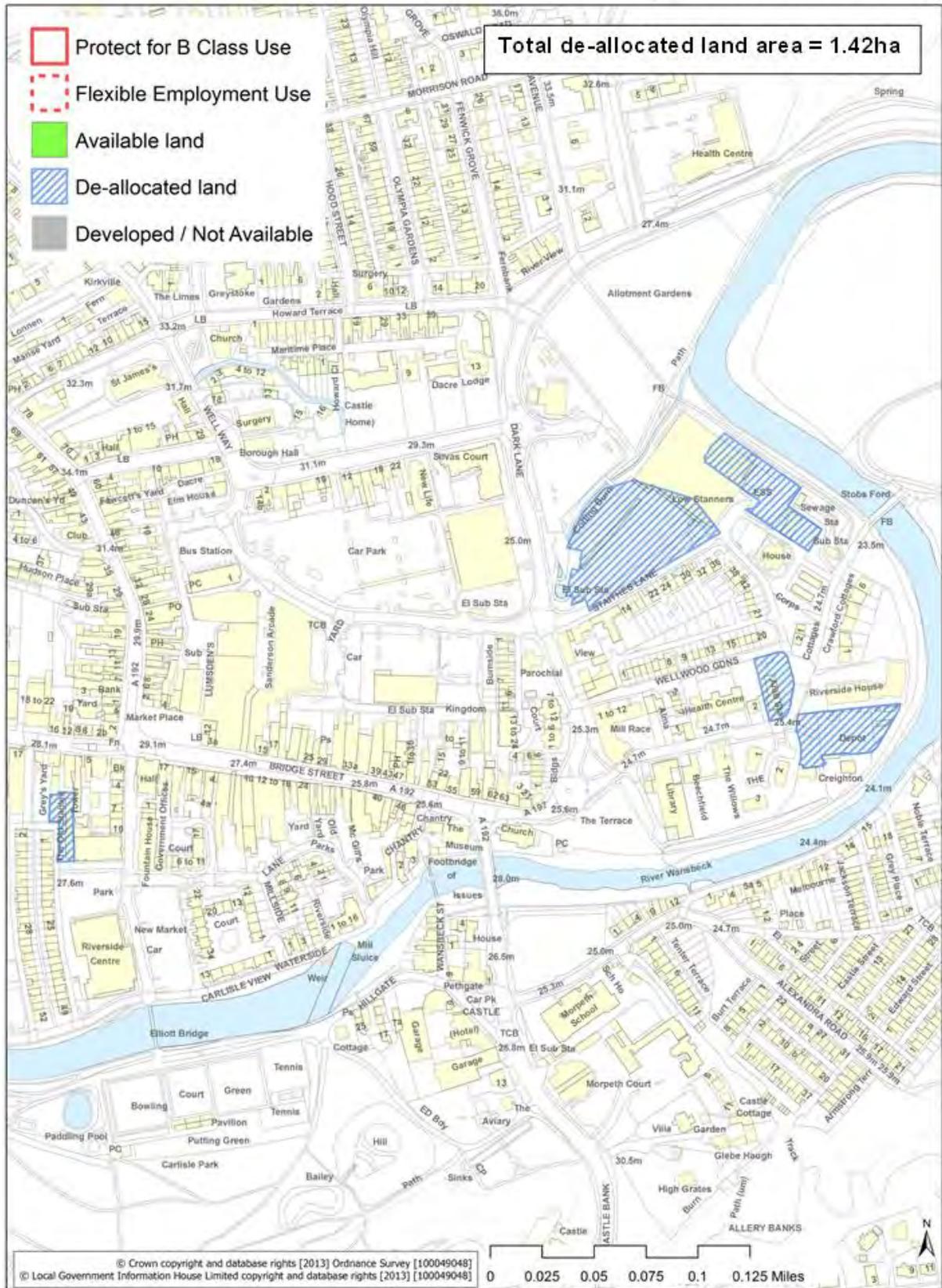


Morpeth - Whalton Road



# Appendix A: Employment land portfolio

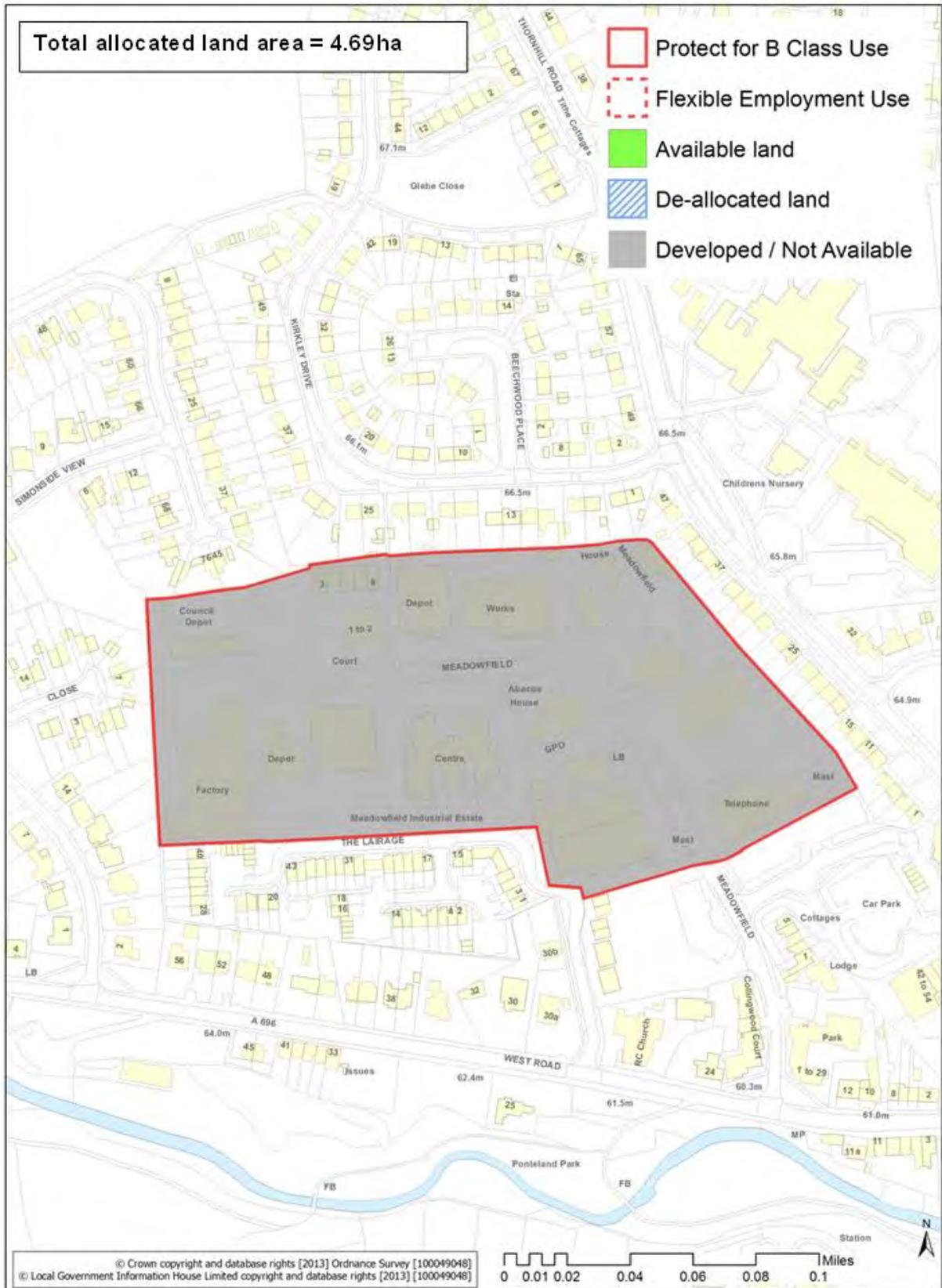
## Morpeth Town Centre





# Appendix A: Employment land portfolio

## Ponteland - Meadowfield

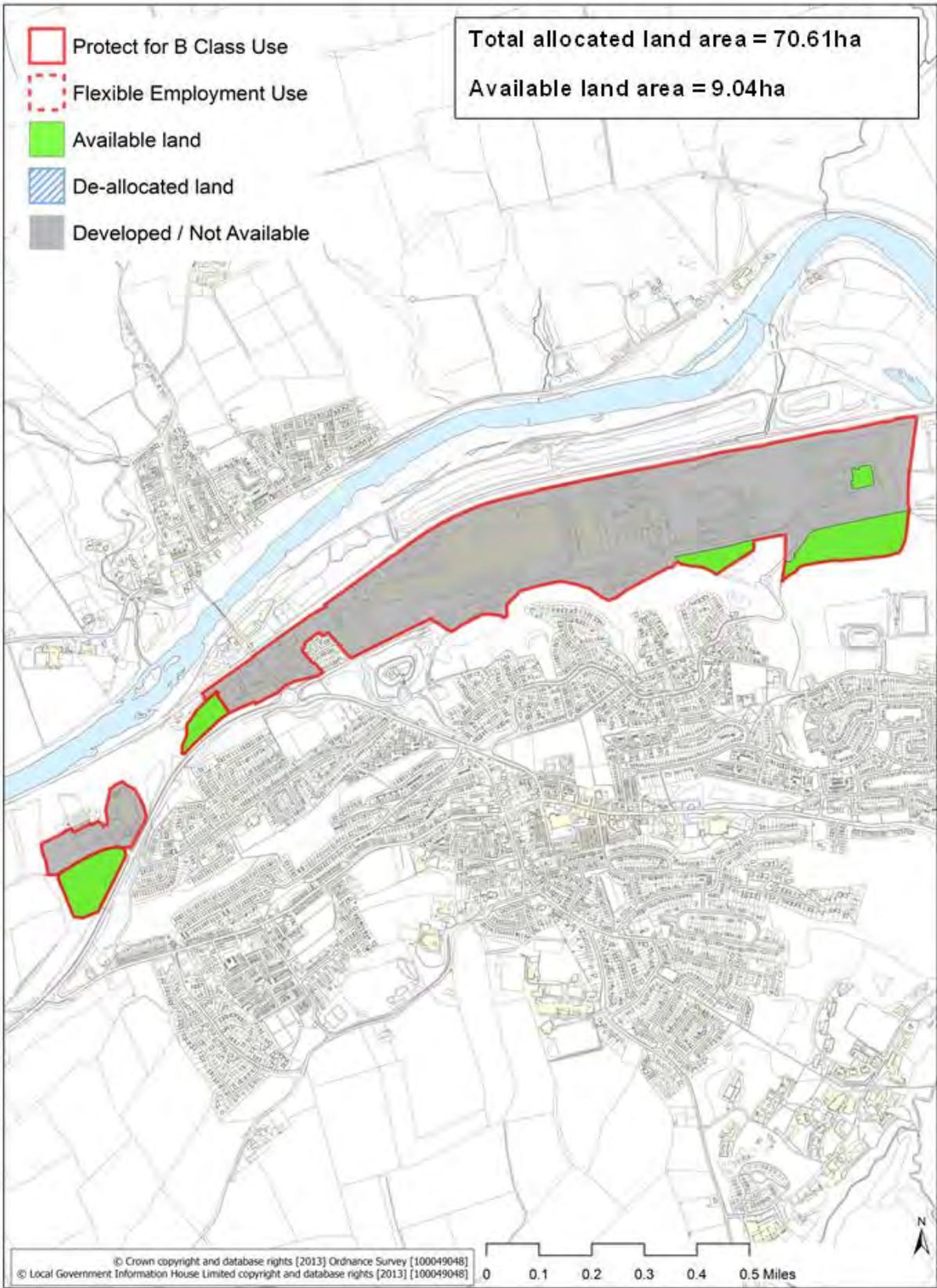


Ponteland - Office Park



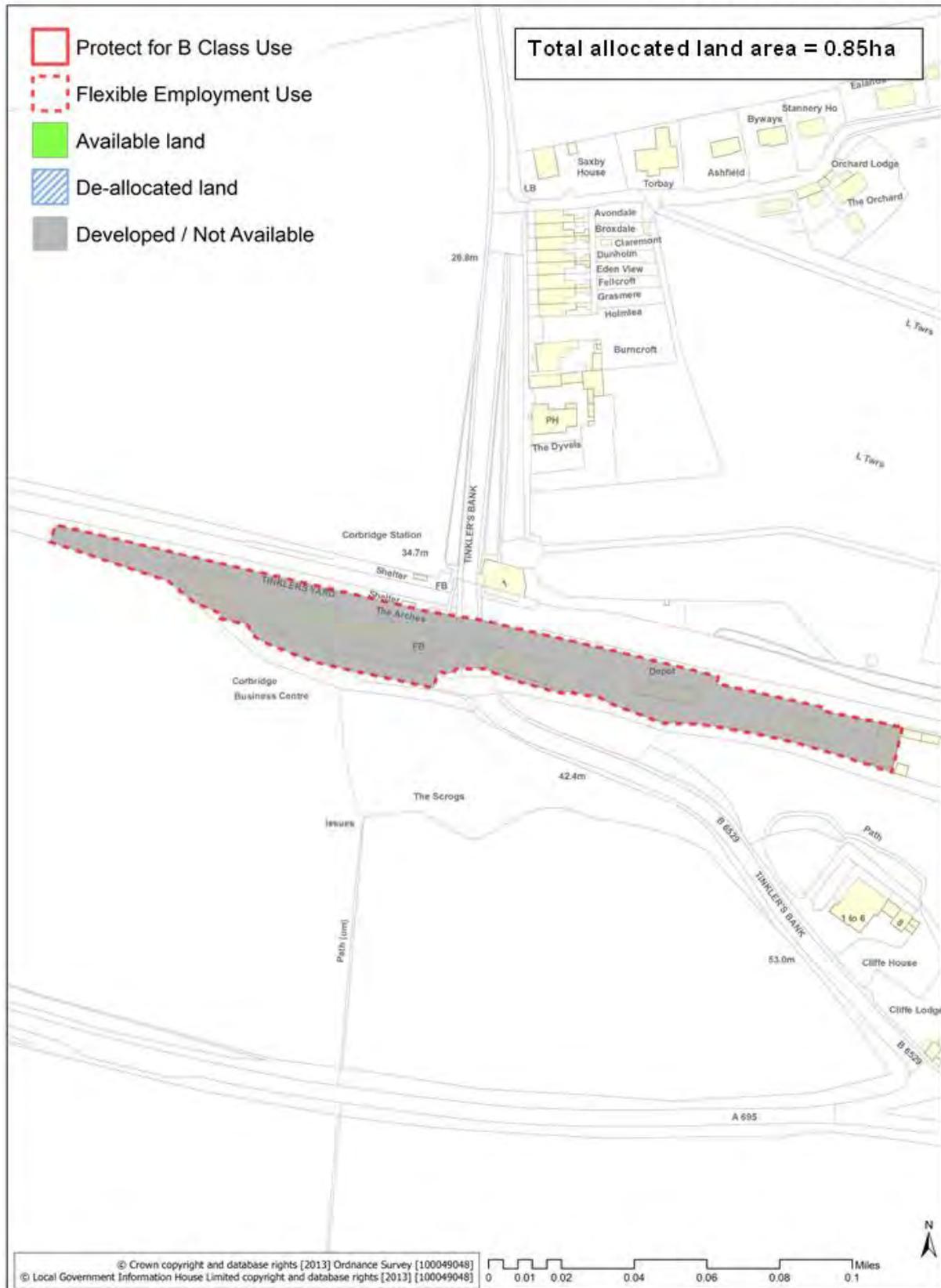
Appendix A: Employment land portfolio

Prudhoe



## Central Northumberland Delivery Area – Service Centre

### Corbridge Station





### Acomb - Howford Quarry



# Appendix A: Employment land portfolio

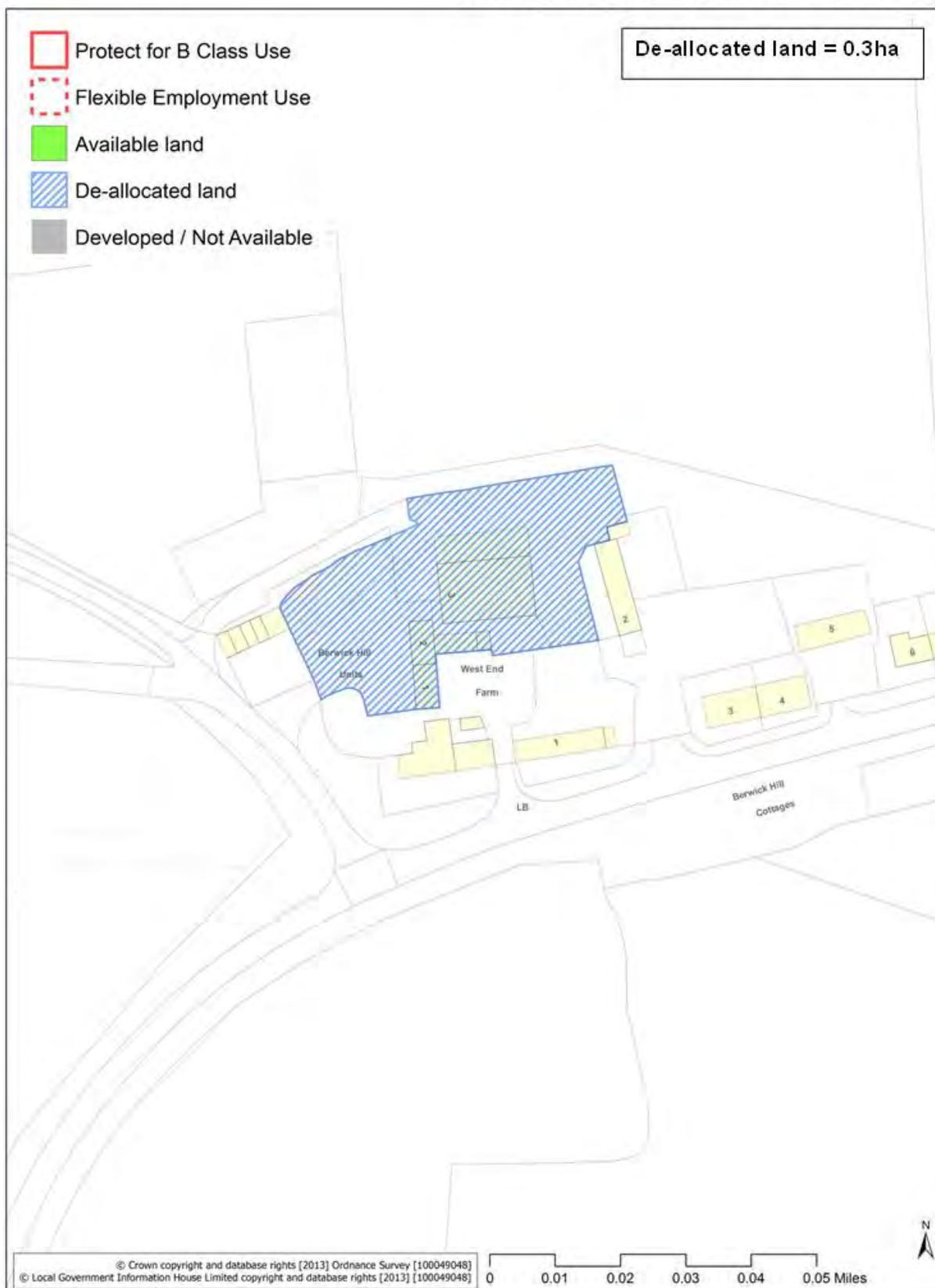
## Blagdon - Milkhope Centre



### Blagdon - New Kennels



### Berwick Hill - West End Farm

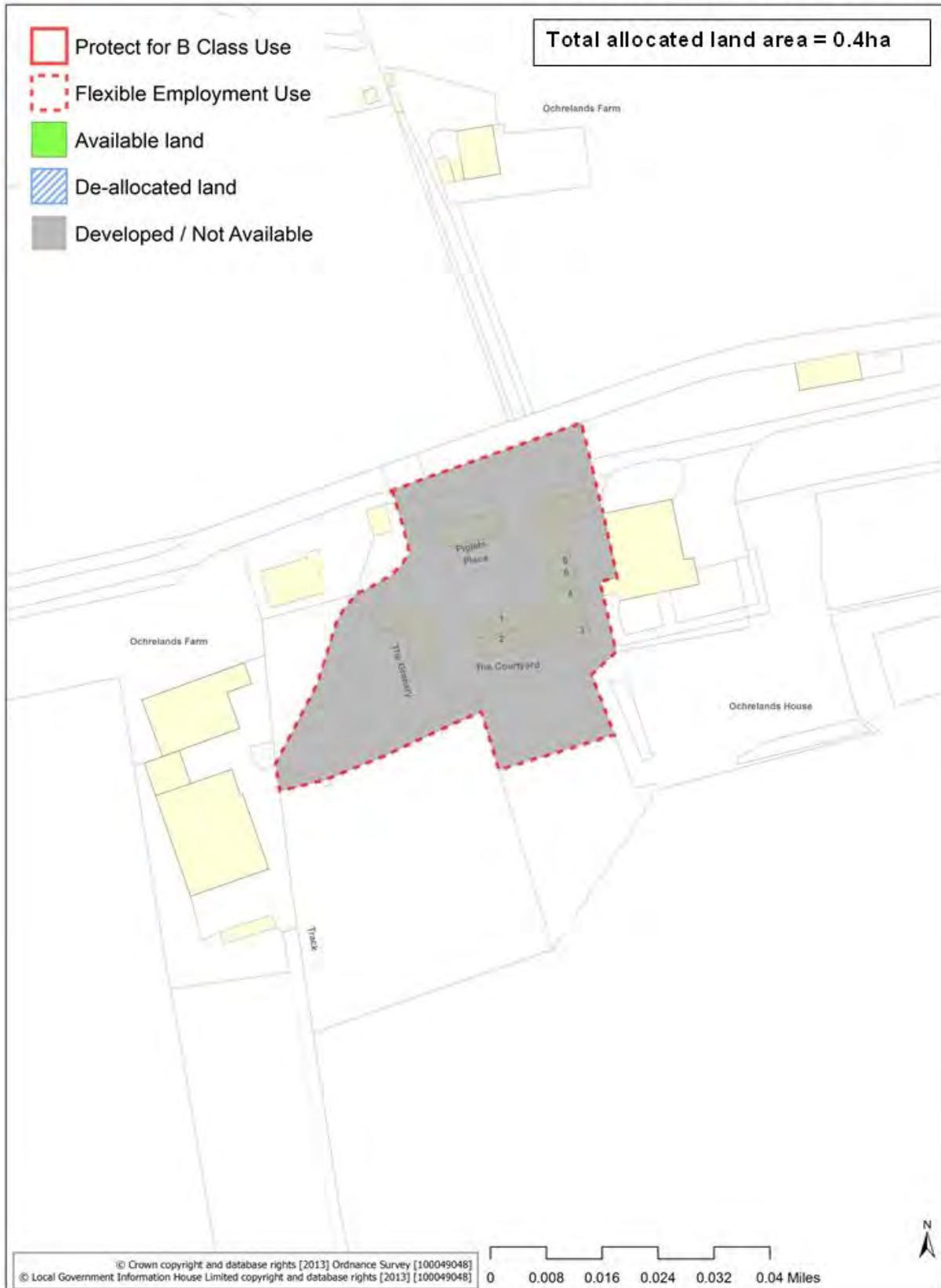


Bywell Home Farm



# Appendix A: Employment land portfolio

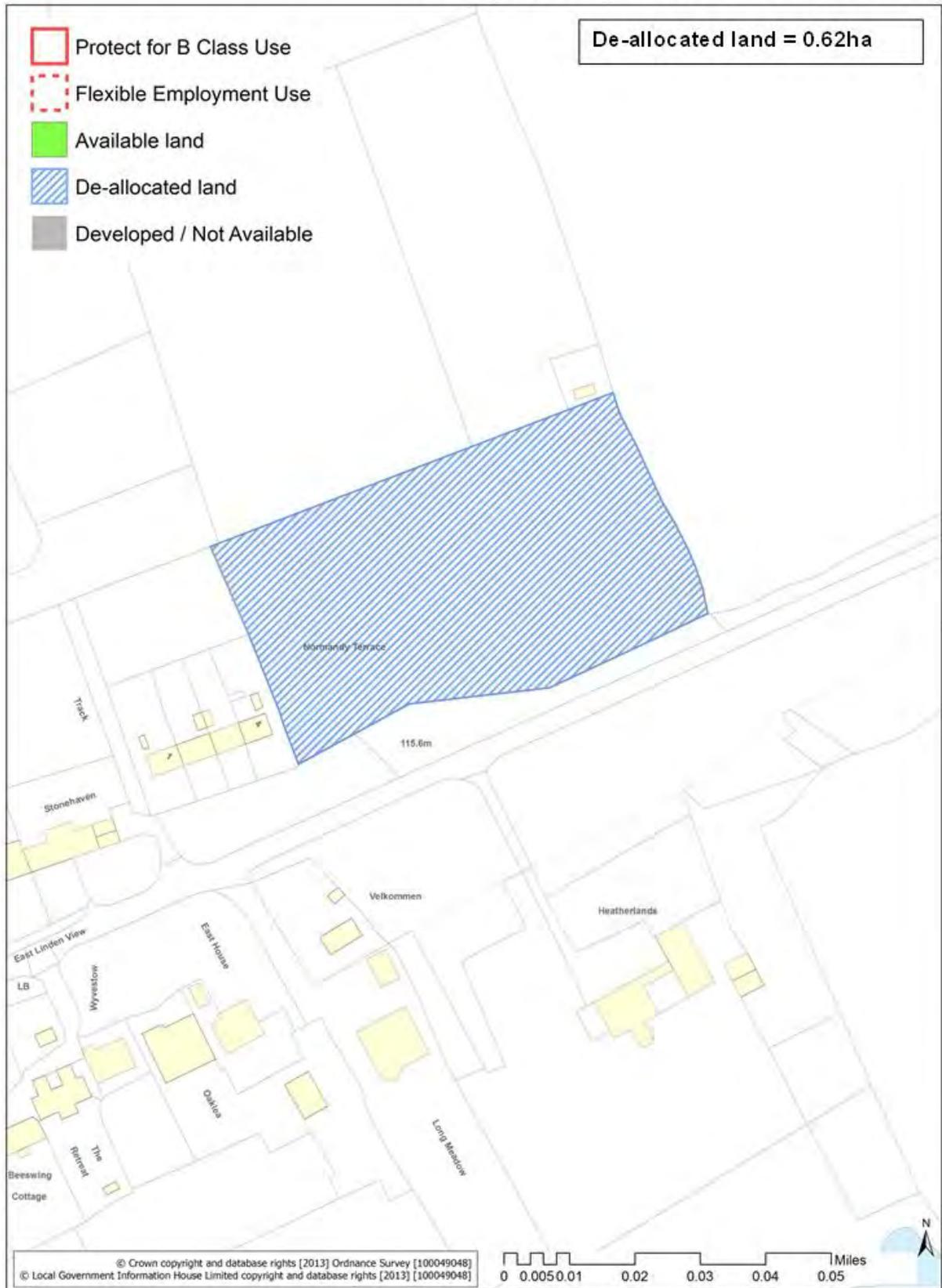
## Hexham - Ochrelands



Longhirst Grain



Longhorsley - Land at East End



### Mickley - Tyne Valley Nursery





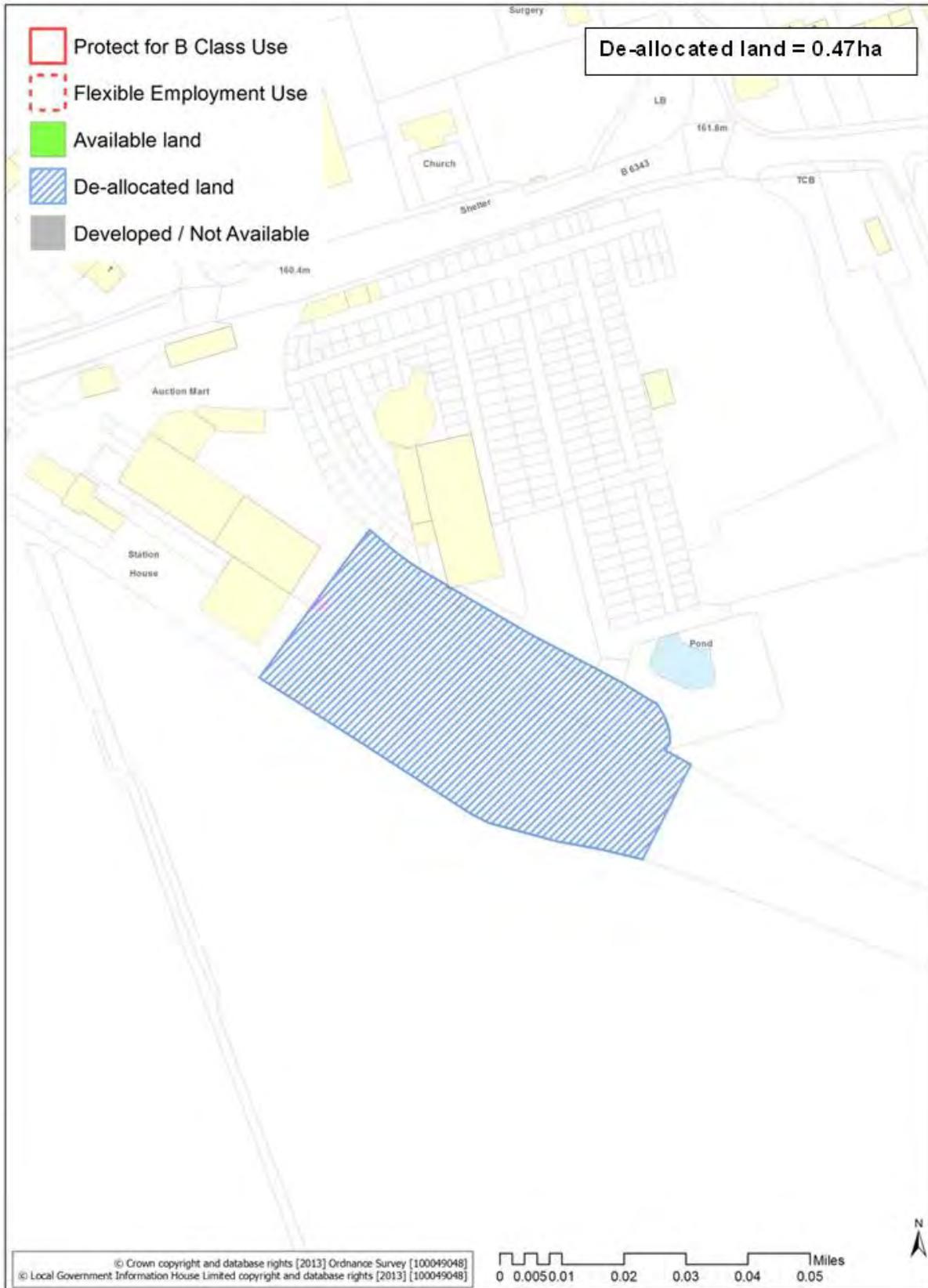
# Appendix A: Employment land portfolio

## Pegswood

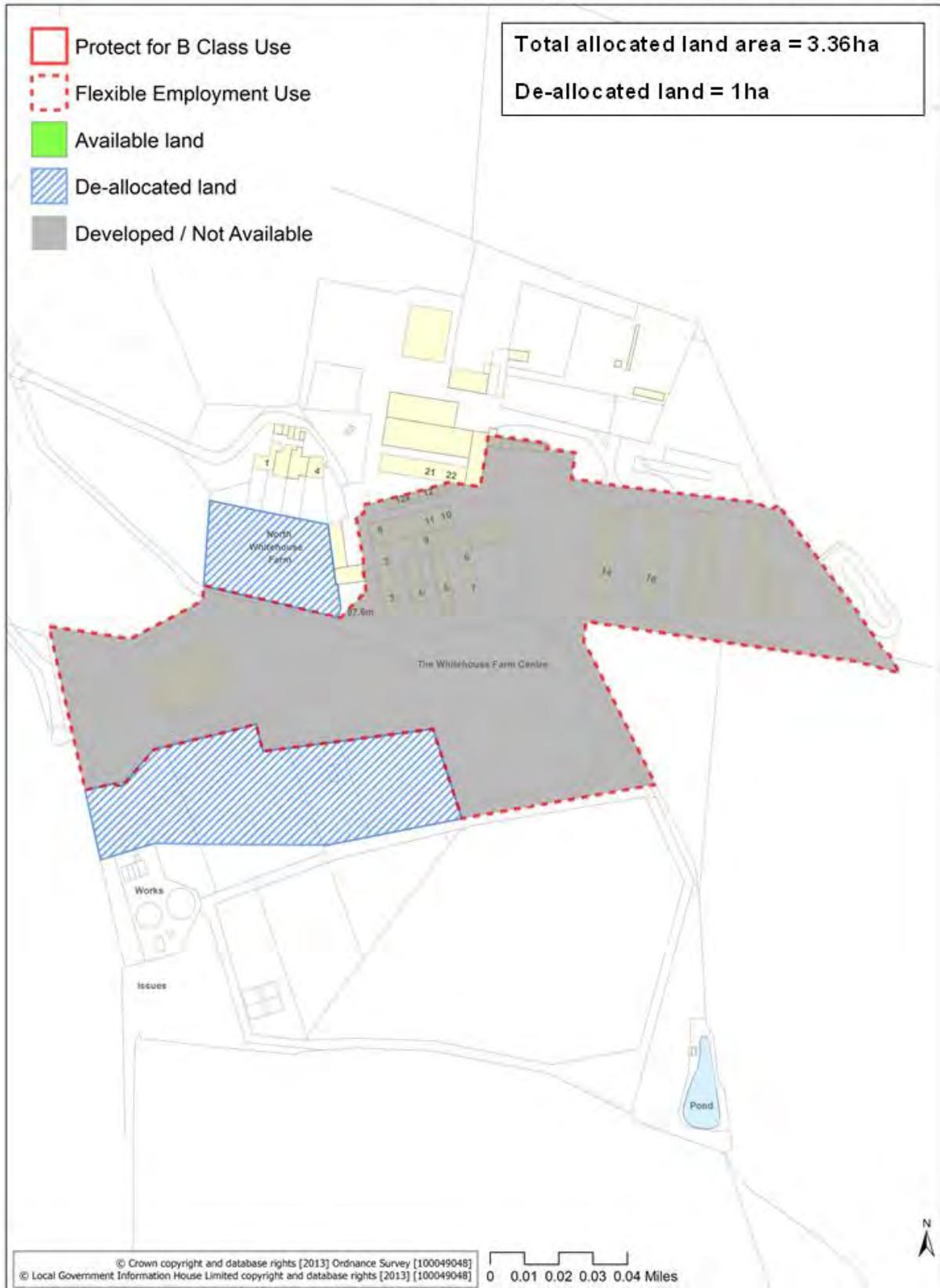




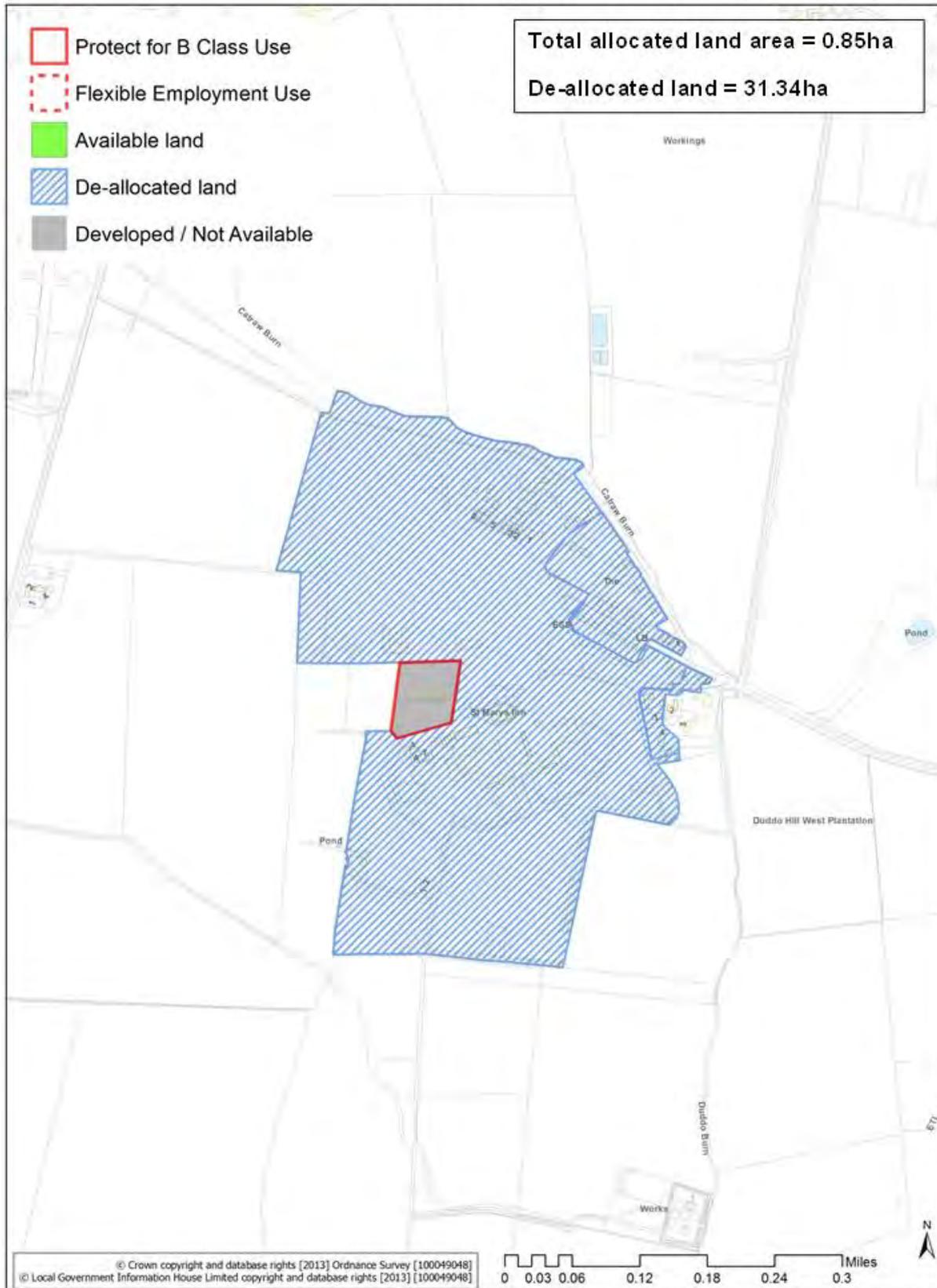
### Scot Gap - Auction Mart



### Stannington - Whitehouse Farm

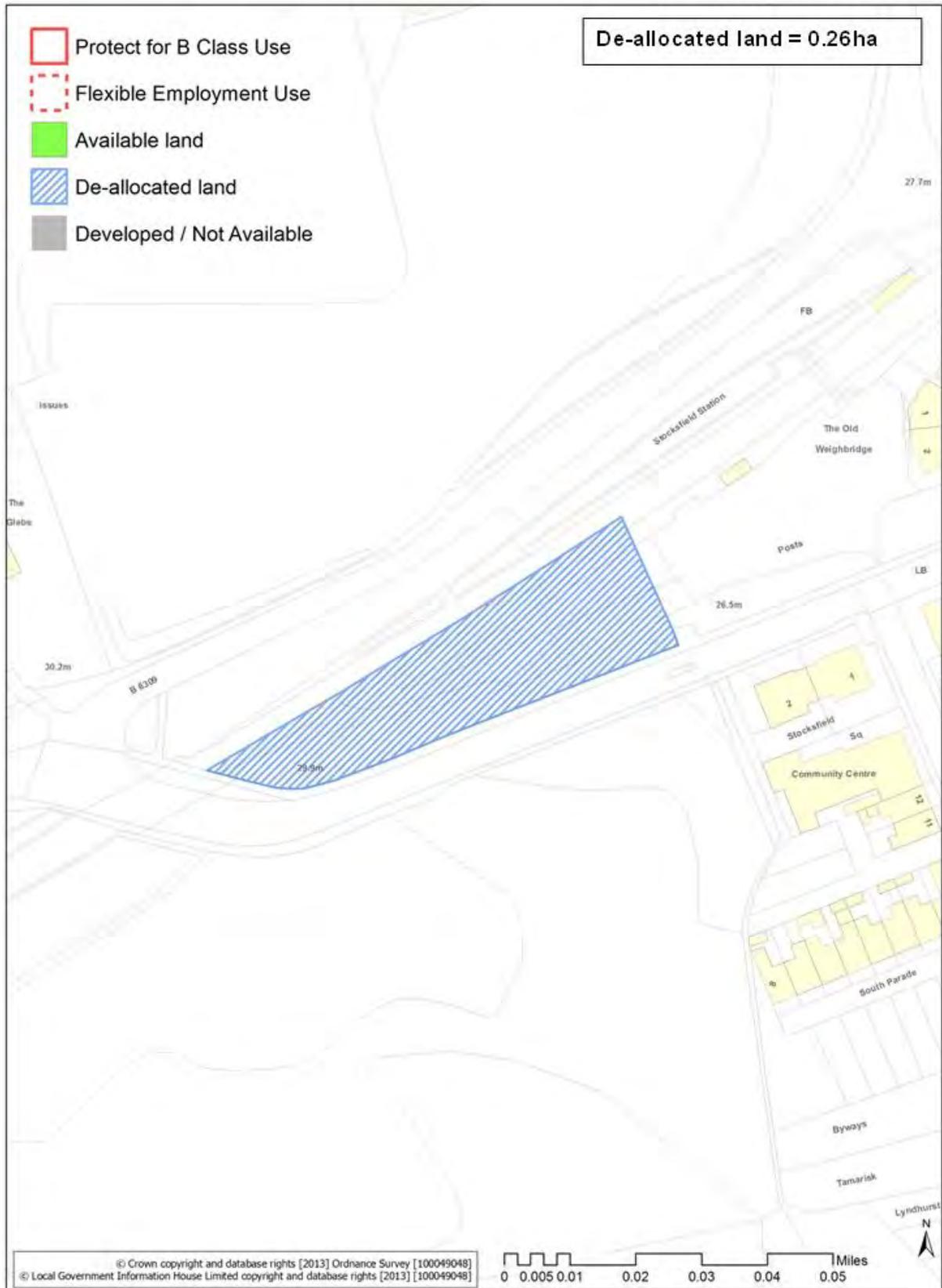


Stannington - Stannington Hospital

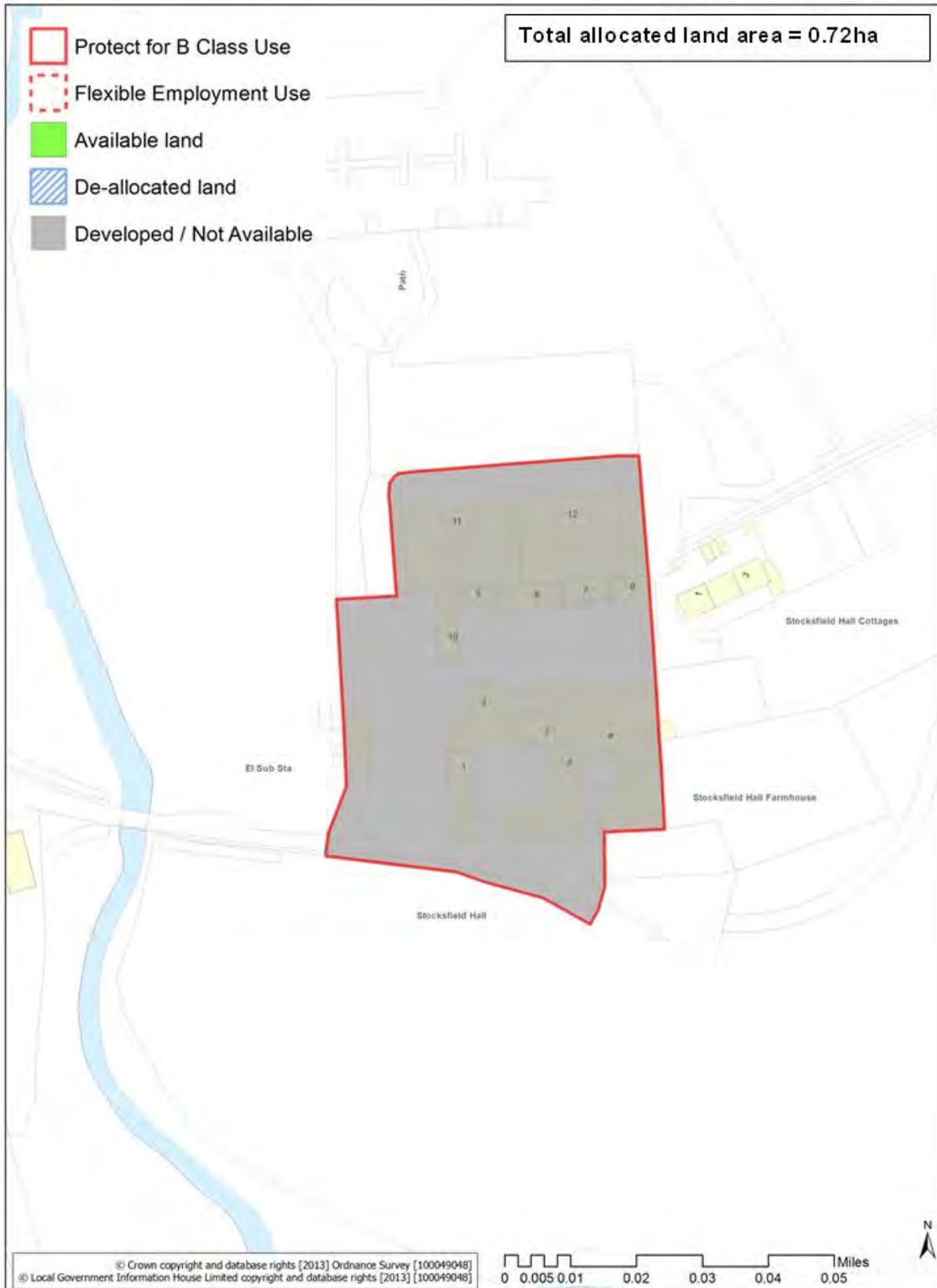


# Appendix A: Employment land portfolio

## Stocksfield Station



Stocksfield Hall





Alnwick - St Thomas' Close



Berwick - South





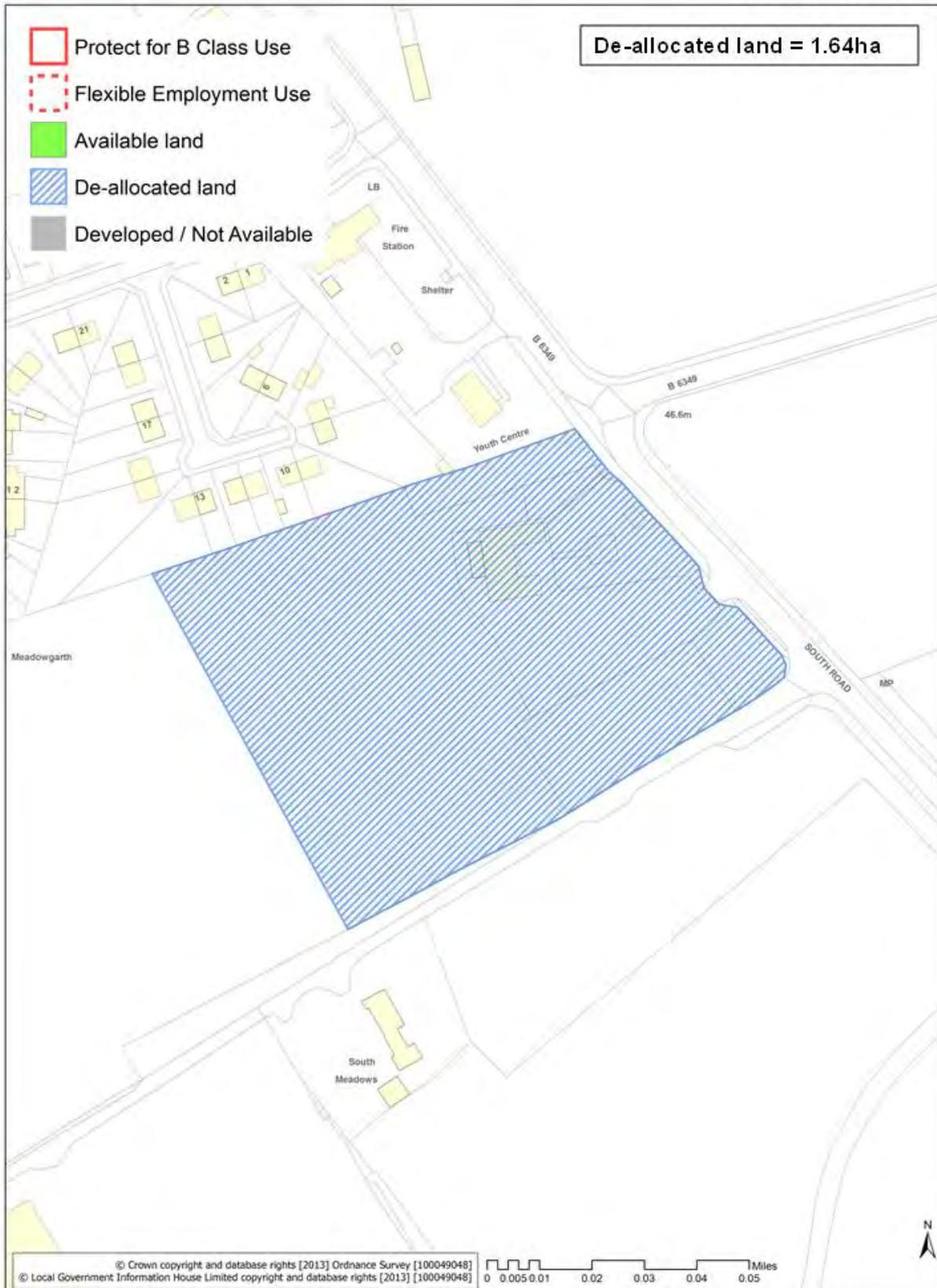
# Appendix A: Employment land portfolio

## North Northumberland Delivery Area – Service Centres

### Belford Industrial Estate



Belford West



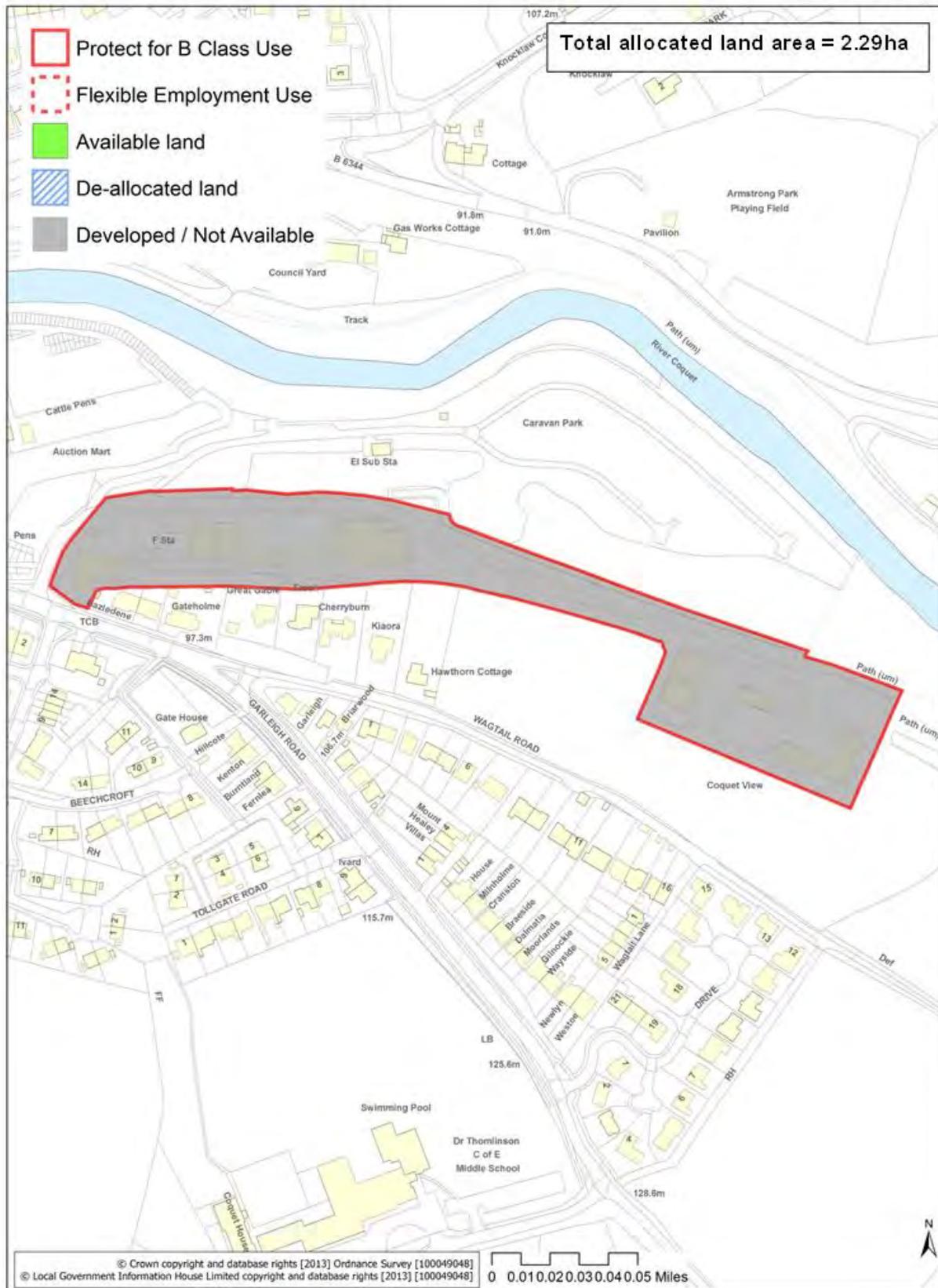
# Appendix A: Employment land portfolio

## North Sunderland



# Appendix A: Employment land portfolio

## Rothbury



# Appendix A: Employment land portfolio

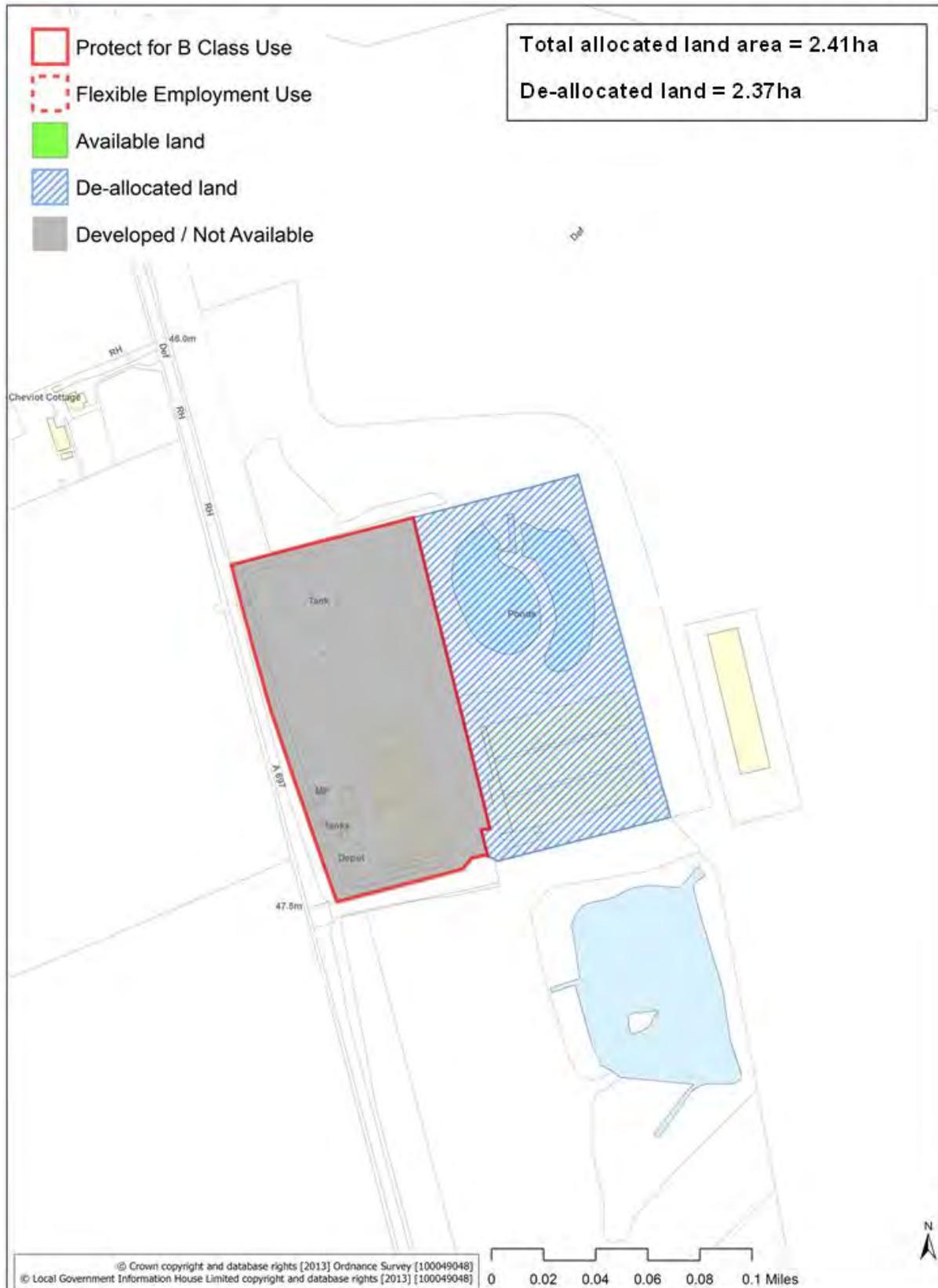
## Wooler



# Appendix A: Employment land portfolio

## North Northumberland Delivery Area – Rest of Delivery Area

Milfield

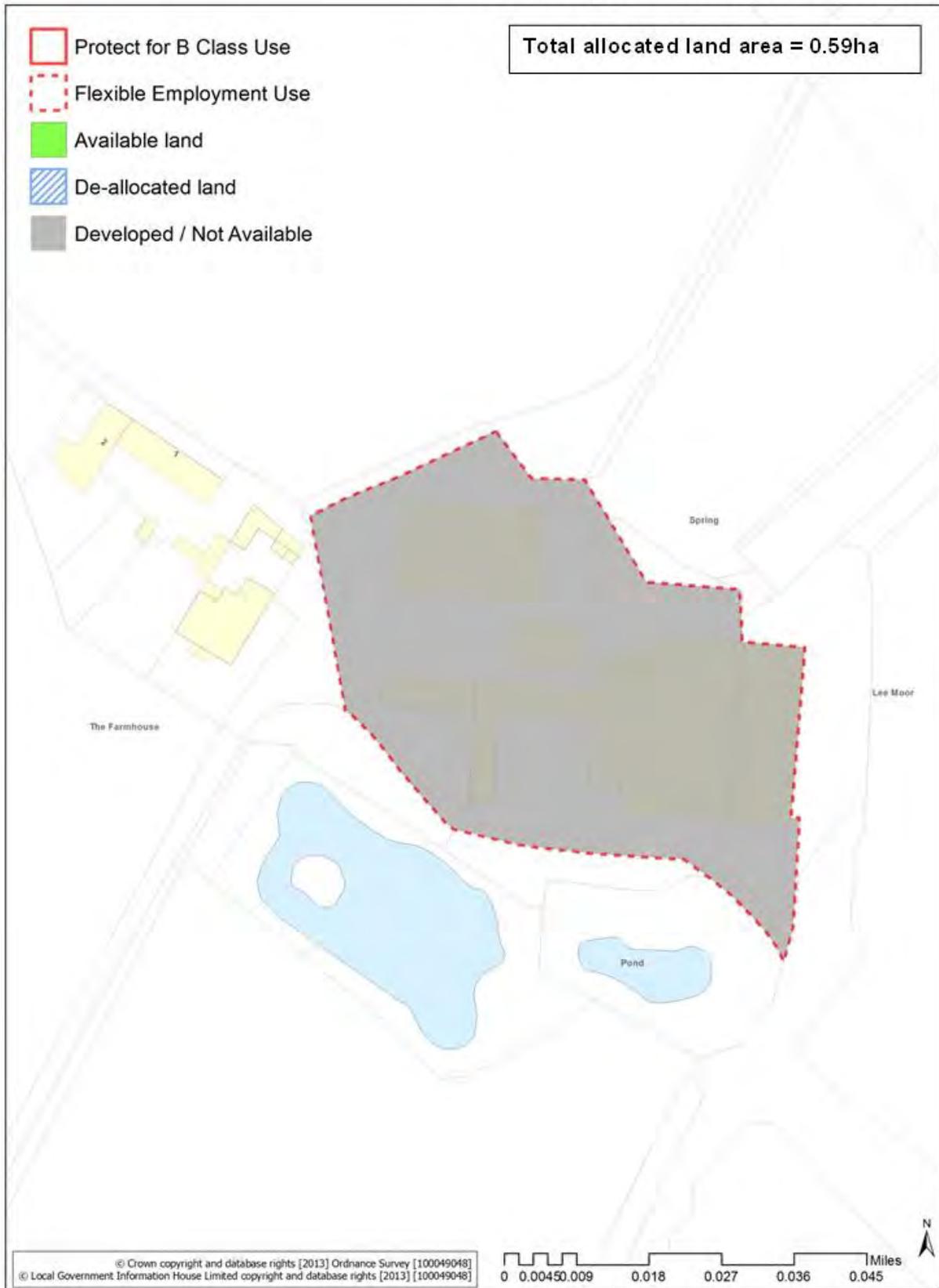


# Appendix A: Employment land portfolio

Norham

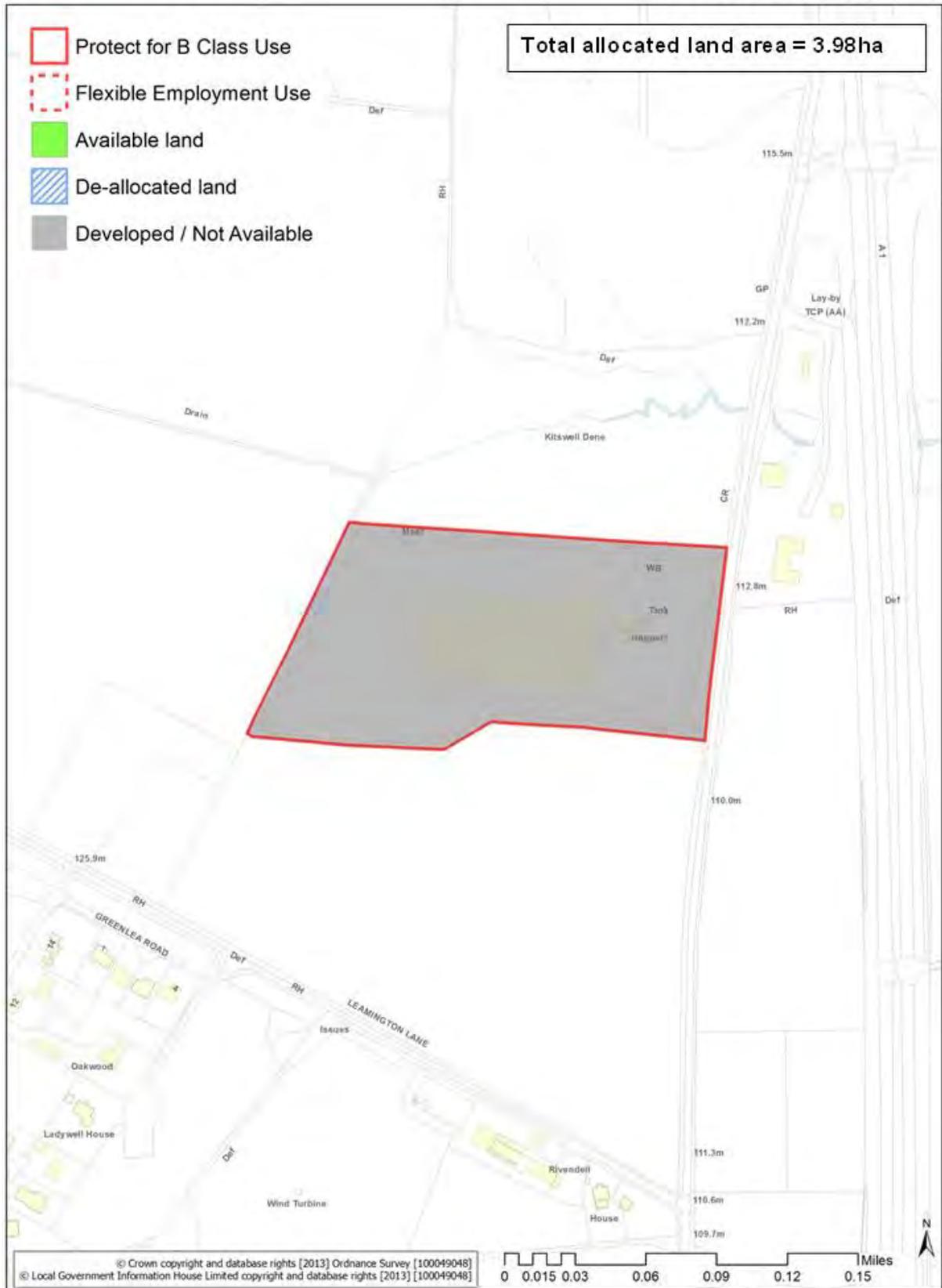


### Rennington - Lee Moor Farm

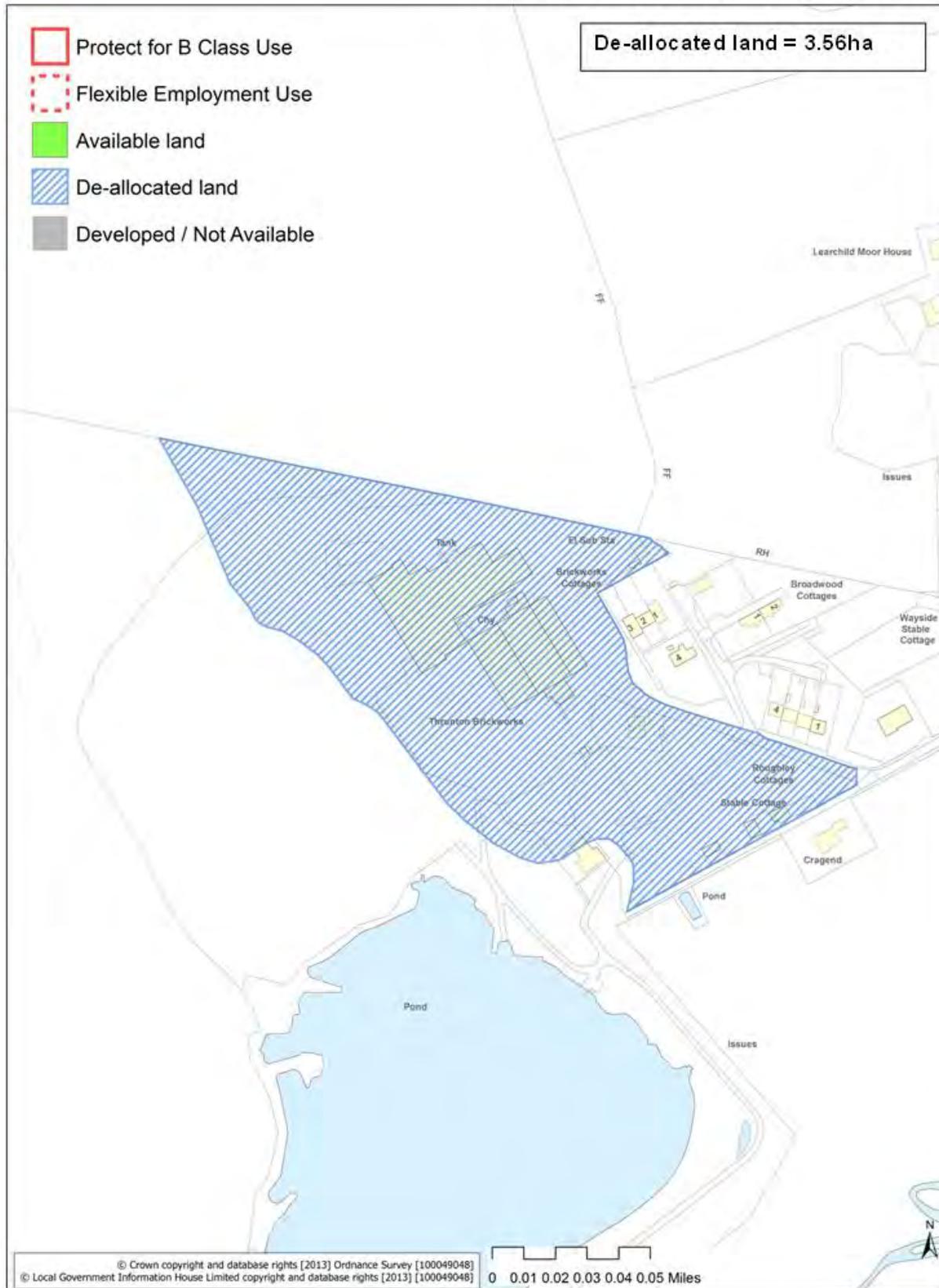


# Appendix A: Employment land portfolio

## Swarland Grains

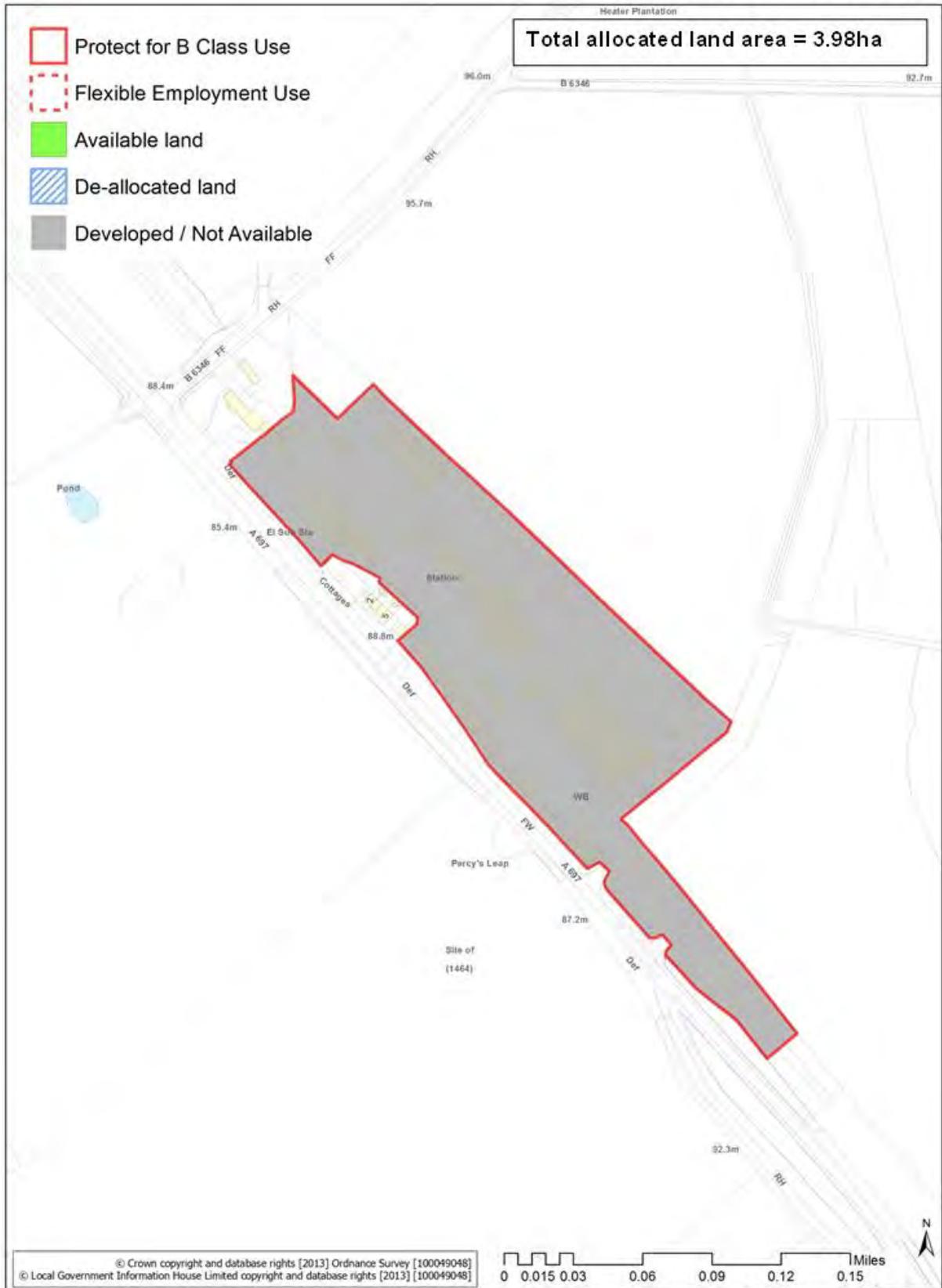


### Thrunton - Former Brickworks



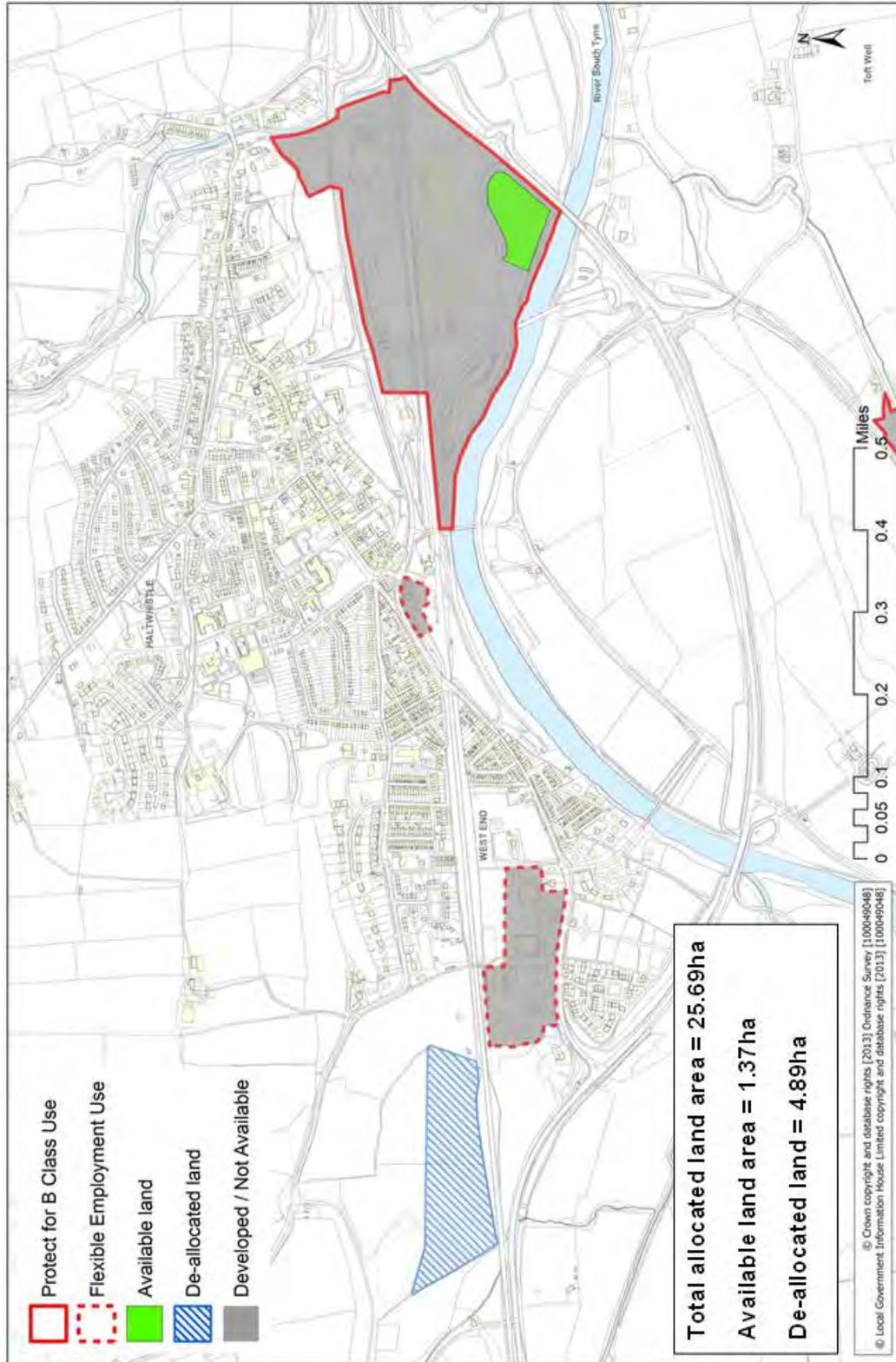
# Appendix A: Employment land portfolio

## Wooperton Sawmill



West Northumberland Delivery Area – Main Town

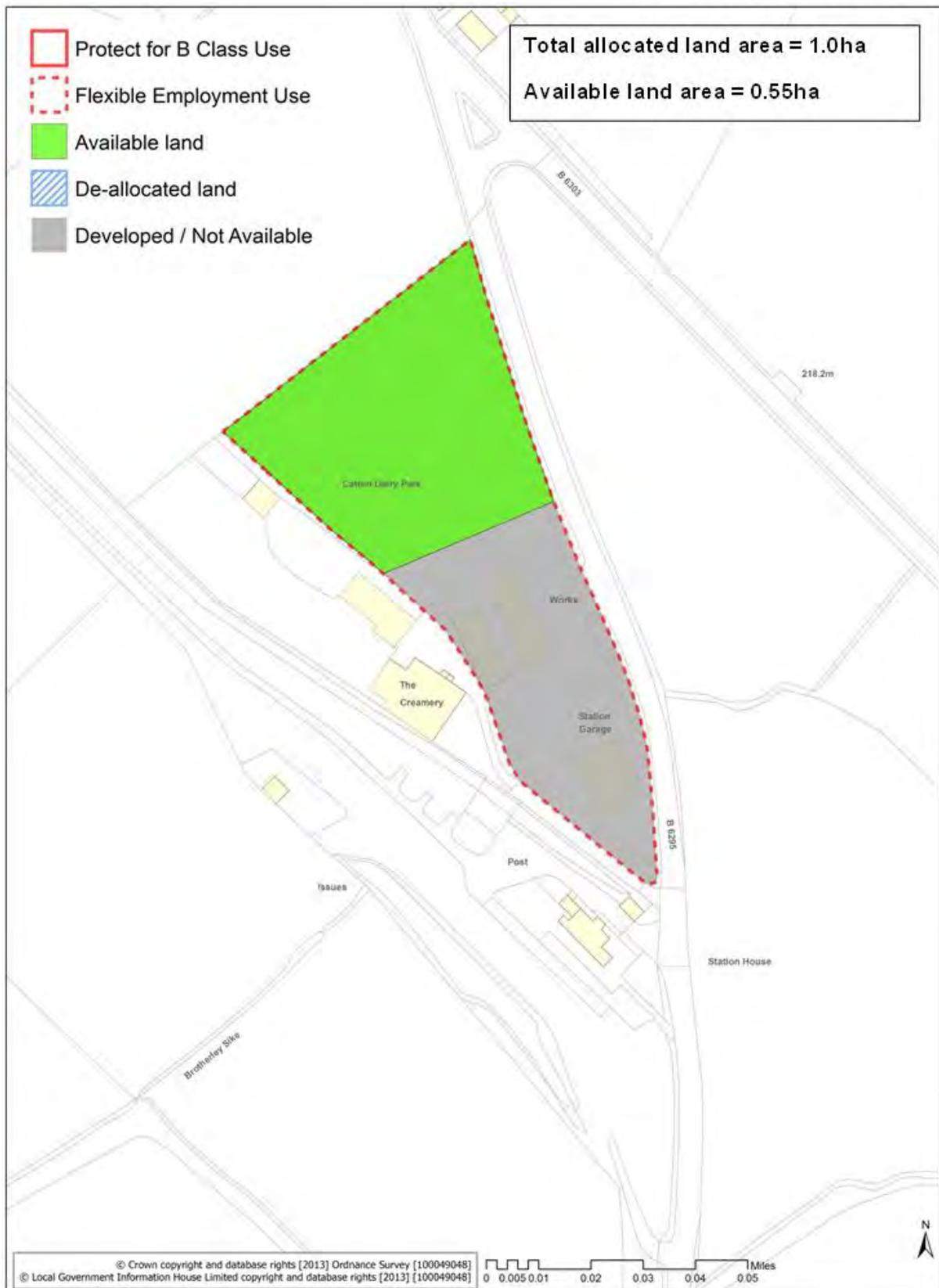
Haltwhistle



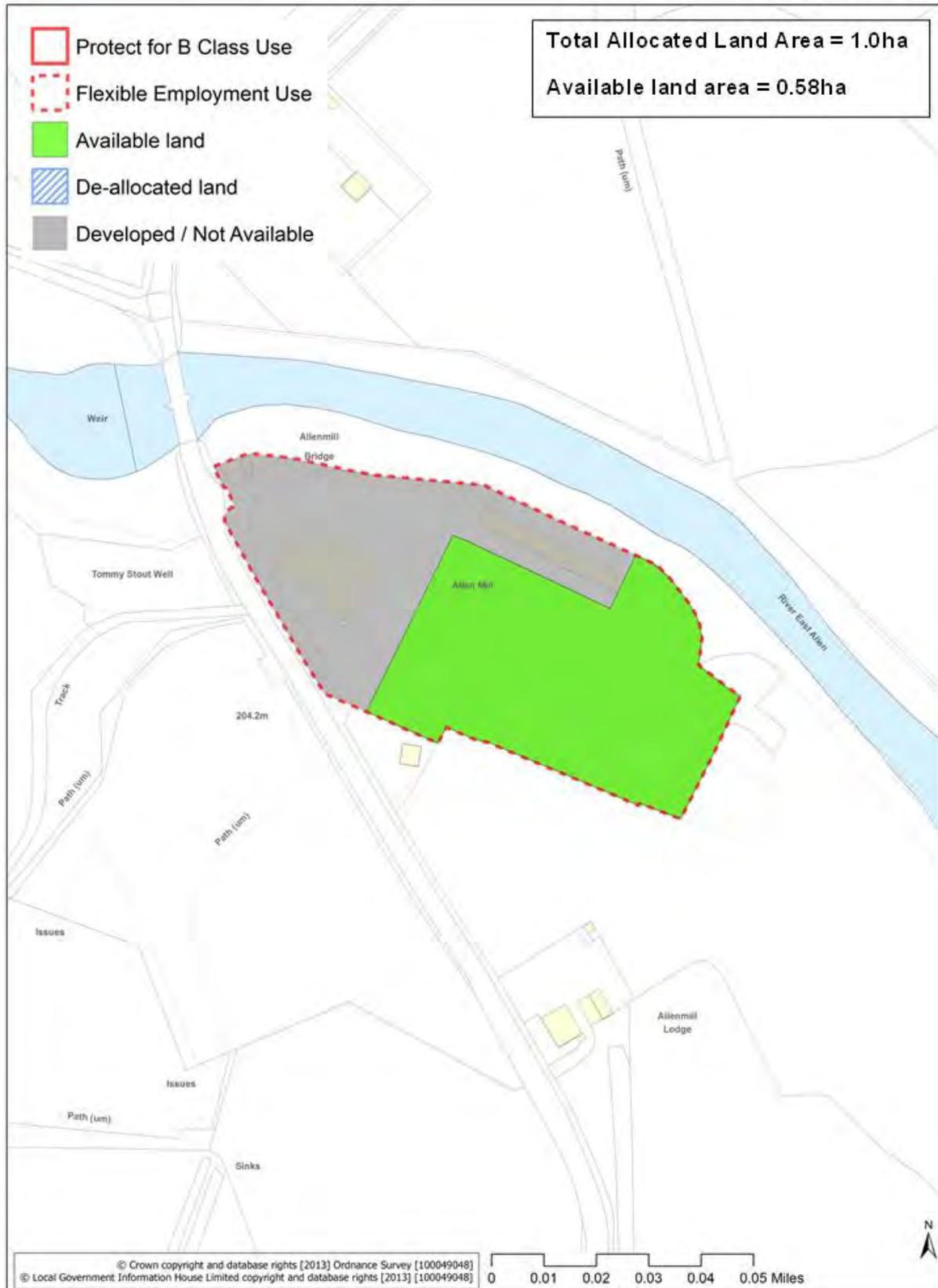
# Appendix A: Employment land portfolio

## West Northumberland Delivery Area – Service Centres

### Allendale - Catton

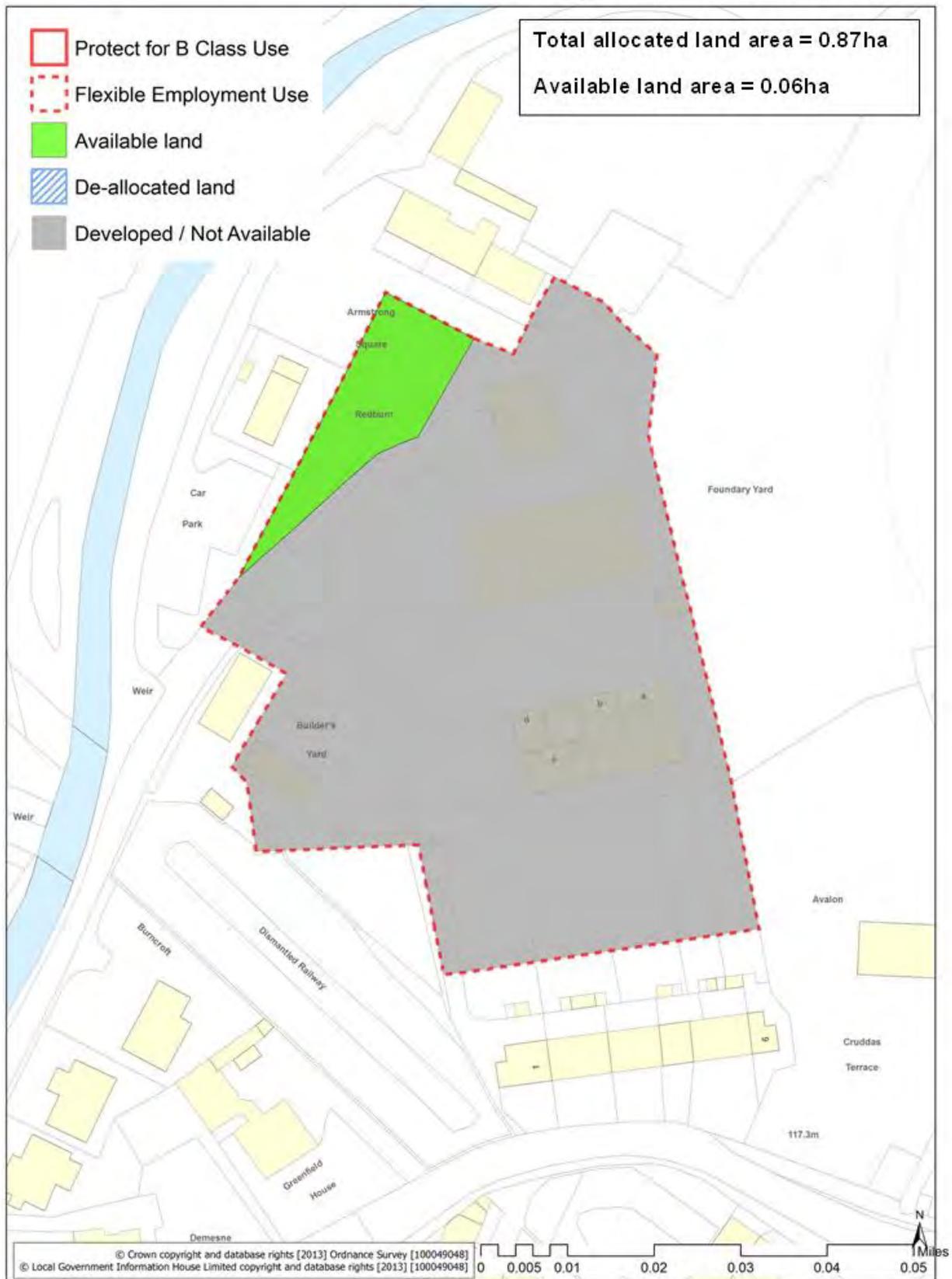


Catton - Ridleys Yard

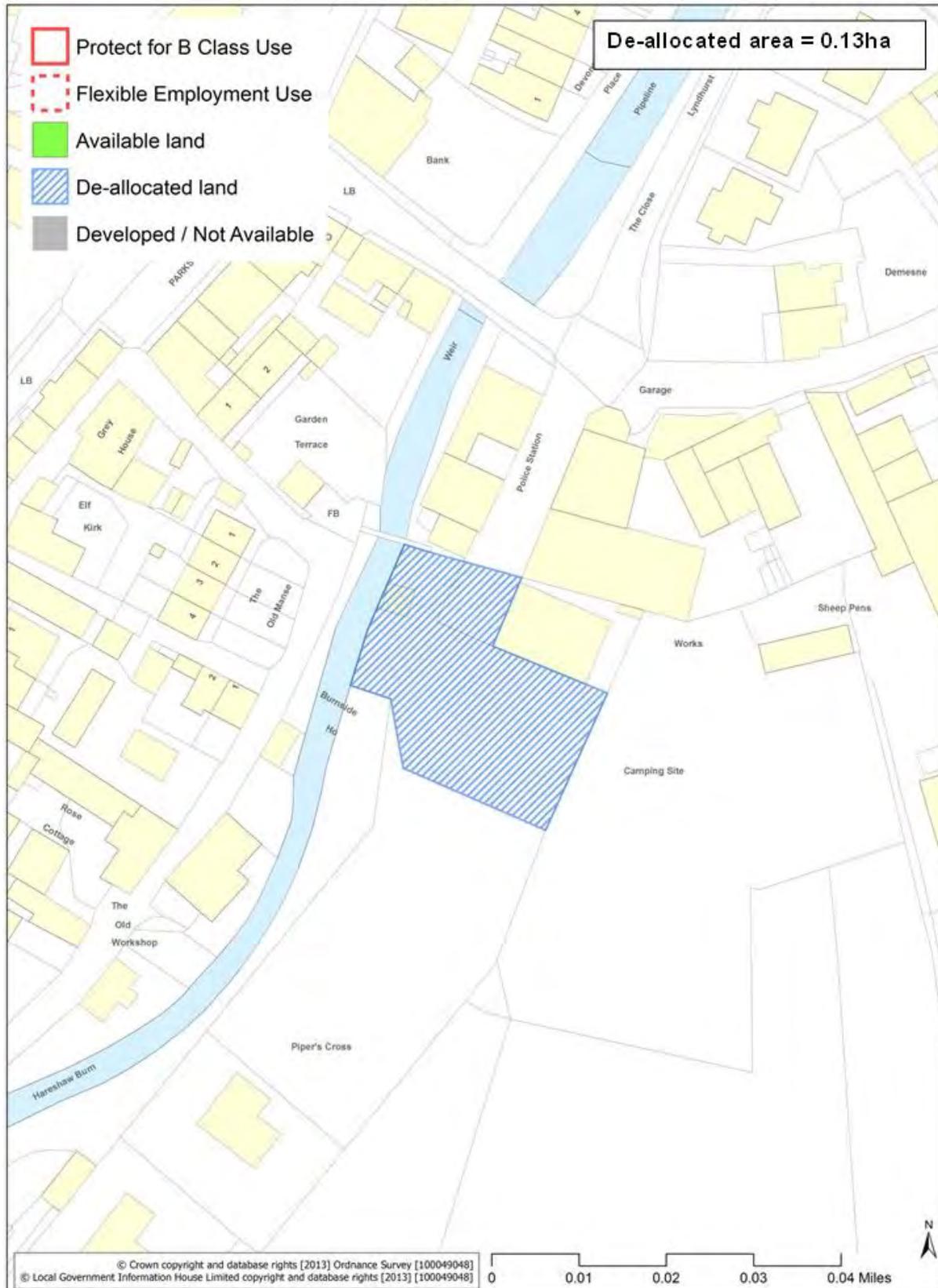


# Appendix A: Employment land portfolio

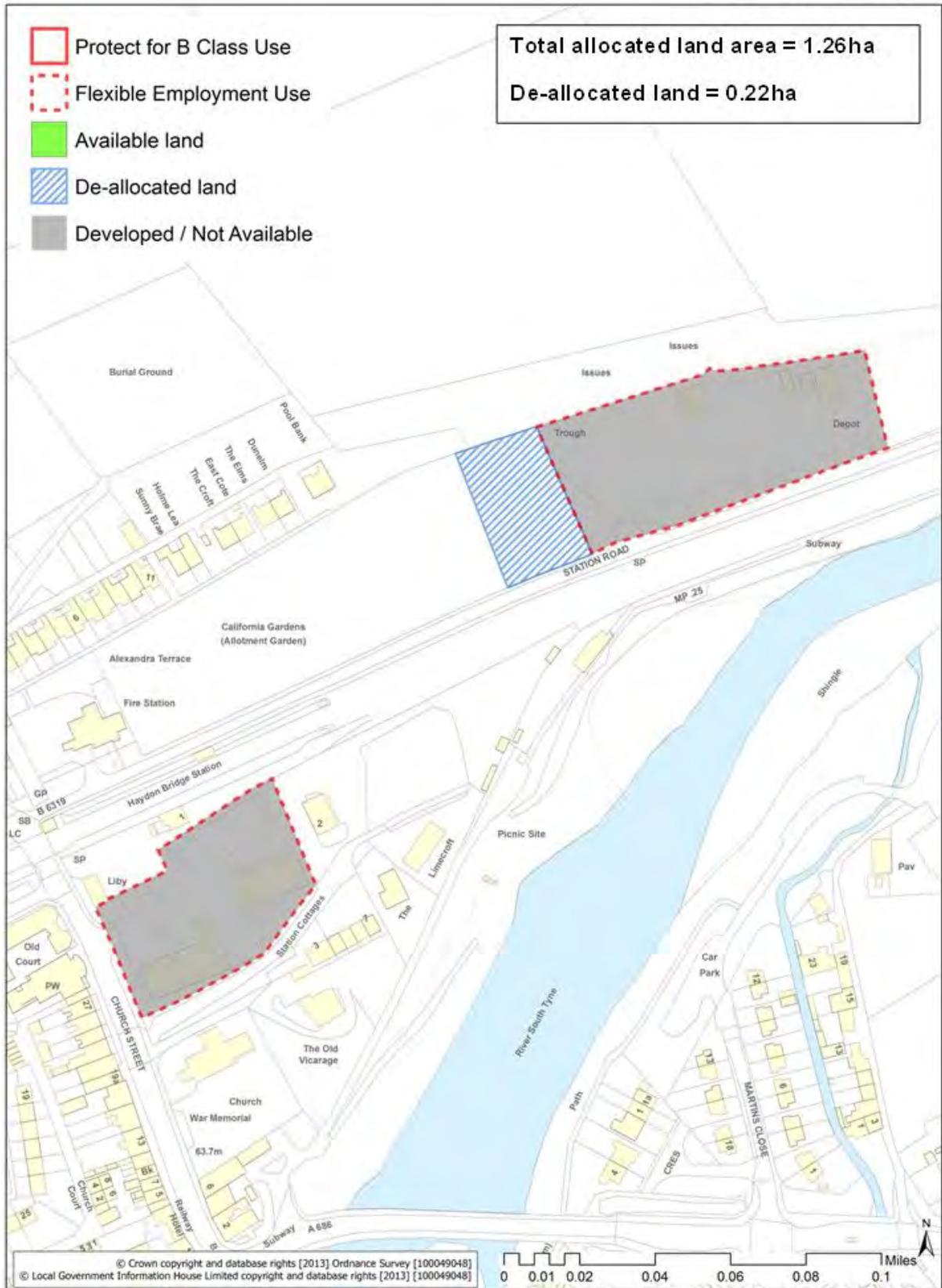
## Bellingham - Foundry Road



### Bellingham - South of Demense Farm



# Haydon Bridge

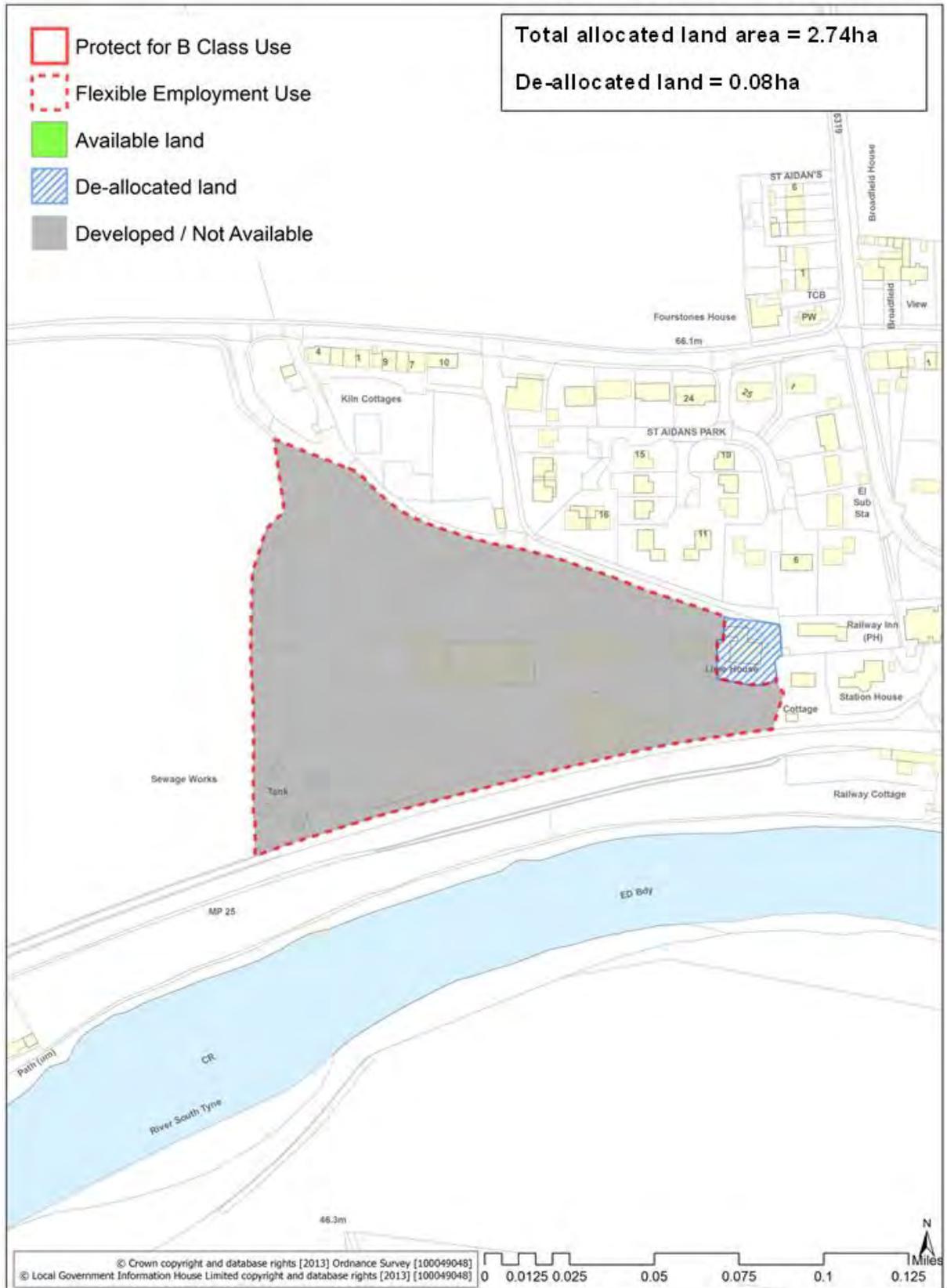


West Northumberland Delivery Area – Rest of Delivery Area

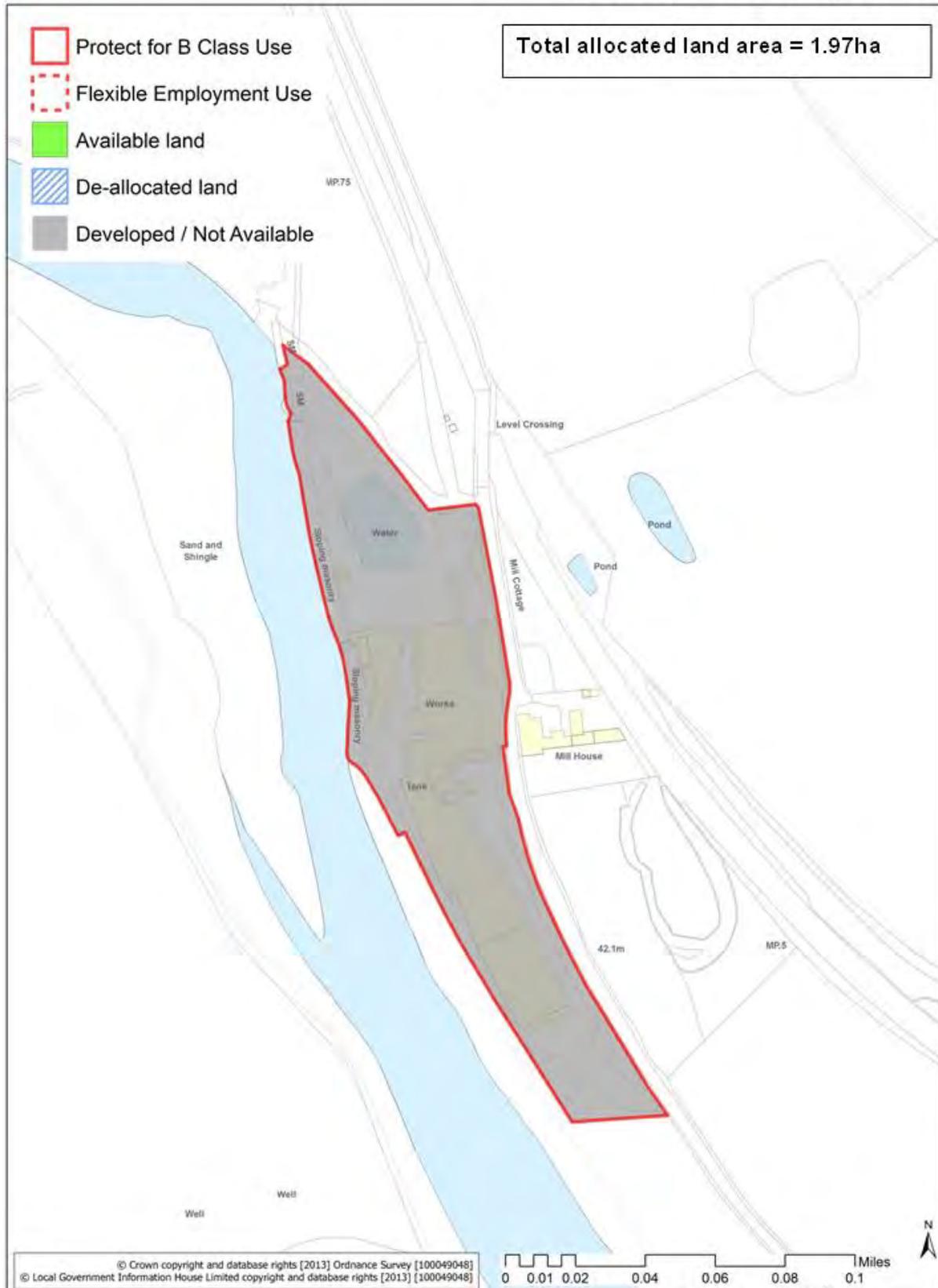
Colwell



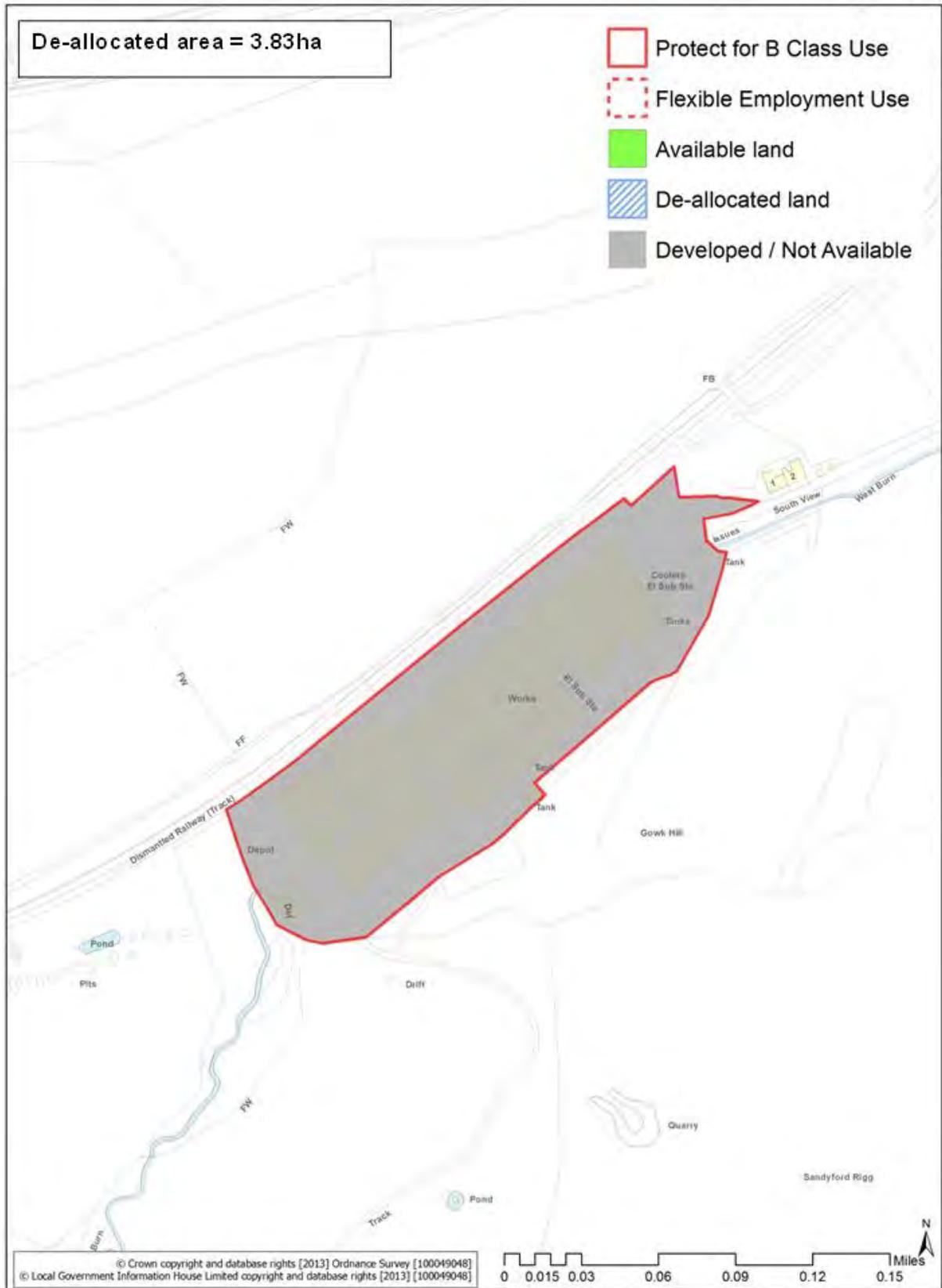
### Fourstones - Limeworks



Fourstones - Papermill



Plenmeller



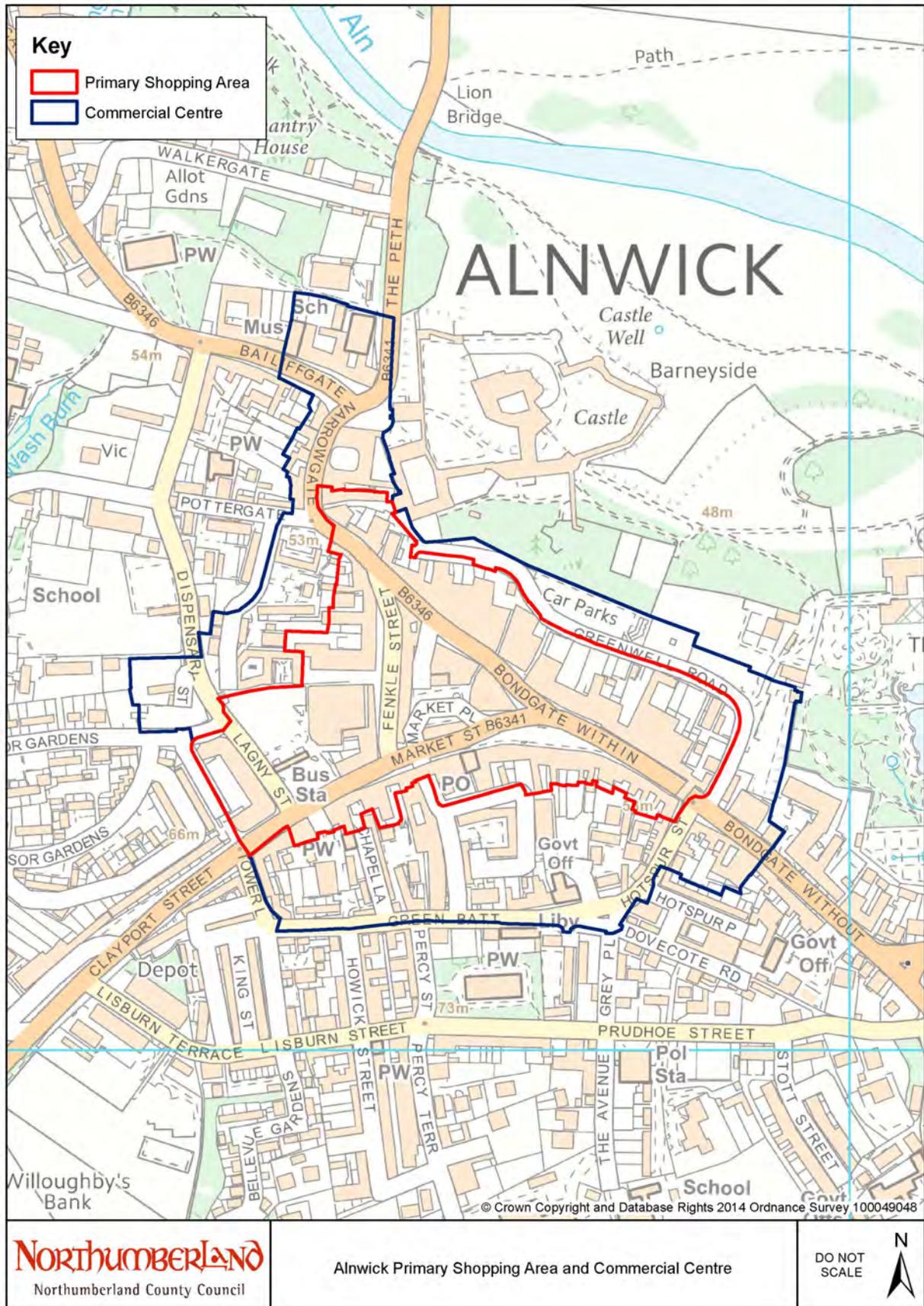
# Appendix A: Employment land portfolio

## Wark - Sawmill



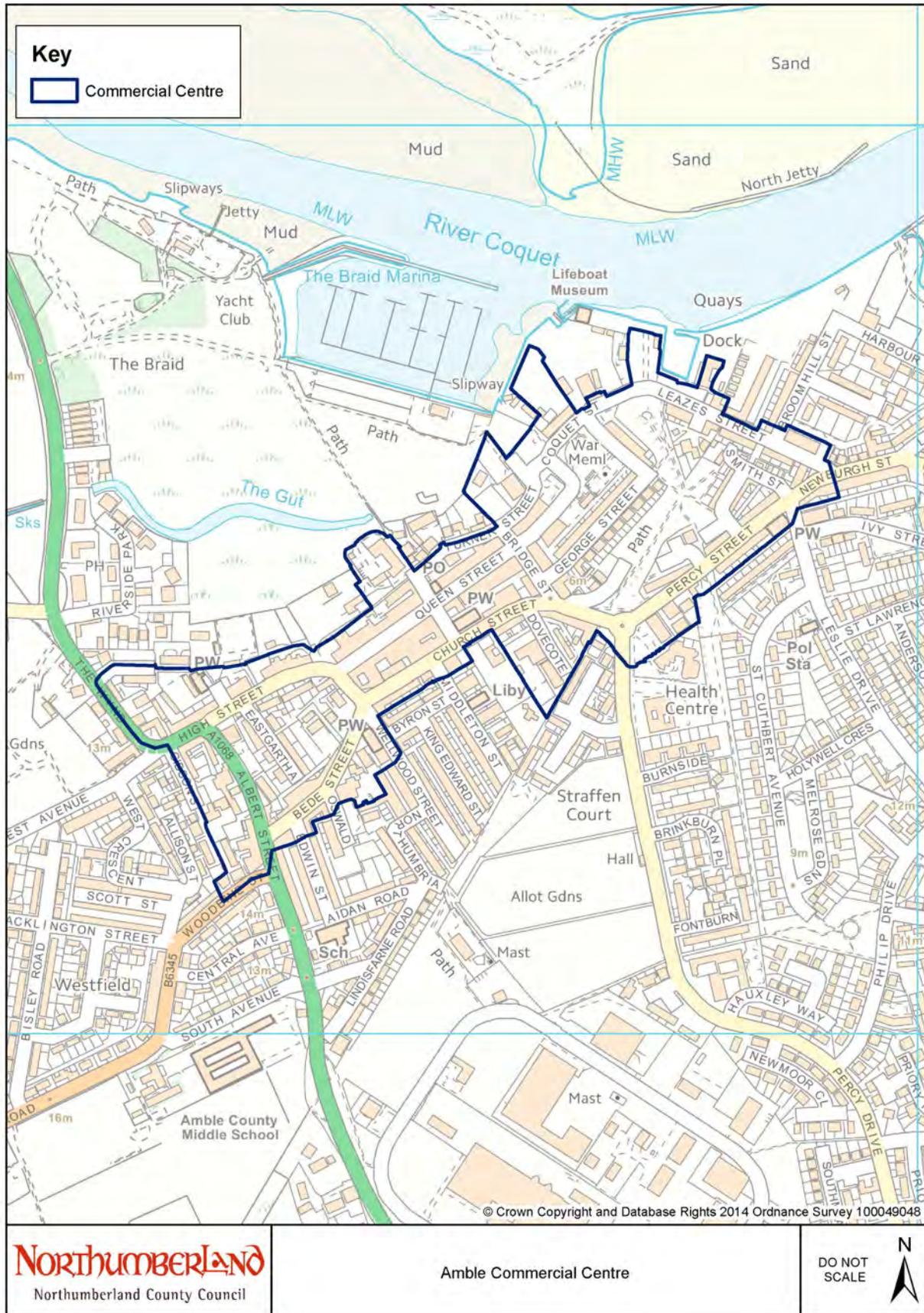
Appendix B: Primary Shopping Area and Commercial Centre boundaries

Alnwick



# Appendix B: Primary Shopping Area and Commercial Centre boundaries

## Amble

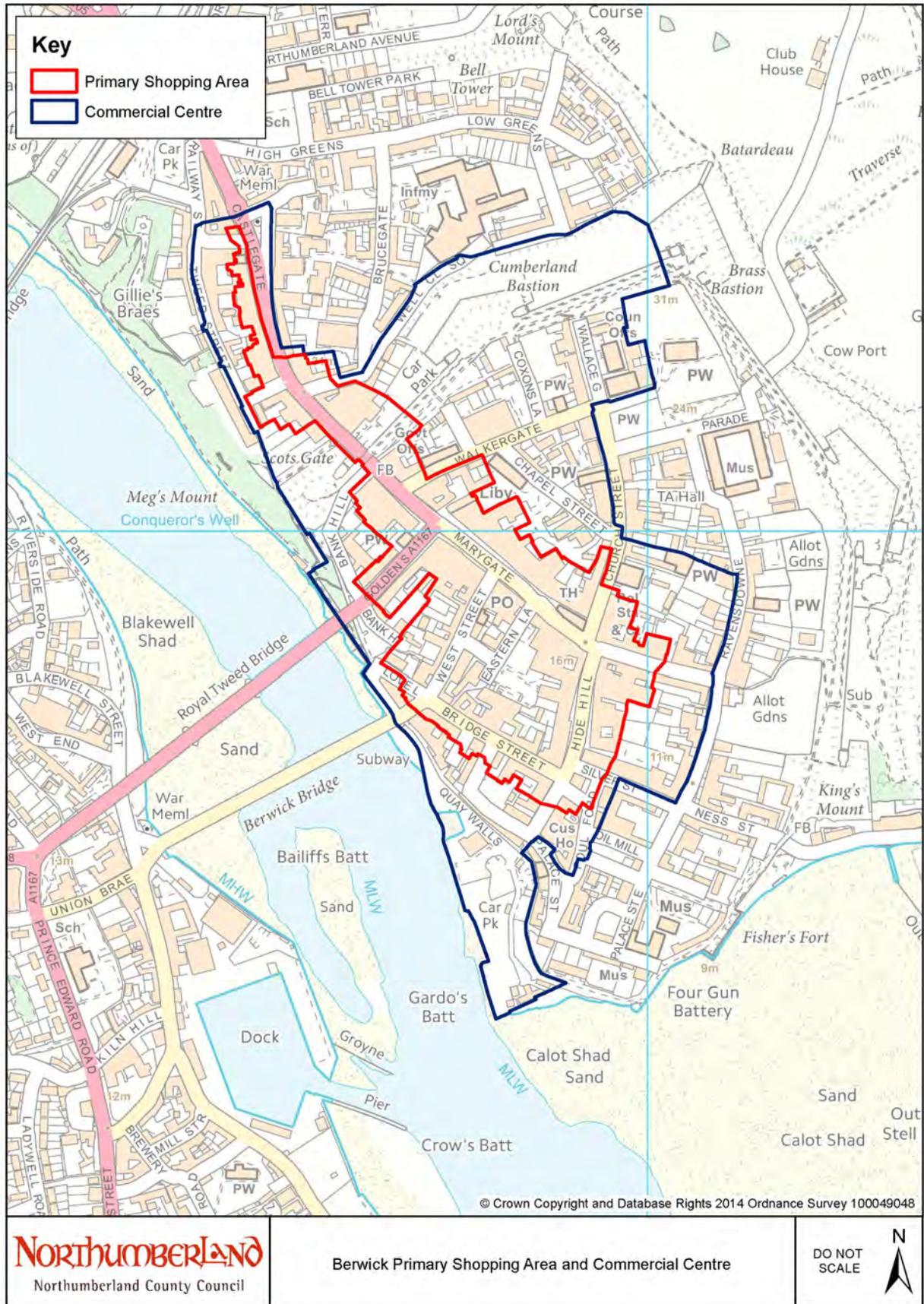






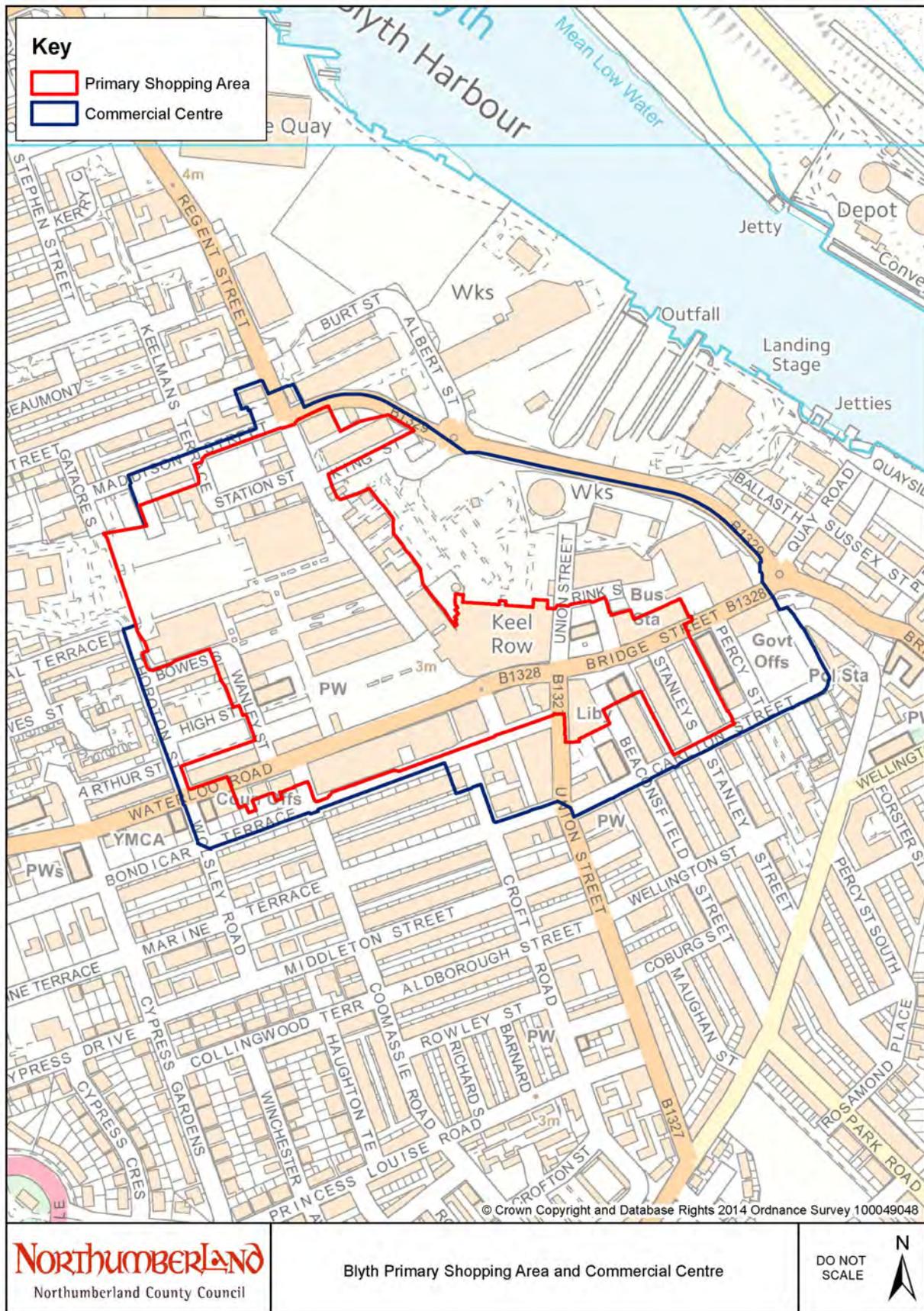
# Appendix B: Primary Shopping Area and Commercial Centre boundaries

## Berwick-upon-Tweed



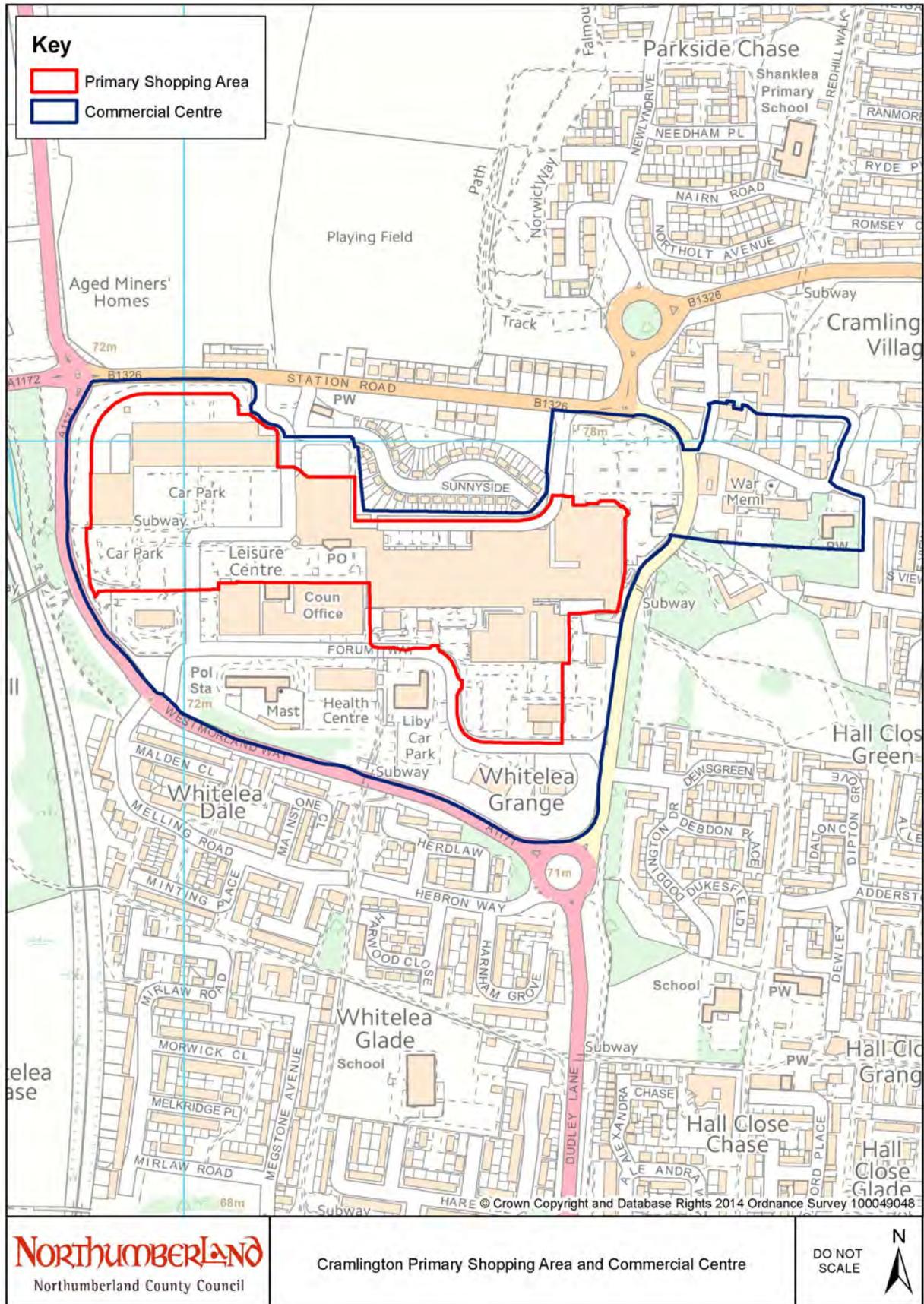
# Appendix B: Primary Shopping Area and Commercial Centre boundaries

## Blyth



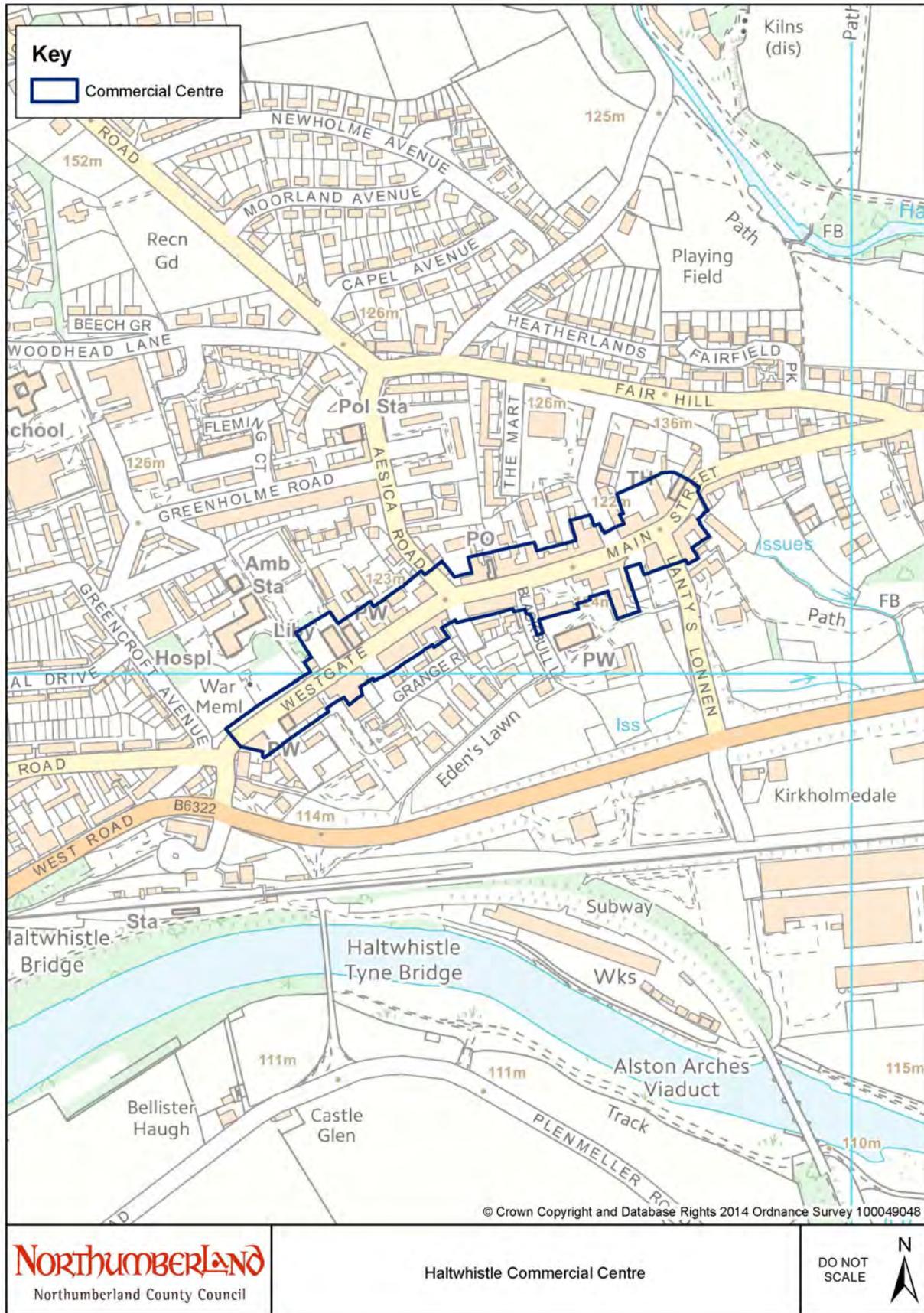
# Appendix B: Primary Shopping Area and Commercial Centre boundaries

## Cramlington



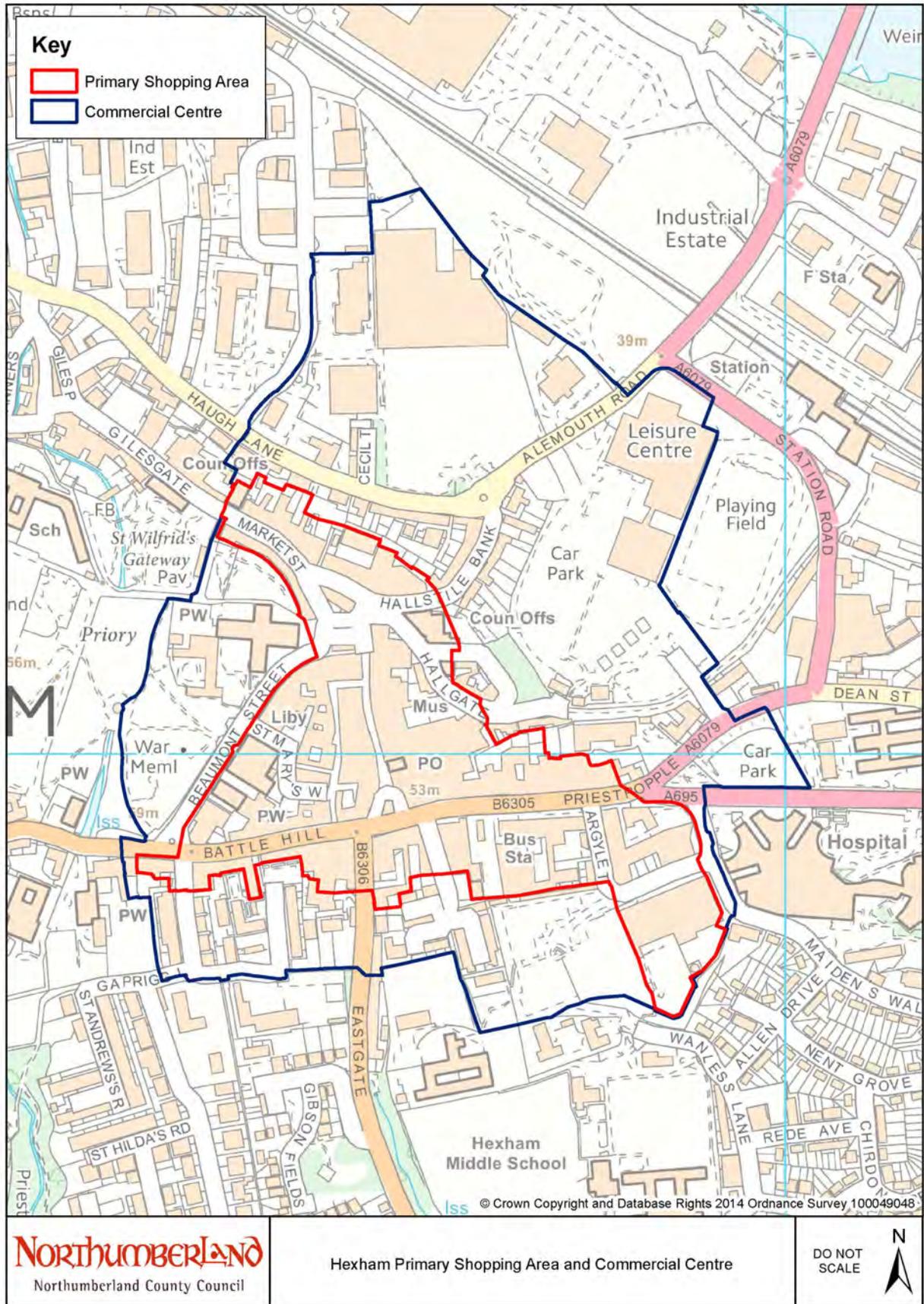
# Appendix B: Primary Shopping Area and Commercial Centre boundaries

## Haltwhistle



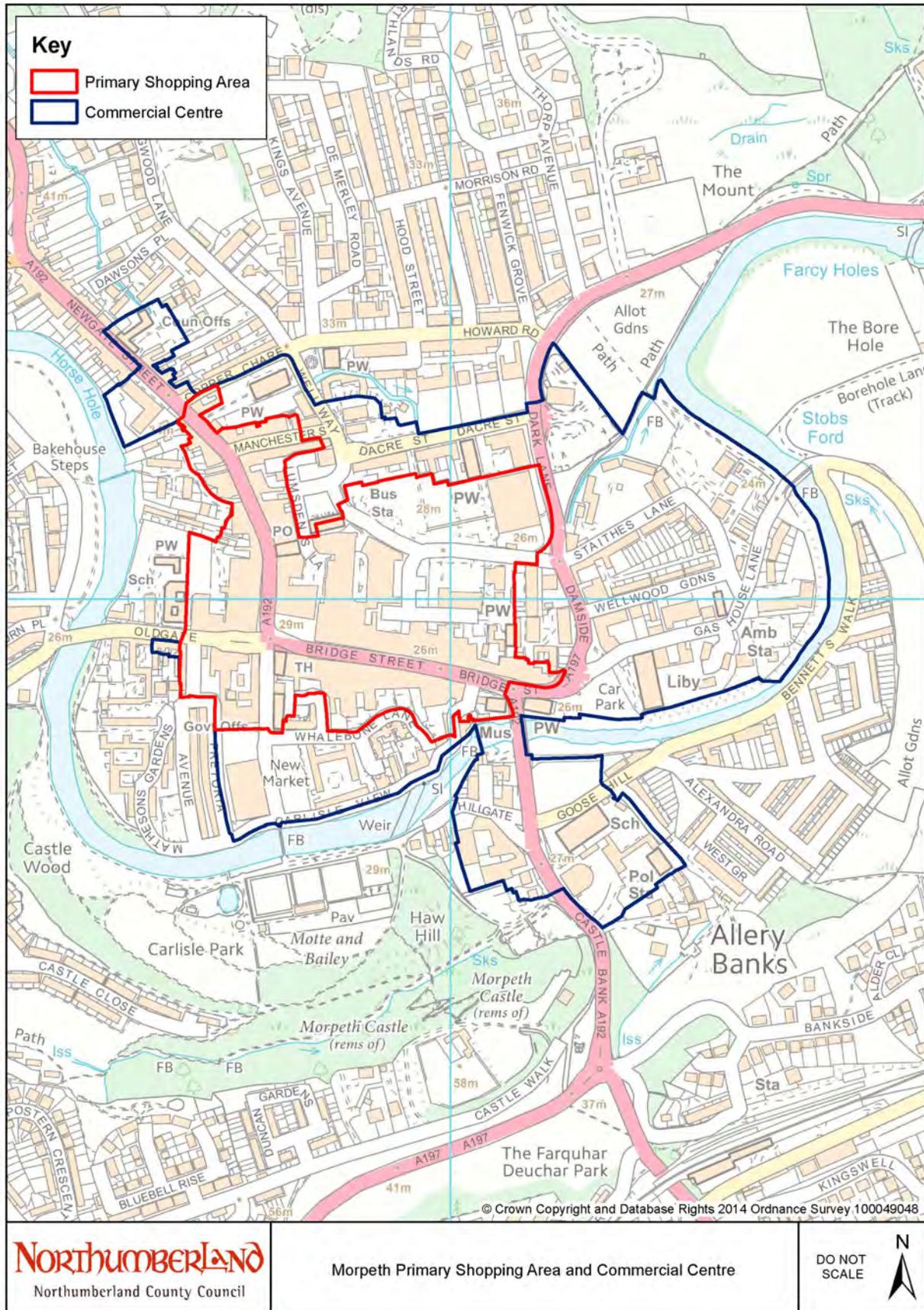
# Appendix B: Primary Shopping Area and Commercial Centre boundaries

## Hexham



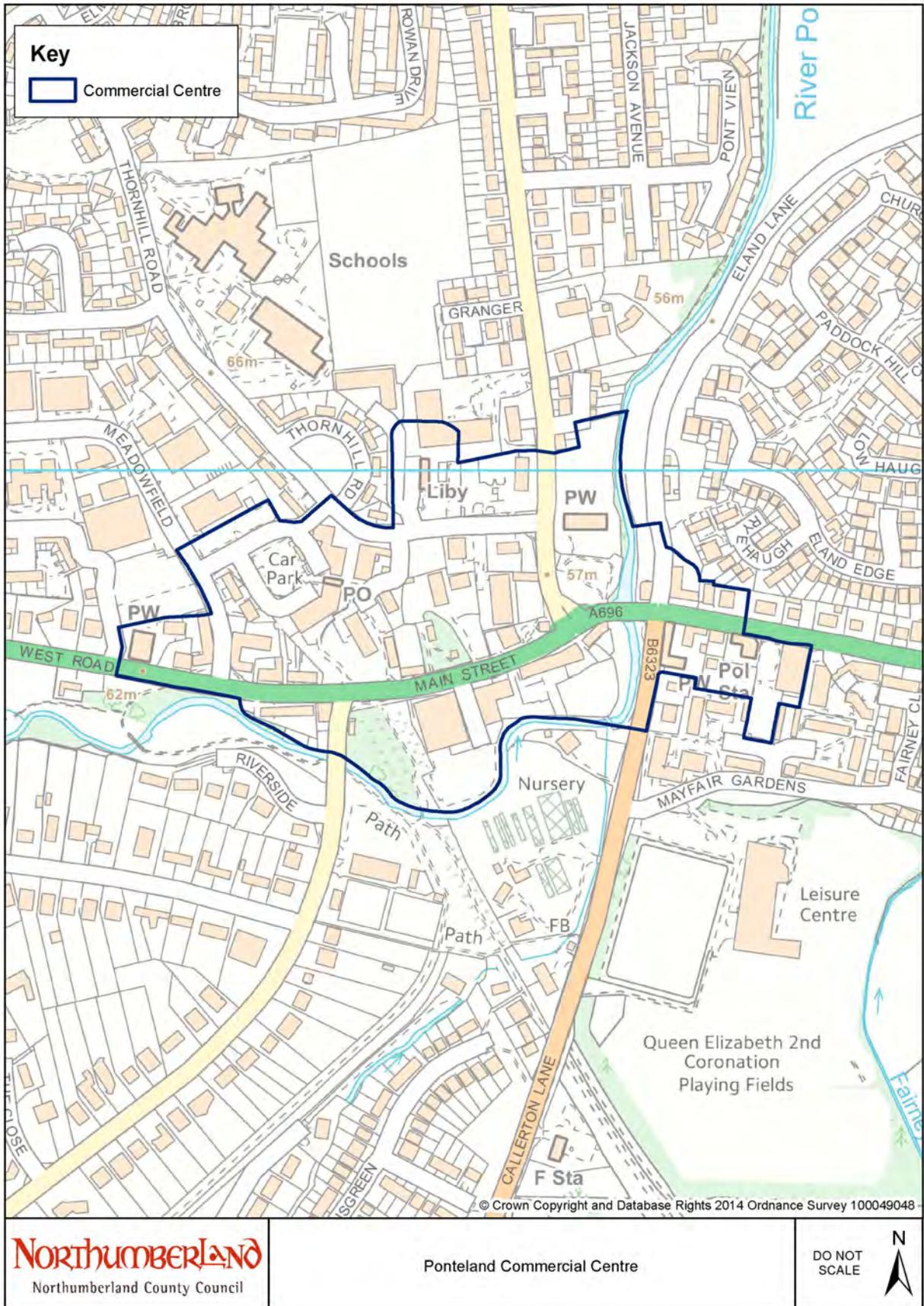
# Appendix B: Primary Shopping Area and Commercial Centre boundaries

## Morpeth



# Appendix B: Primary Shopping Area and Commercial Centre boundaries

## Ponteland

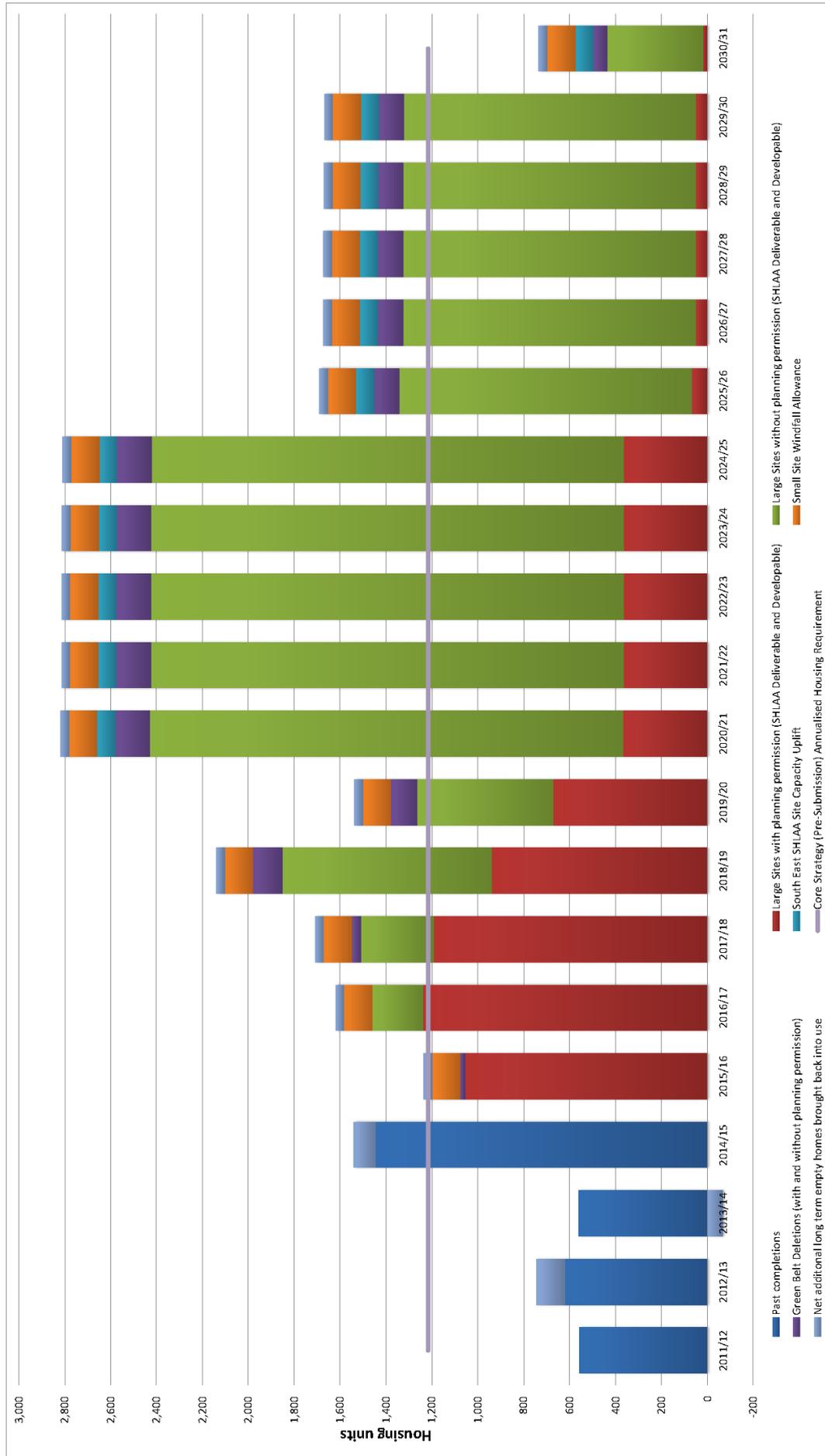


# Appendix B: Primary Shopping Area and Commercial Centre boundaries

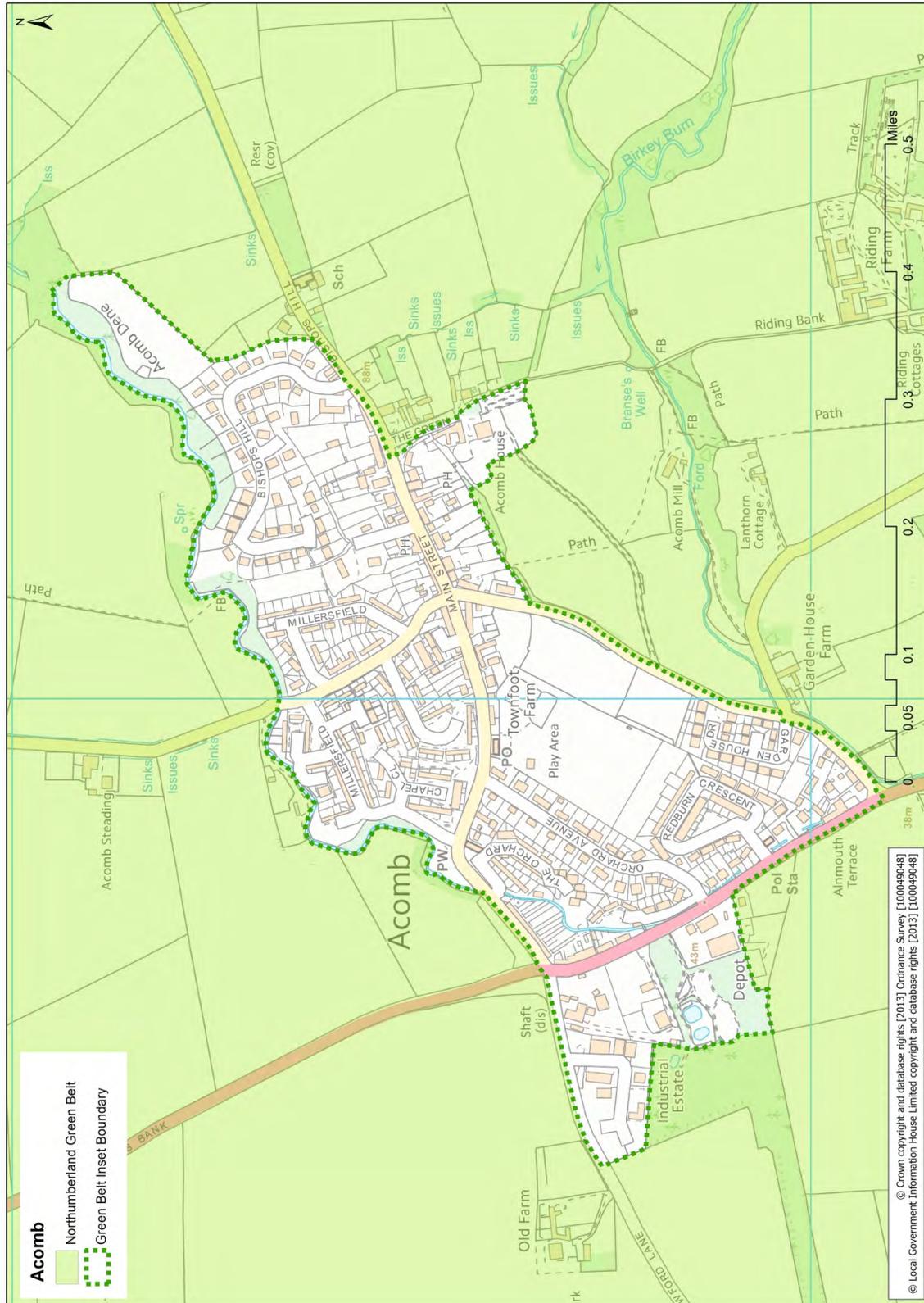
## Prudhoe



Appendix C: Northumberland housing trajectory 2011 to 2031

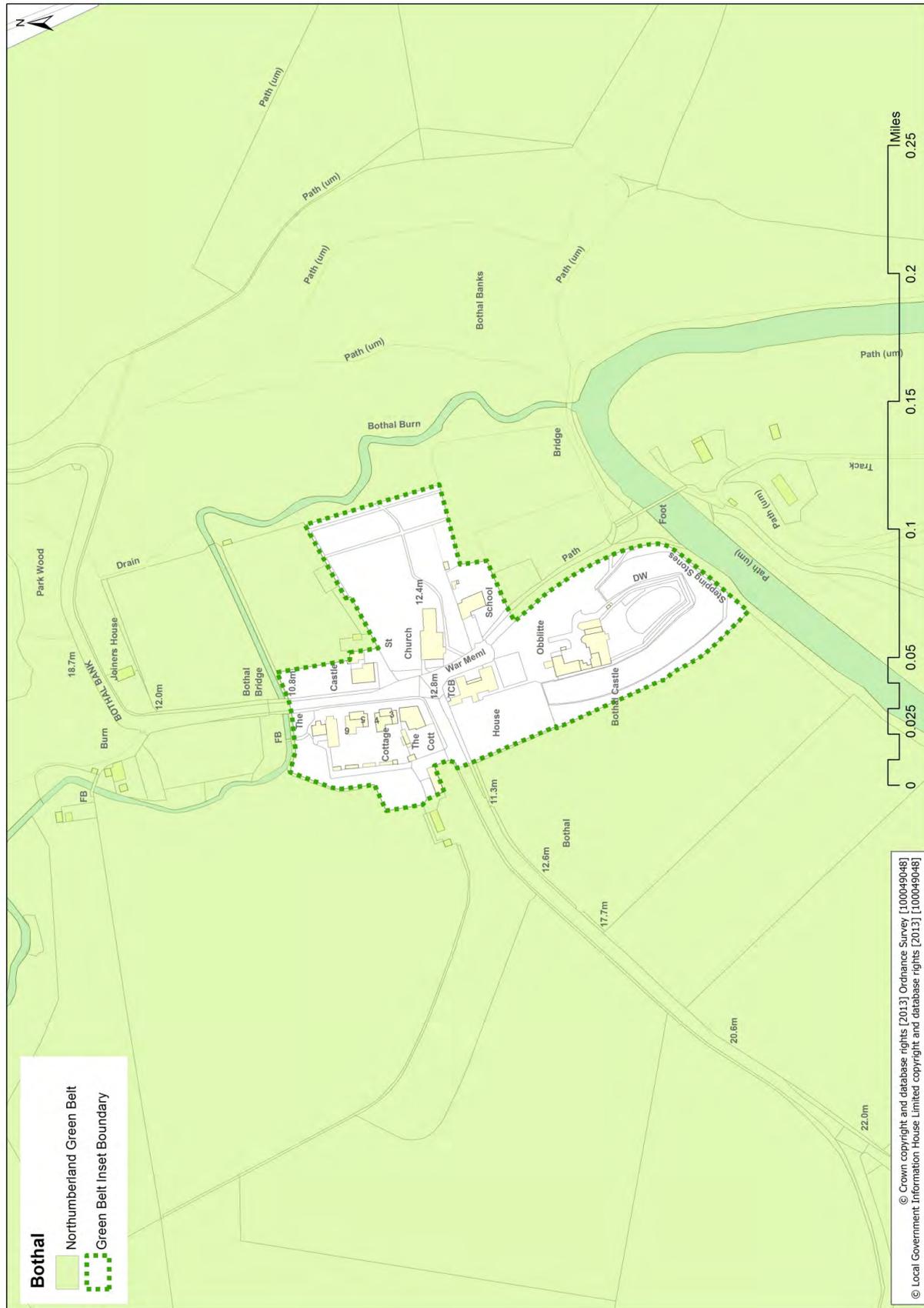


Appendix D: Green Belt Inset Boundaries for small settlements





# Appendix D: Green Belt Inset Boundaries for small settlements





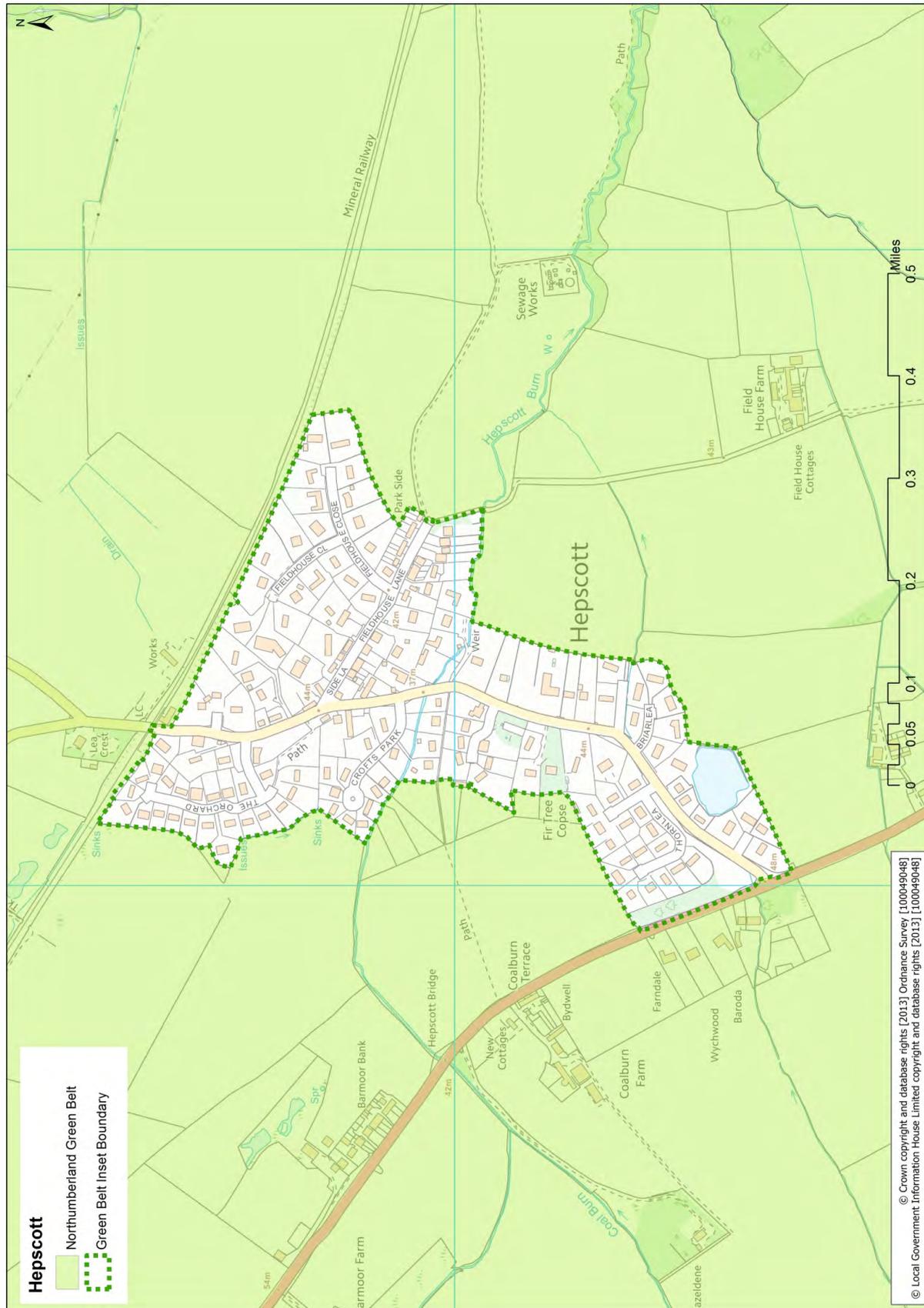




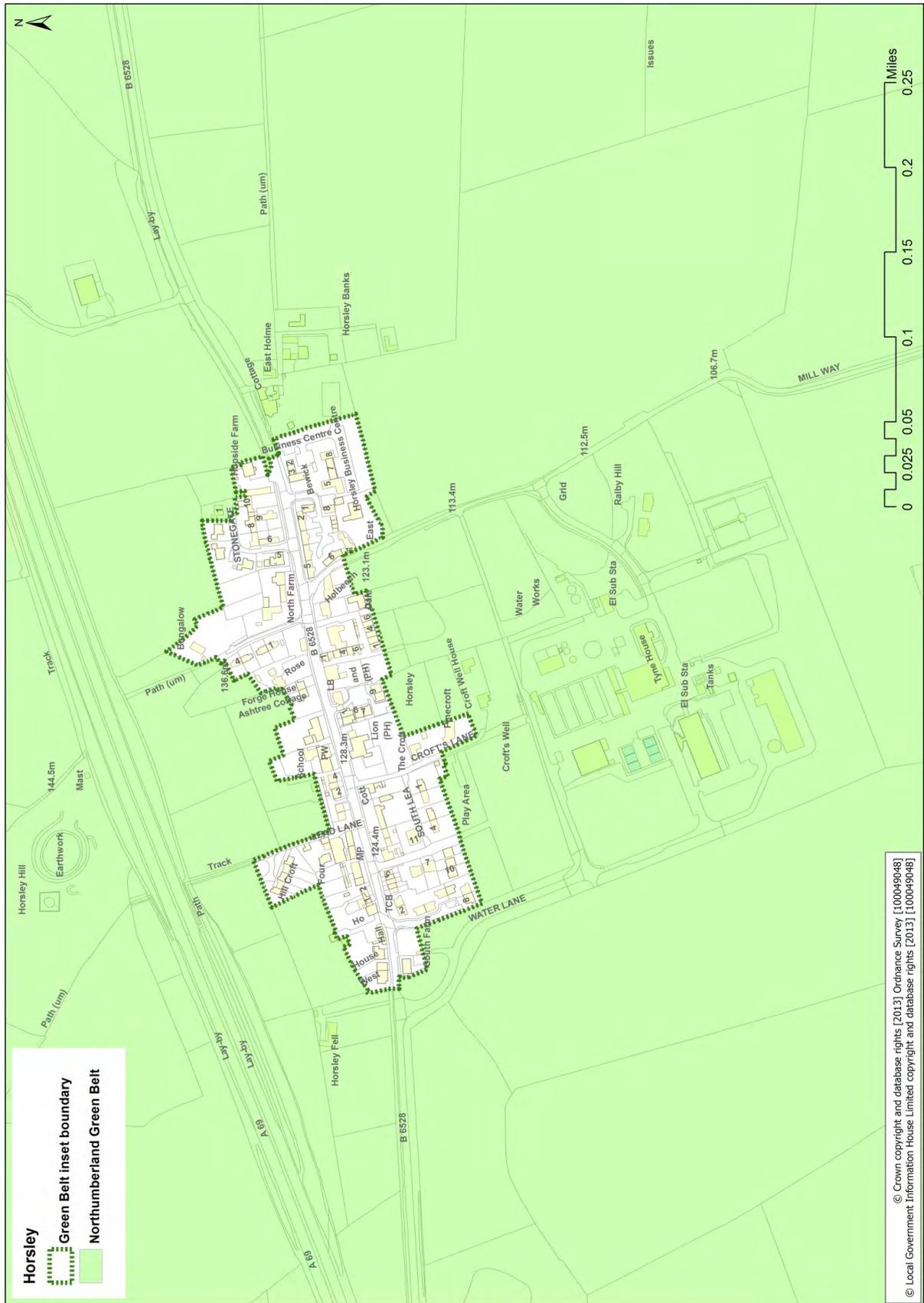




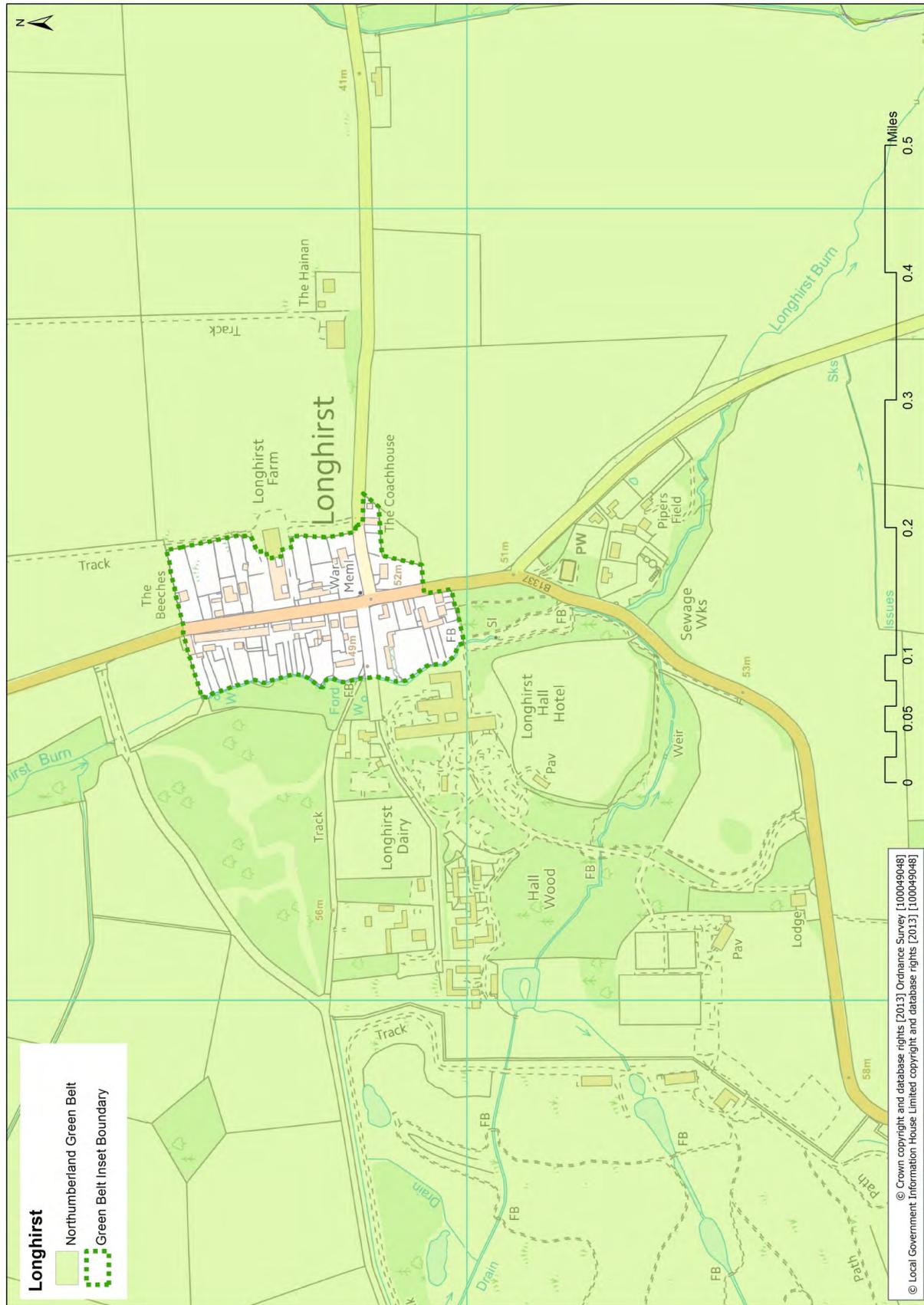
# Appendix D: Green Belt Inset Boundaries for small settlements



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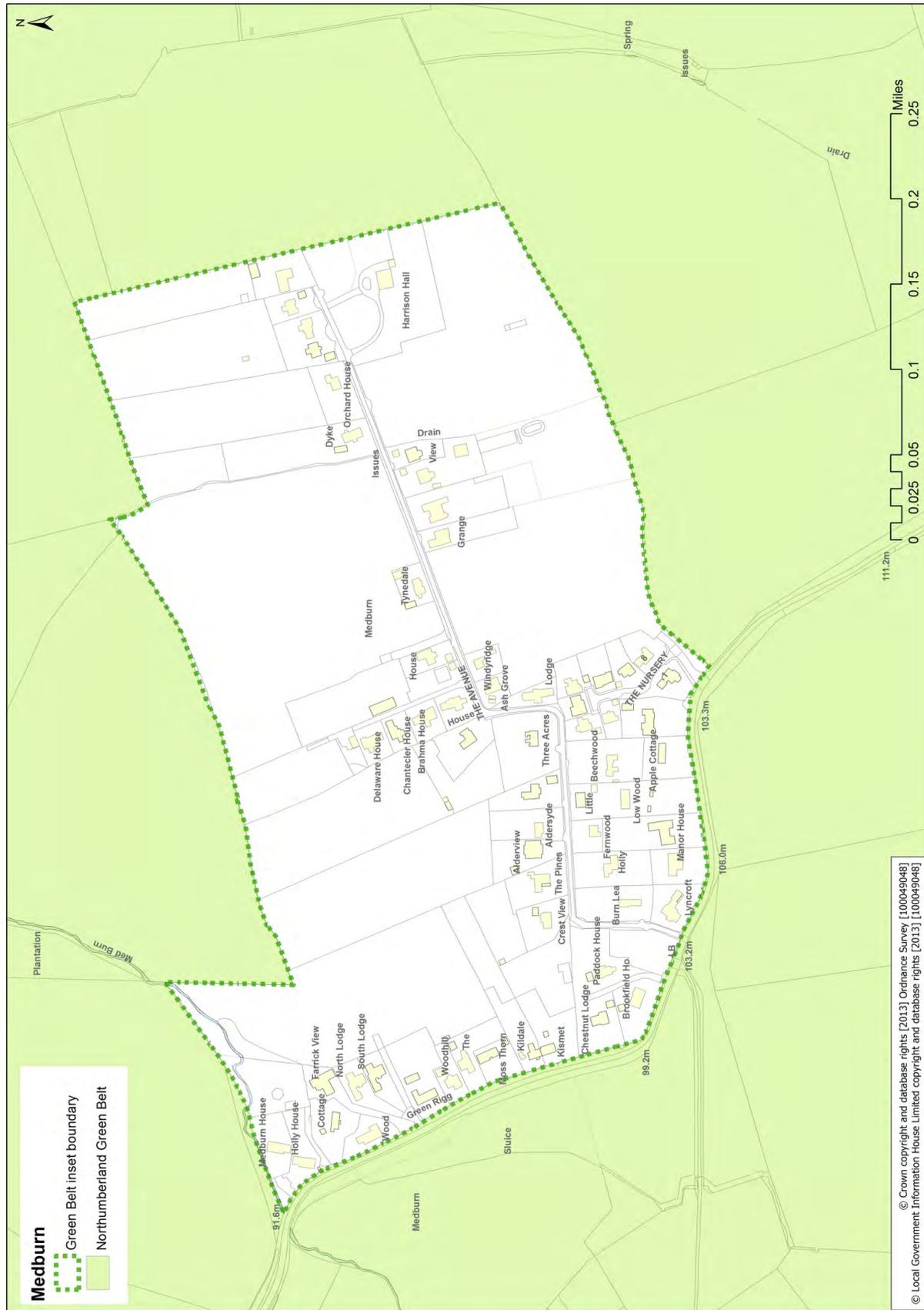


# Appendix D: Green Belt Inset Boundaries for small settlements

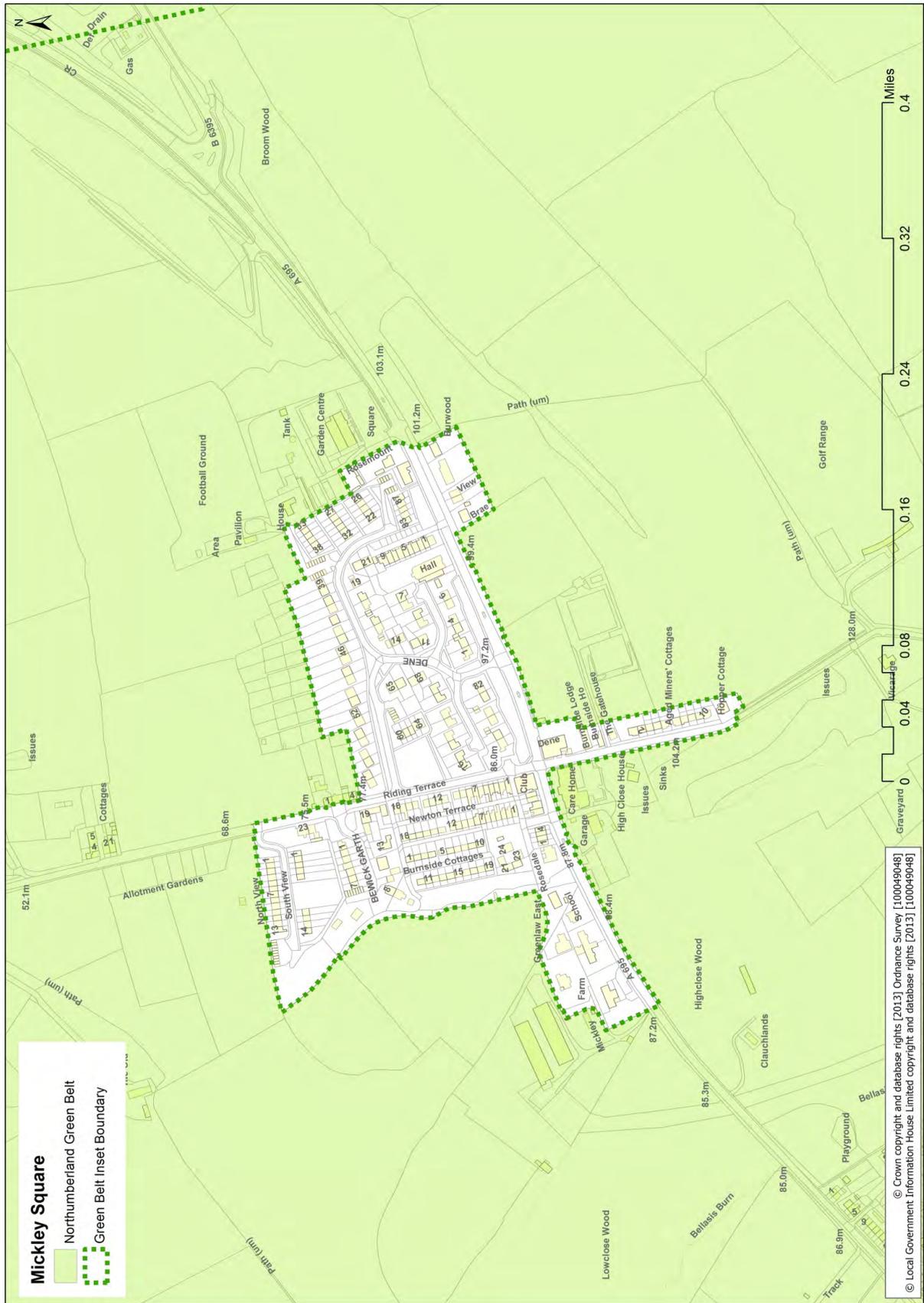




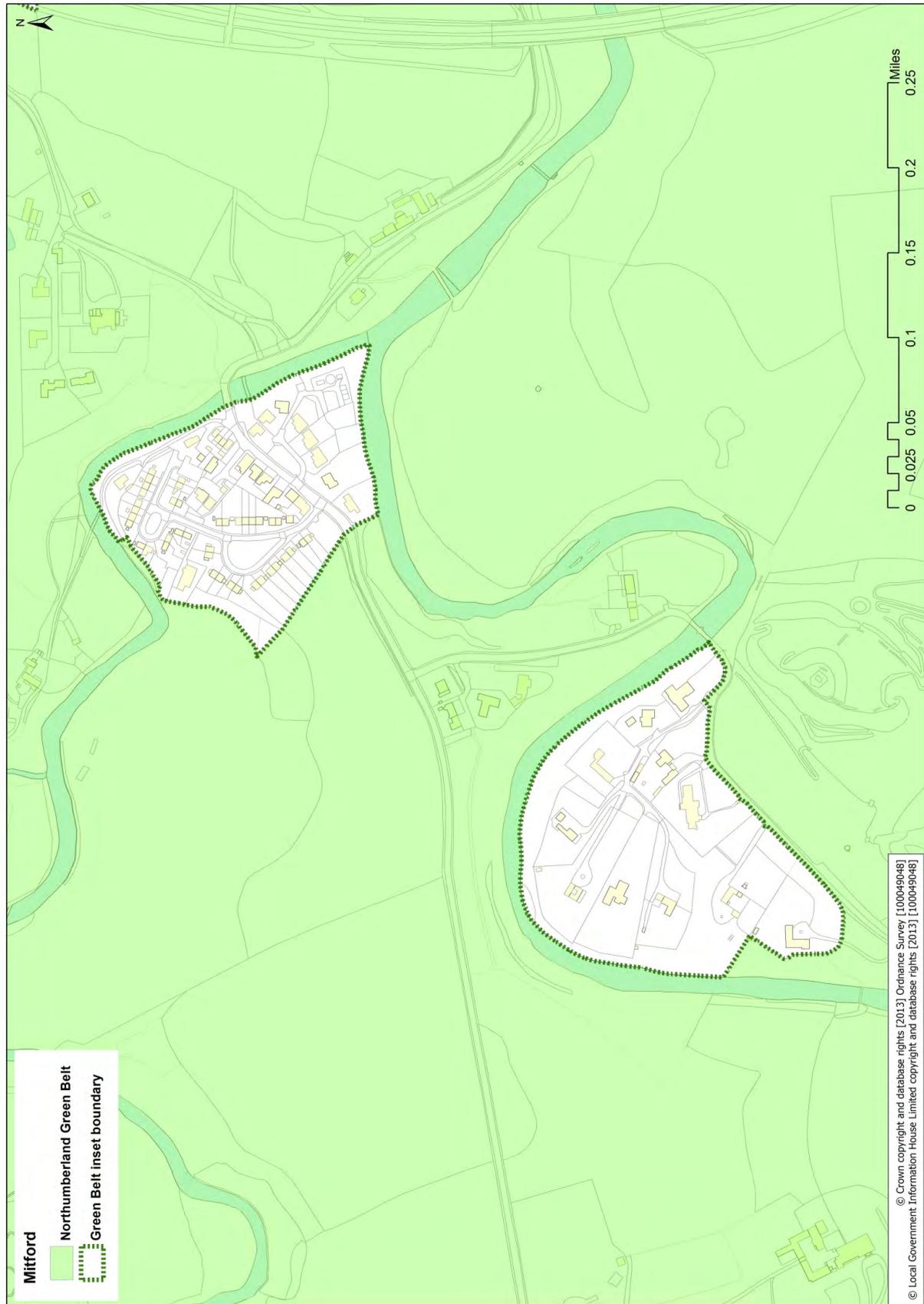
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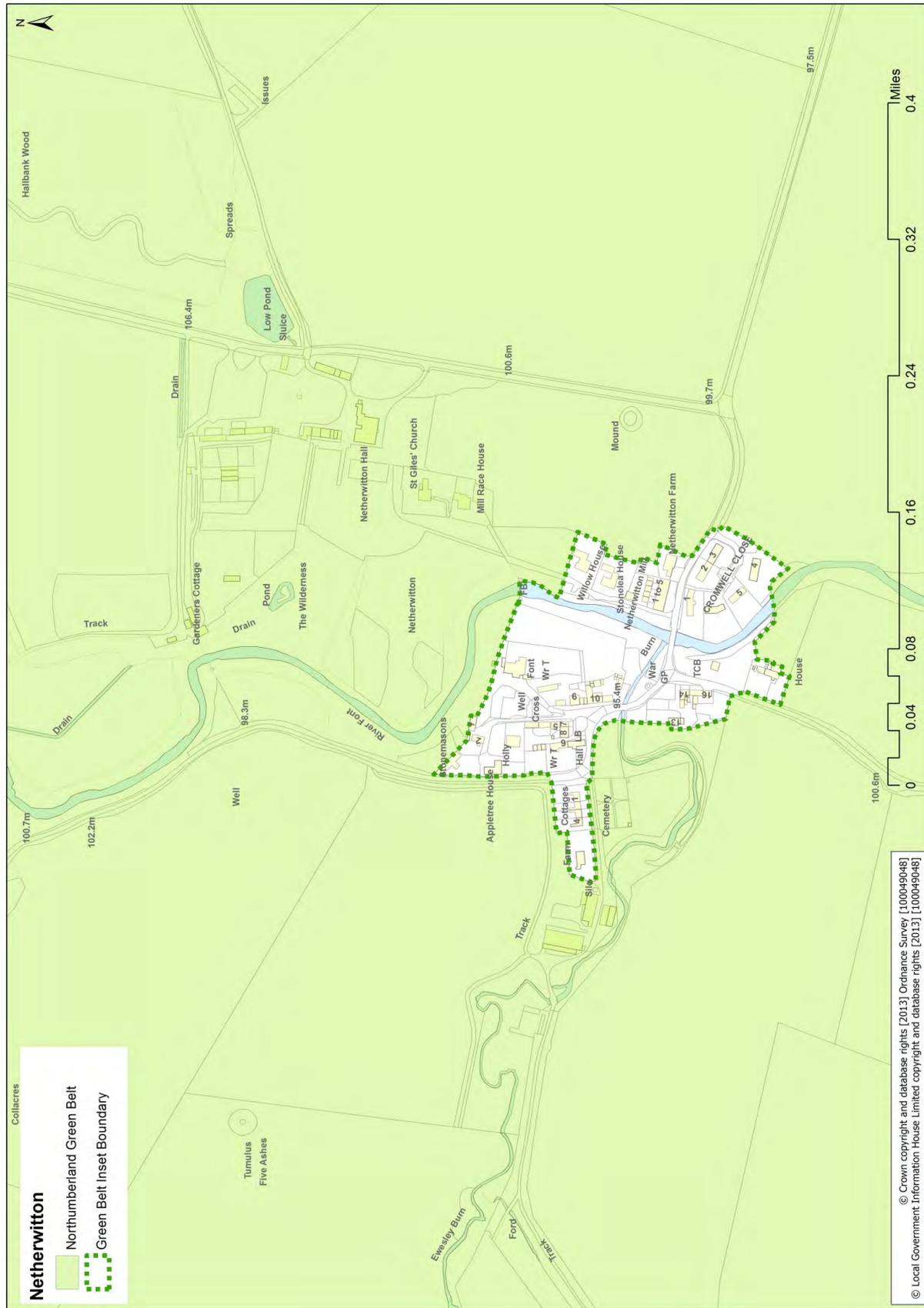
# Appendix D: Green Belt Inset Boundaries for small settlements



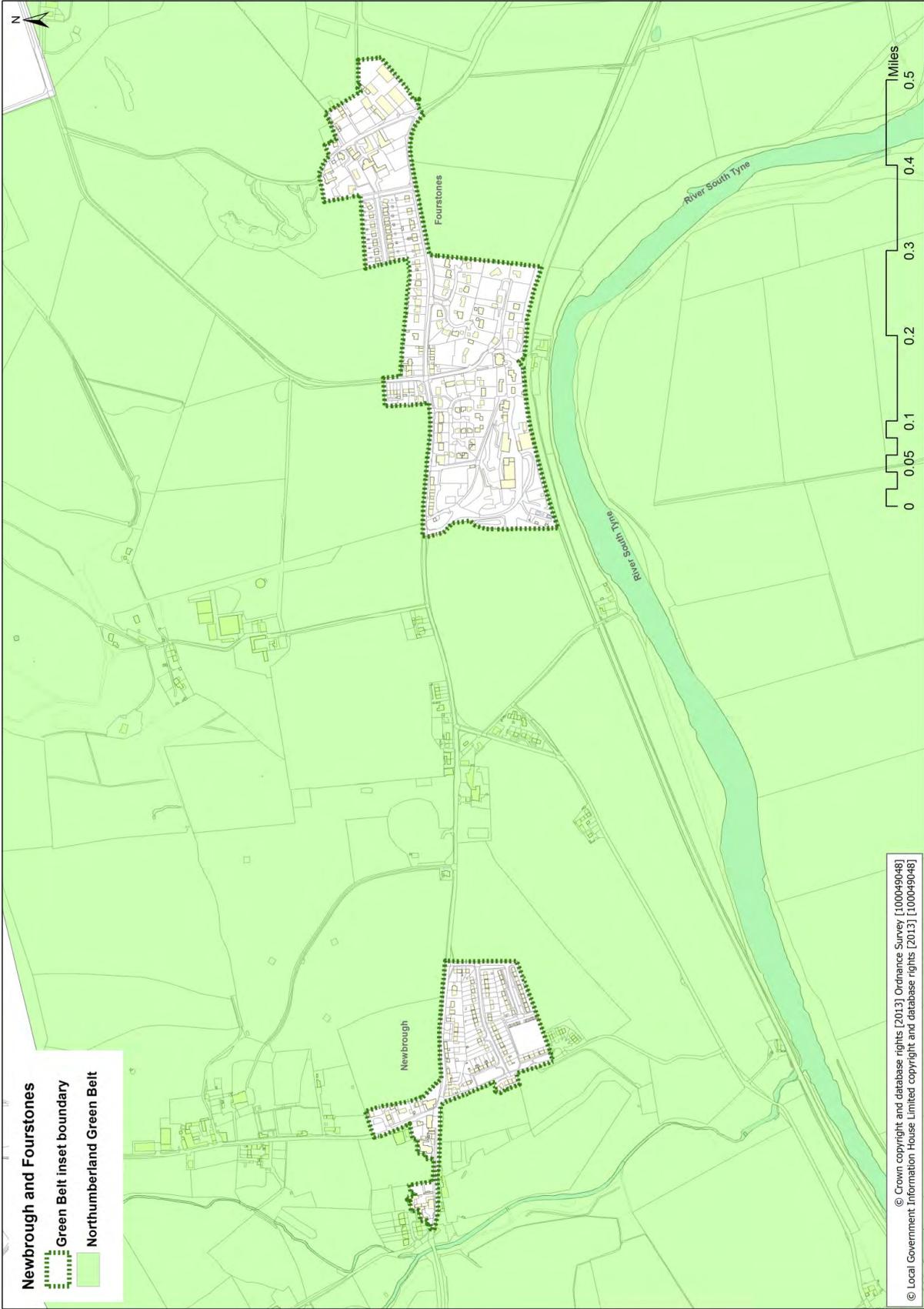
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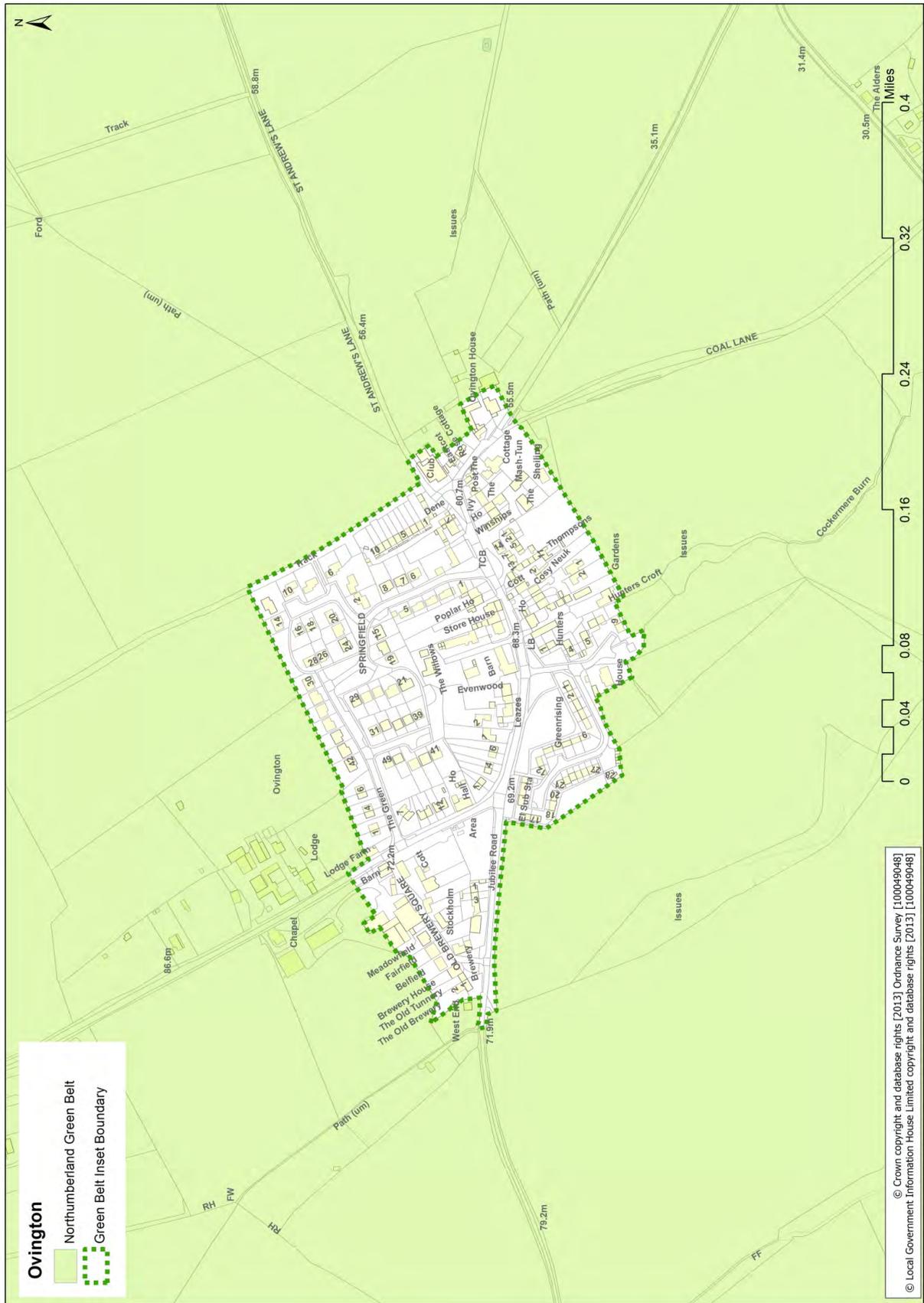


# Appendix D: Green Belt Inset Boundaries for small settlements

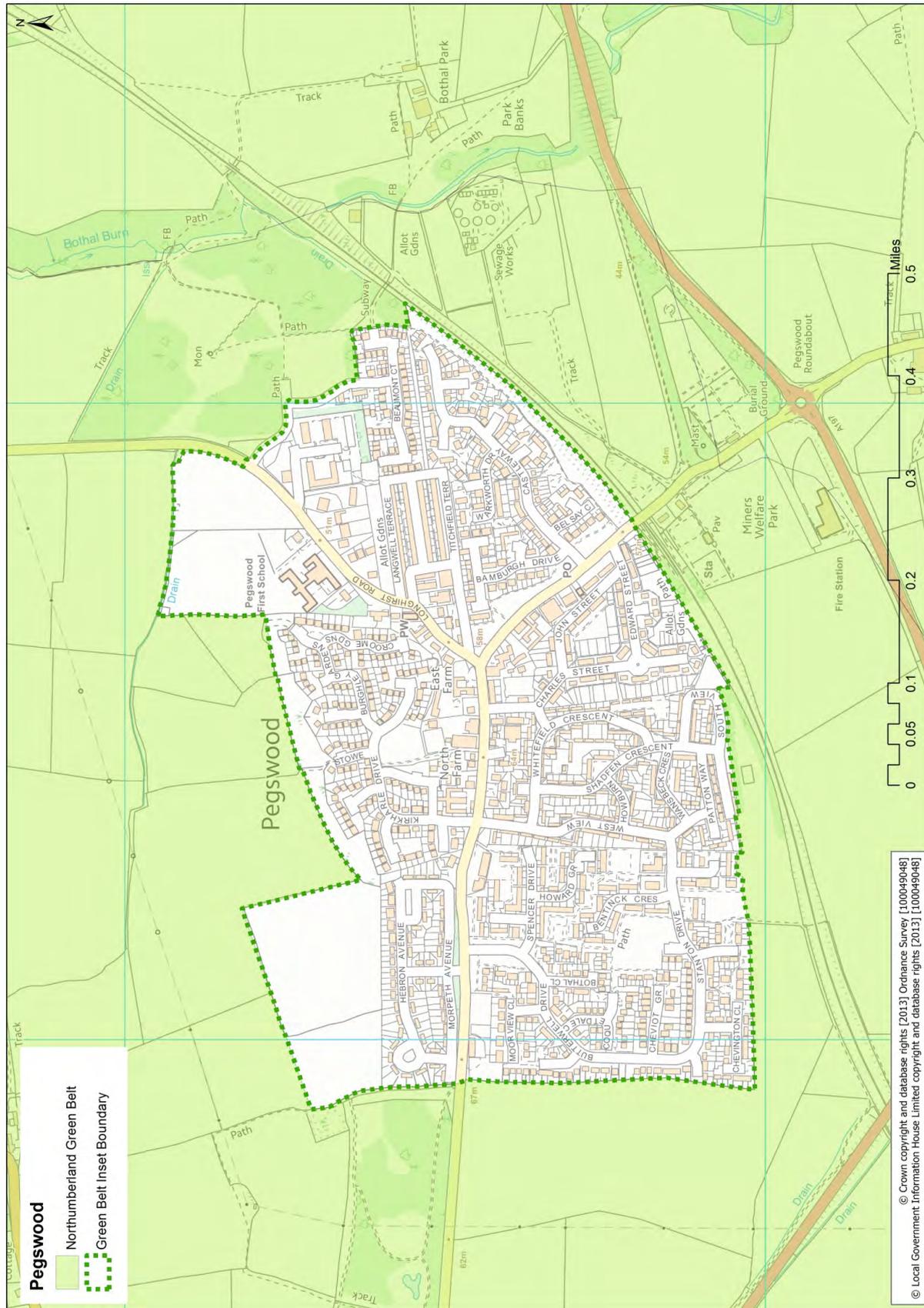




# Appendix D: Green Belt Inset Boundaries for small settlements

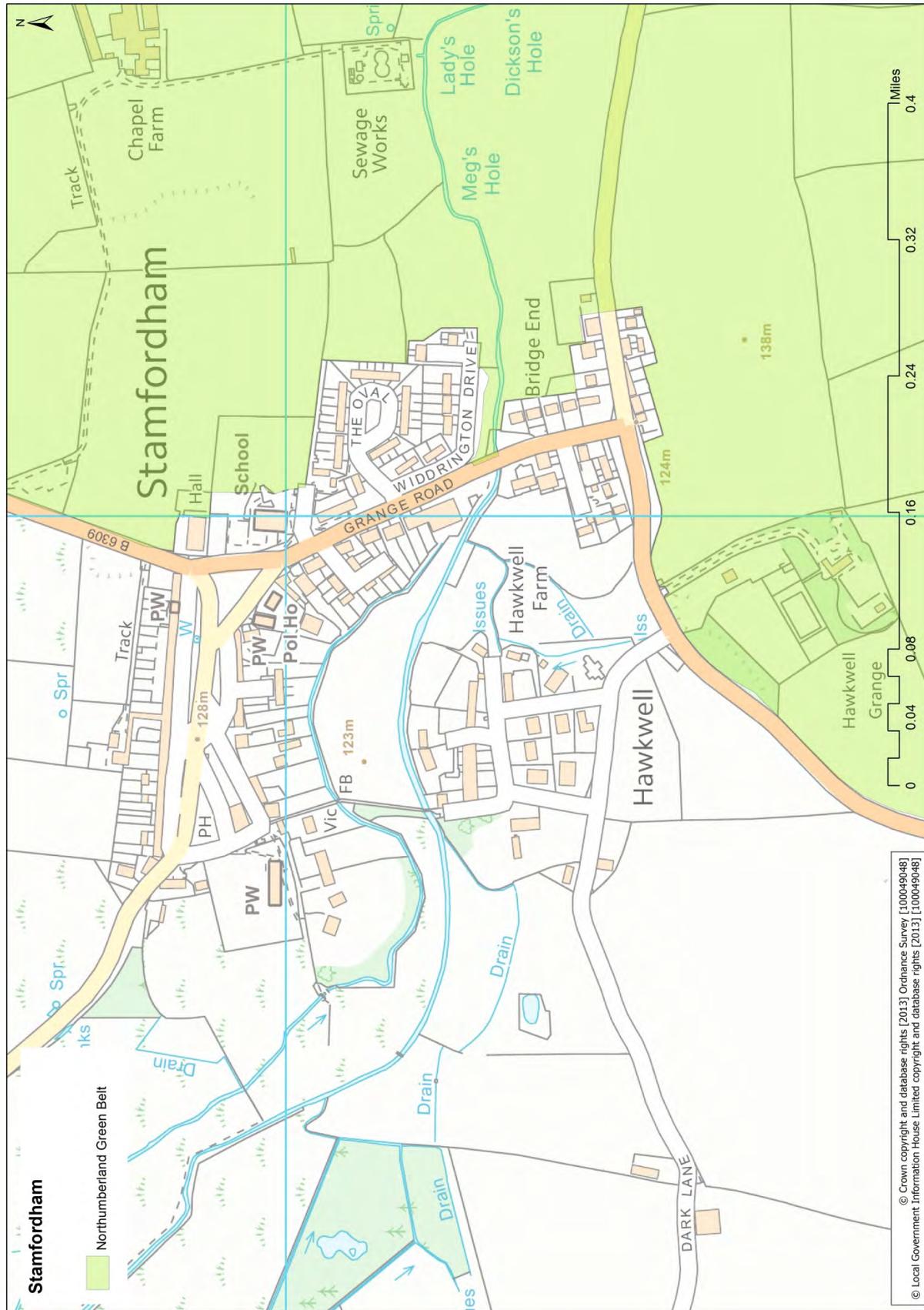


# Appendix D: Green Belt Inset Boundaries for small settlements

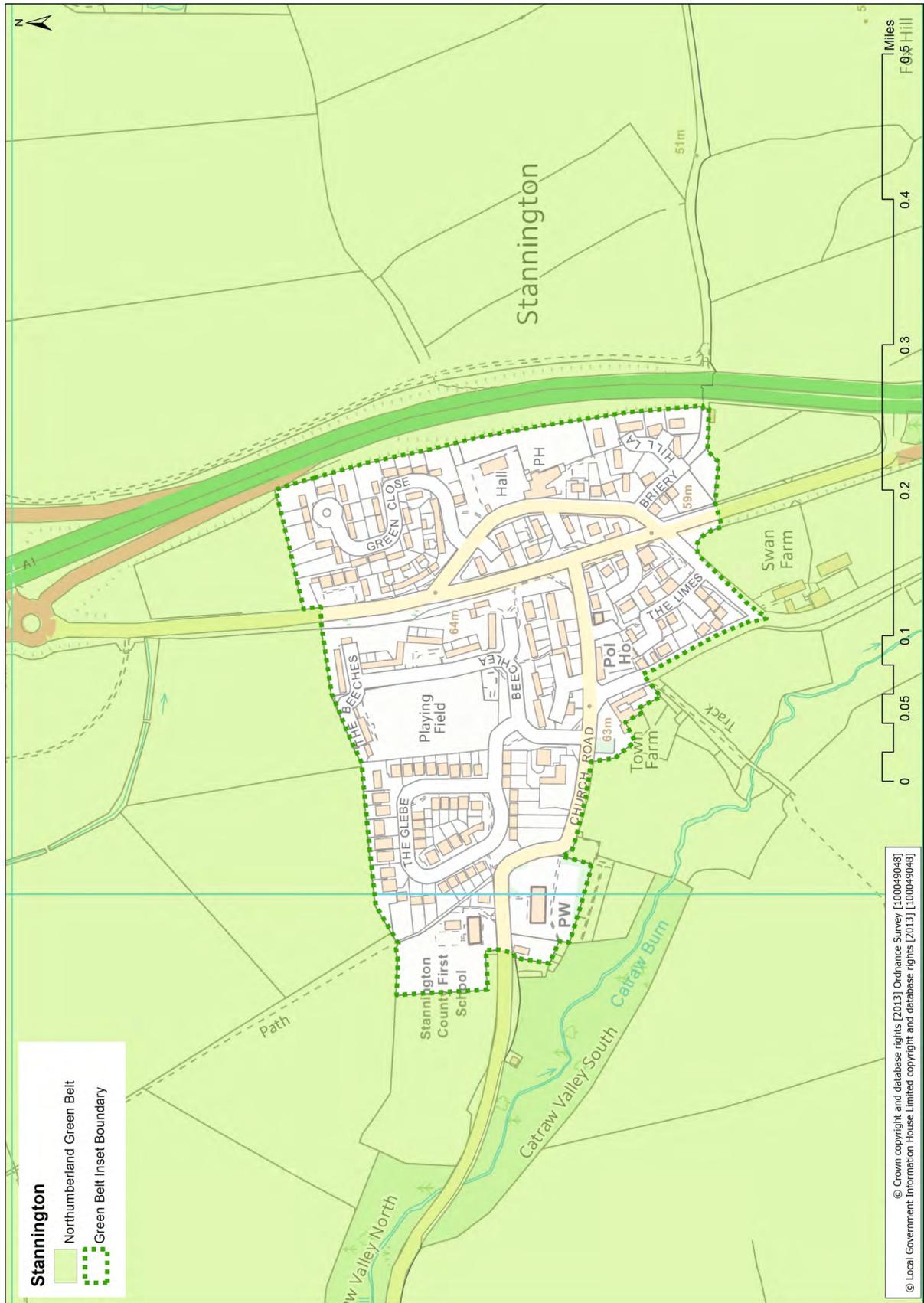




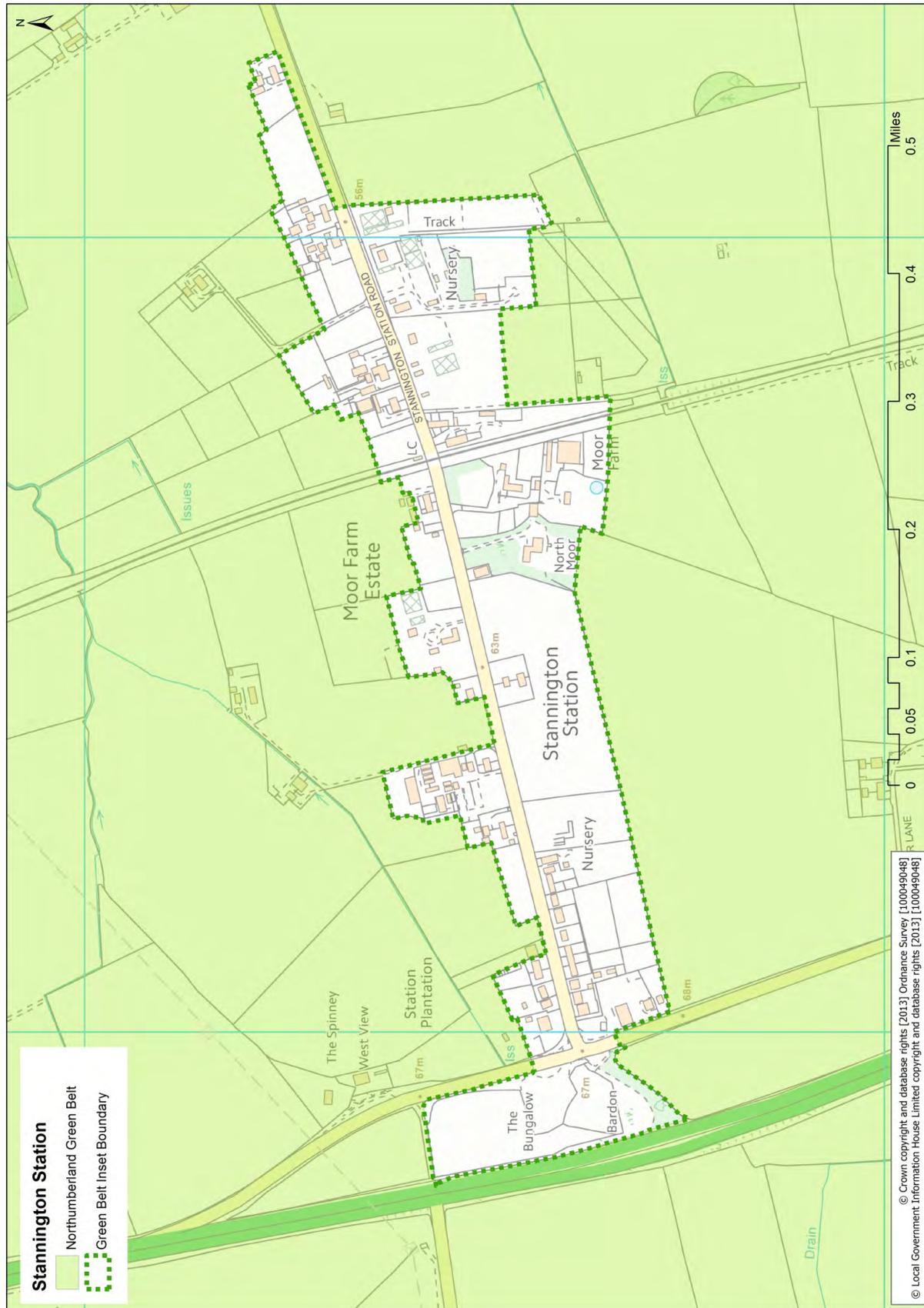
# Appendix D: Green Belt Inset Boundaries for small settlements



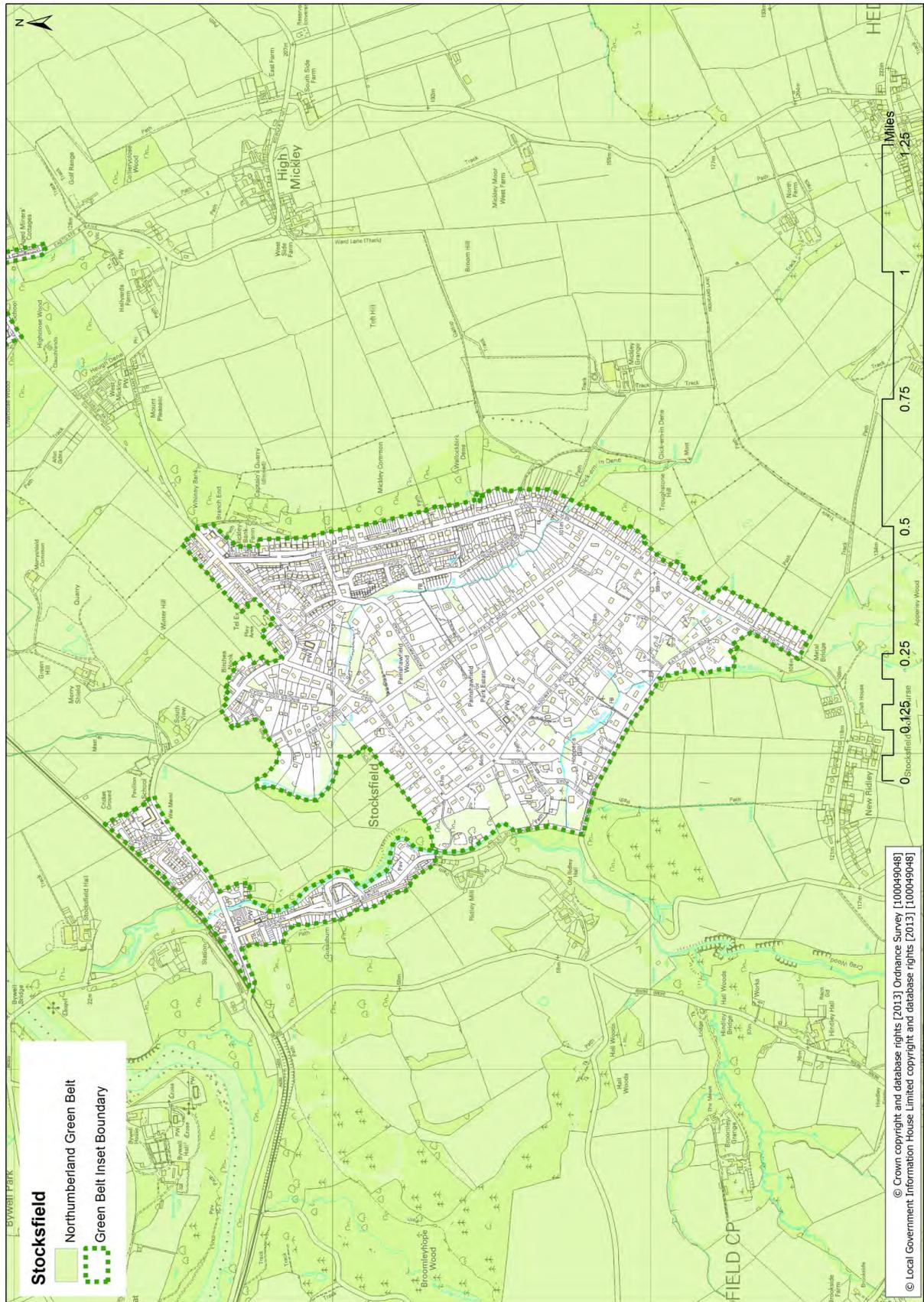
# Appendix D: Green Belt Inset Boundaries for small settlements



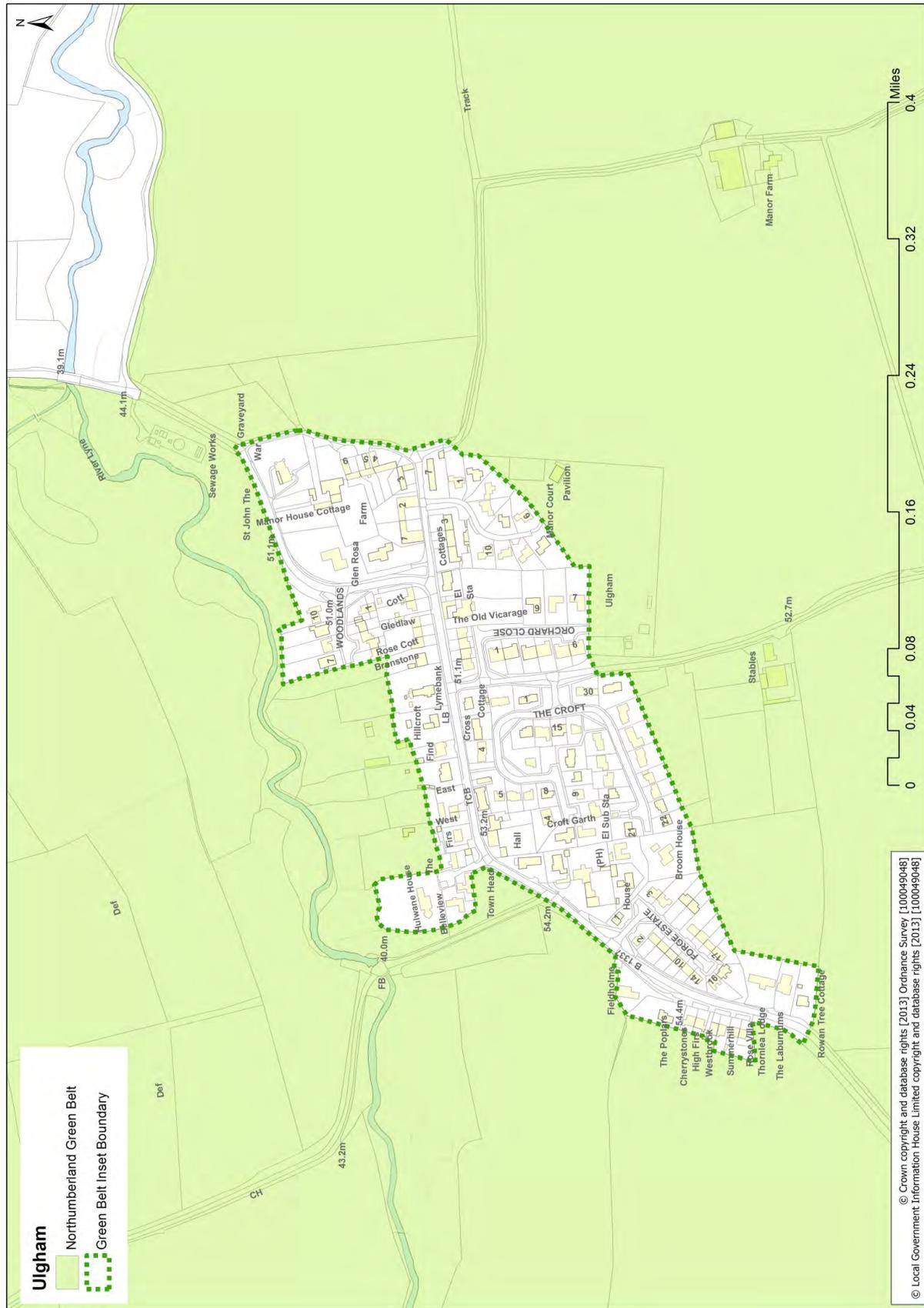
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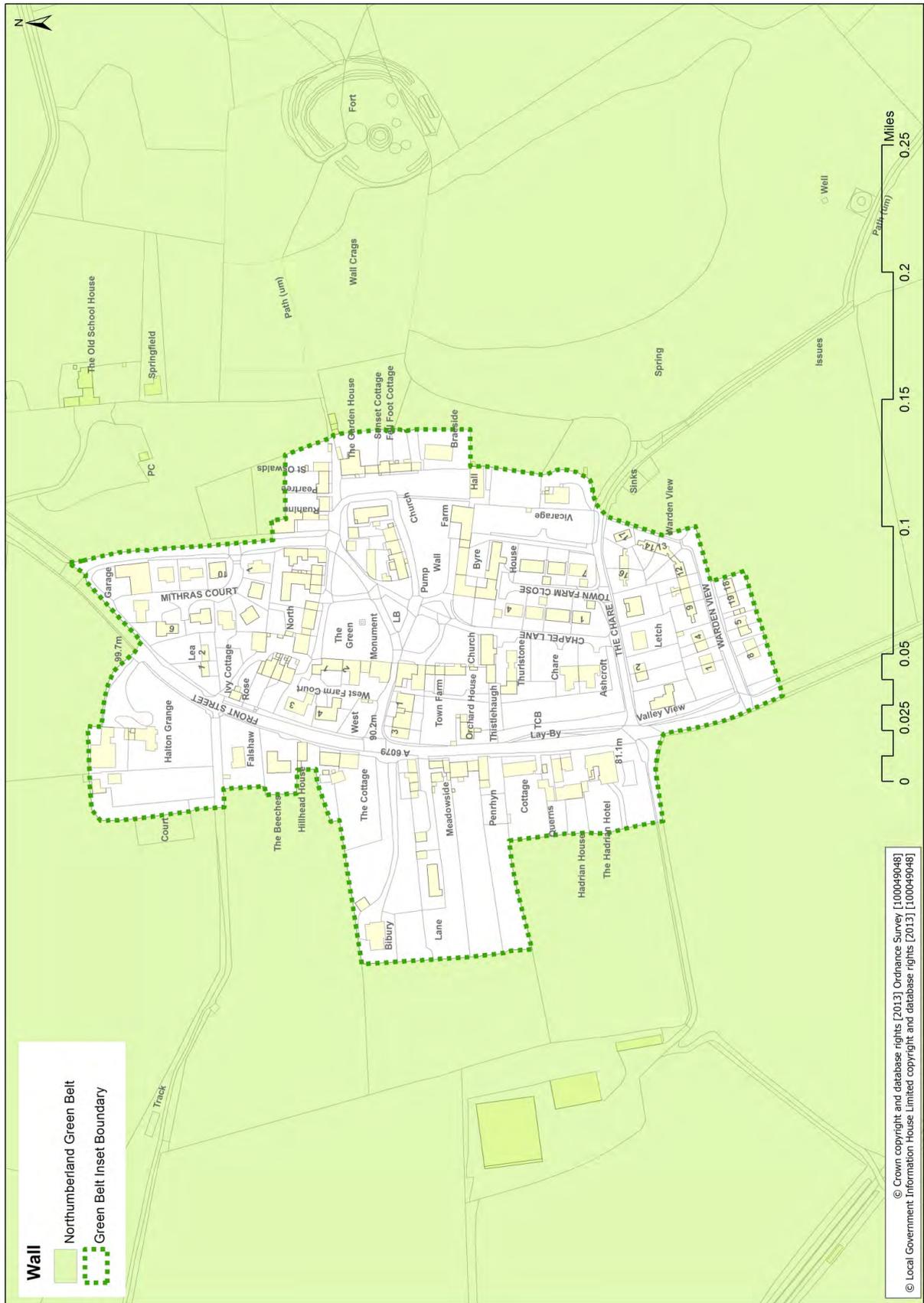
# Appendix D: Green Belt Inset Boundaries for small settlements



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# Appendix E: Mineral Safeguarding Areas

## Appendix E: Mineral Safeguarding Areas

### Definition and purpose of Mineral Safeguarding Areas

Mineral Safeguarding Areas are areas of known mineral resources that are of sufficient economic or conservation value to warrant protection for future generations.

The purpose of Mineral Safeguarding Areas is to make relevant parties aware of the presence of a mineral resource and to ensure that mineral resources are adequately and effectively considered in land-use planning decisions so these resources are not needlessly sterilised.

There is no presumption that any areas within a Mineral Safeguarding Area will ultimately be acceptable for mineral extraction.

### Northumberland Mineral Safeguarding Areas for Coal

- Mineral Safeguarding Areas for Coal
- Northumberland Local Plan Area



# Appendix E: Mineral Safeguarding Areas

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## Northumberland Mineral Safeguarding Areas for Limestone and Igneous Rock

-  Mineral Safeguarding Areas for Limestone
-  Mineral Safeguarding Areas for Igneous Rock
-  Northumberland Local Plan Area



# Appendix E: Mineral Safeguarding Areas

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## Northumberland Mineral Safeguarding Areas for Sandstone for Building Stone Use

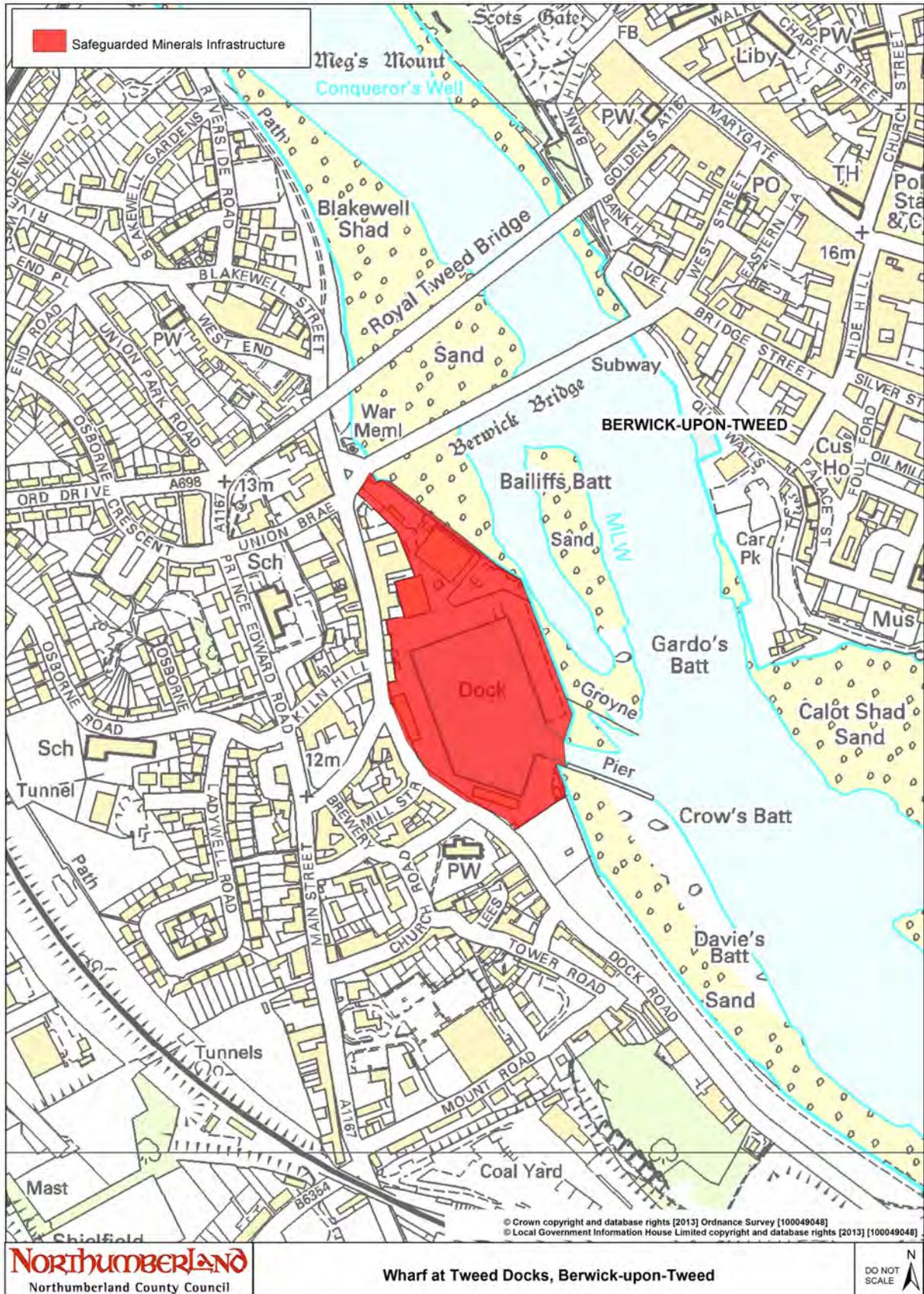
- Mineral Safeguarding Area for Sandstone for Building Stone Use
- Northumberland Local Plan Area



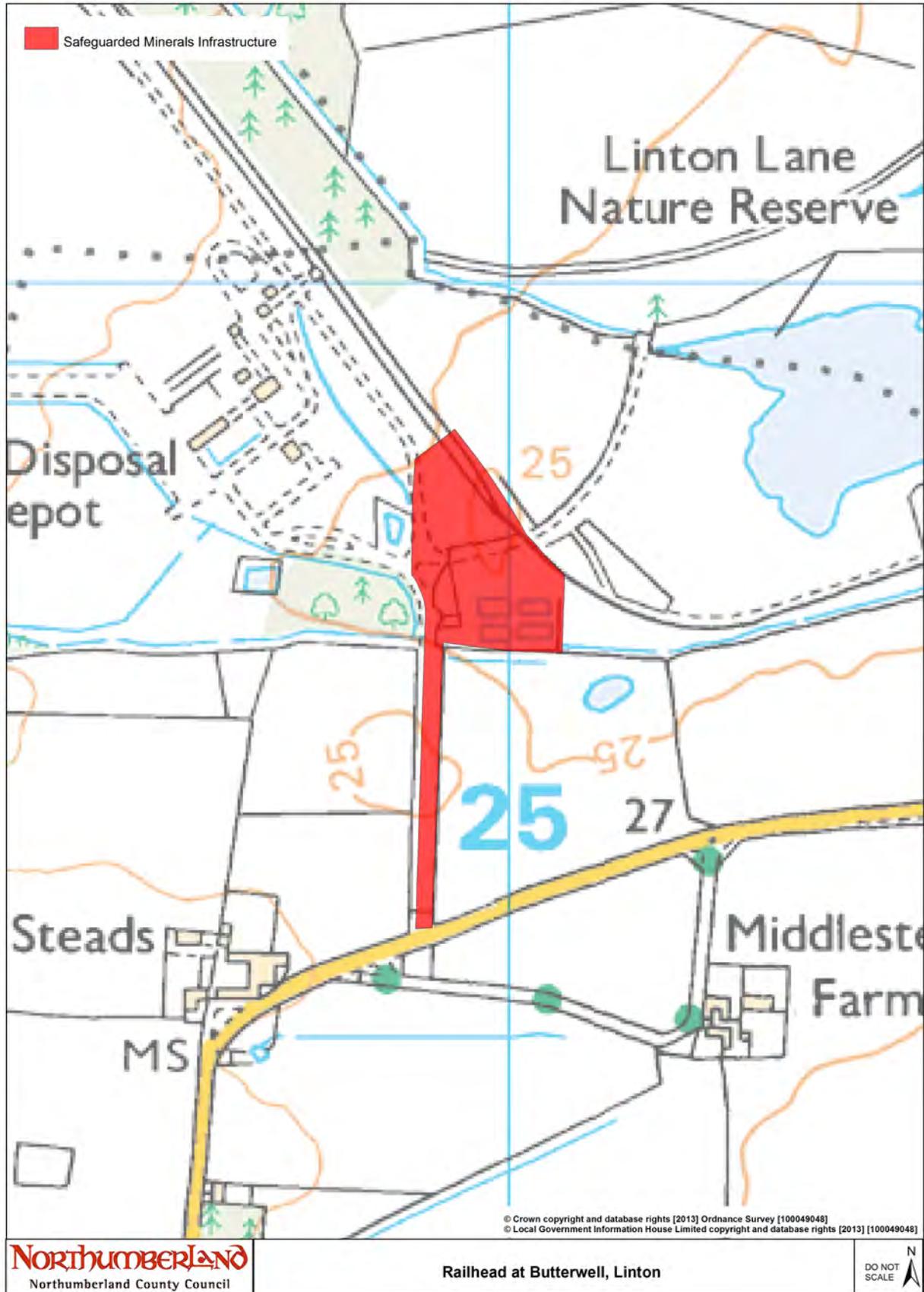


# Appendix F: Safeguarded minerals infrastructure

## Wharf at Tweed Docks

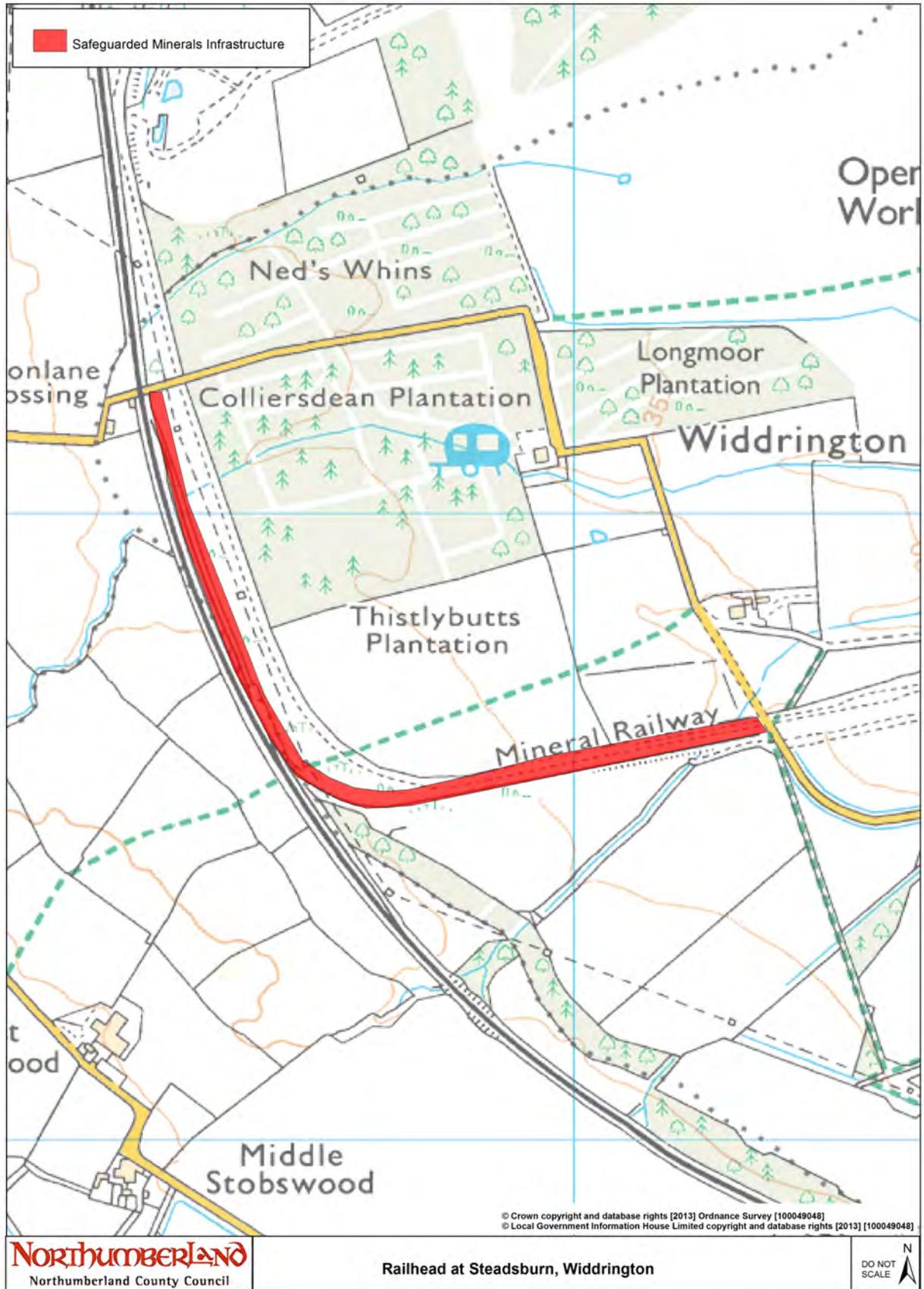


Railhead at Butterwell

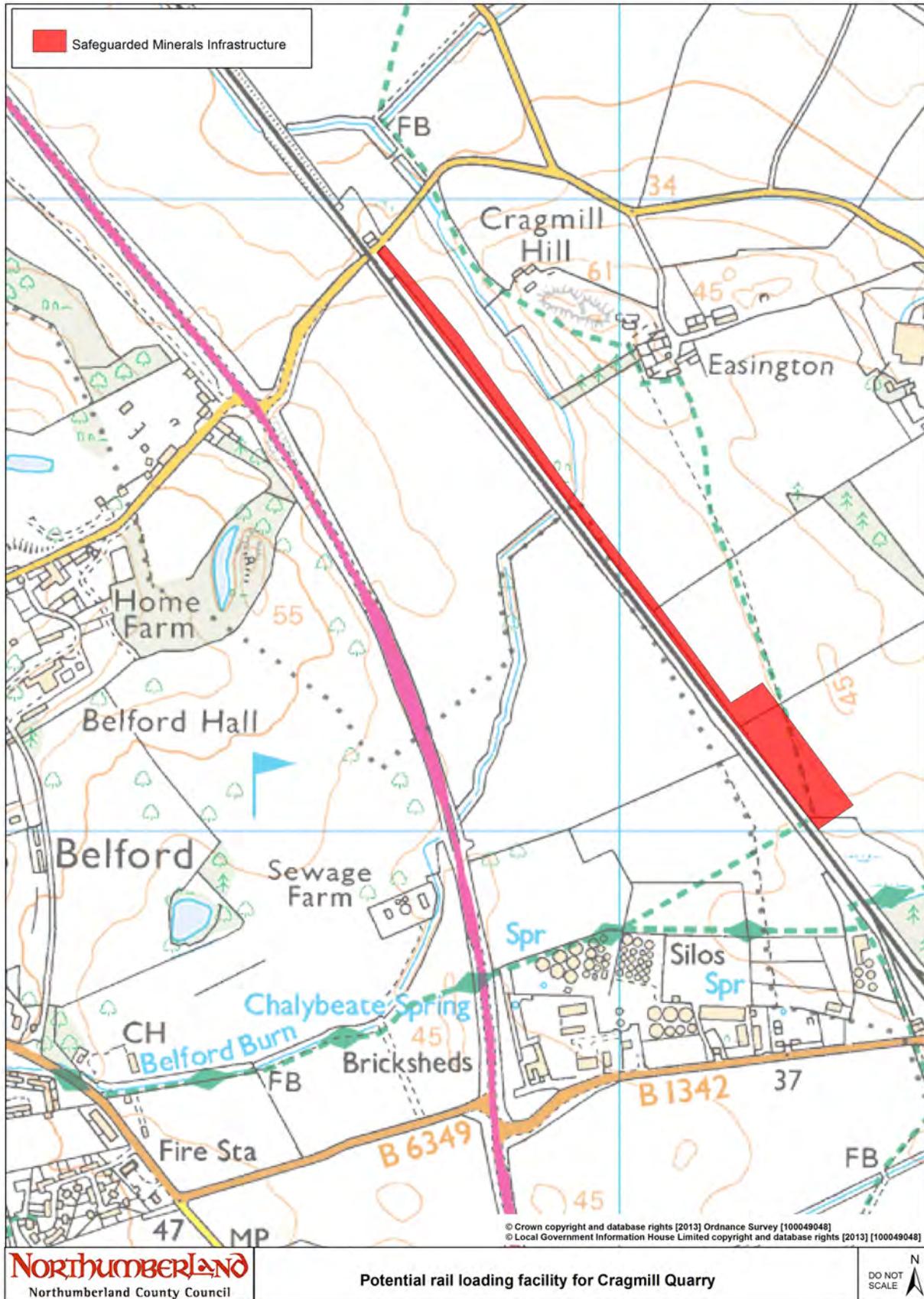


# Appendix F: Safeguarded minerals infrastructure

## Railhead at Steadsburn

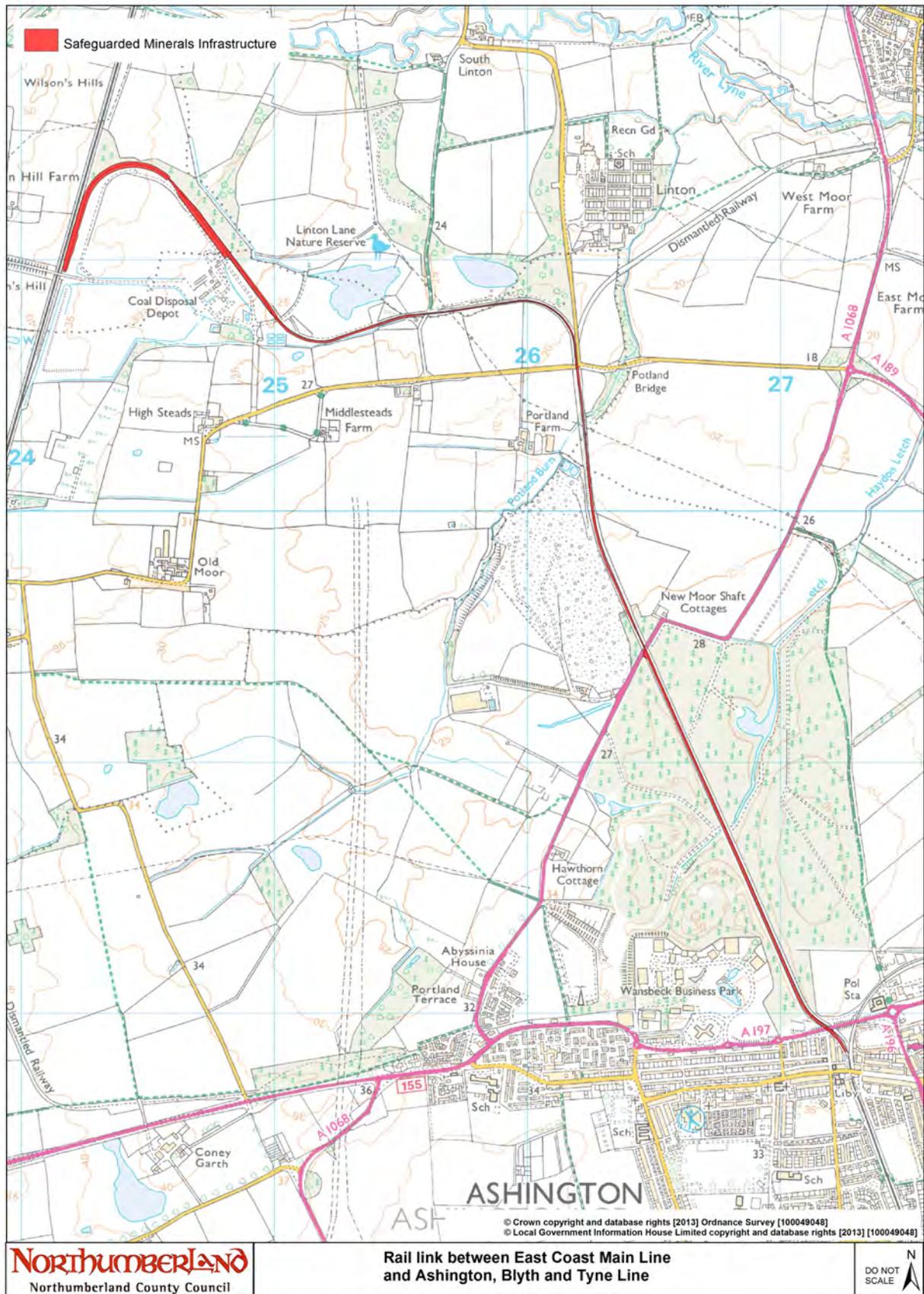


Potential Railhead for Cragmill Quarry



# Appendix F: Safeguarded minerals infrastructure

## Rail link between the East Coast Main Line and the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line



# Appendix F: Safeguarded minerals infrastructure

## Rail links to the Port of Blyth



Strategic Planning and Housing  
Northumberland County Council  
County Hall  
Morpeth  
Northumberland  
NE61 2EF  
Telephone: 0345 600 6400  
Email: [PlanningStrategy@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:PlanningStrategy@northumberland.gov.uk)  
Website: [corestrategy.northumberland.gov.uk](http://corestrategy.northumberland.gov.uk)

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

Northumberland County Council