

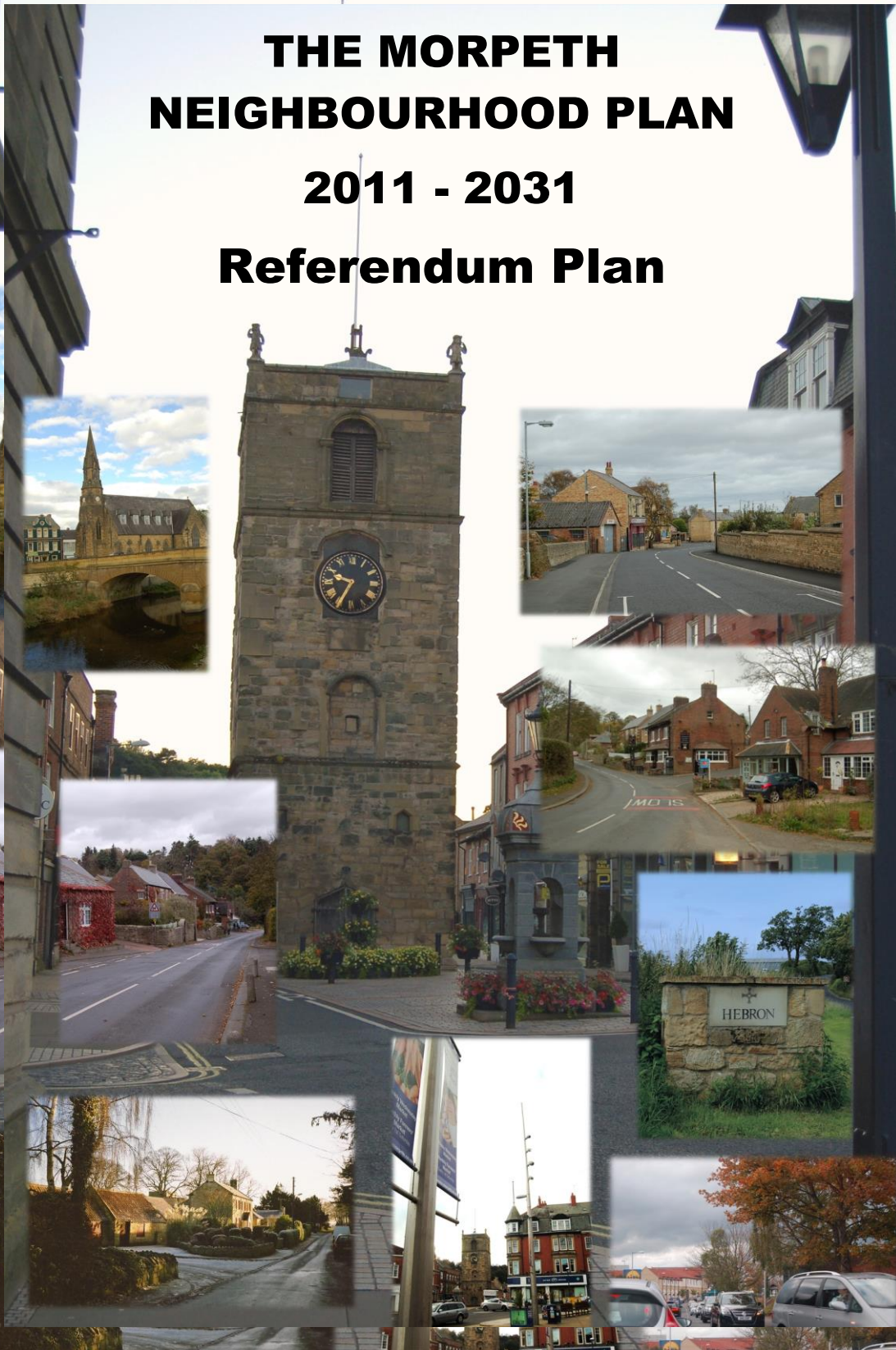
The Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan

Morpeth Pegswood Hebron Hepscott Mitford



*Our Community
Our Future
Our Plan*

THE MORPETH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2011 - 2031 Referendum Plan



www.themorpethneighbourhoodplan.org.uk

PREFACE

Neighbourhood Plans: Neighbourhood Plans are part of the Government's reforms allowing local communities to express their priorities with a view to managing change rather than responding to developer pressures. Since the launch of the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan (MNP), which covers Morpeth, Hebron, Hepscoth, Mitford and Pegswood, a large number of residents and stakeholders have identified issues and concerns and taken part in two phases of consultation and very many volunteers have been directly active in researching, and drafting this Plan. Following a consultation exercise in autumn 2013, a draft MNP was prepared with a vision, objectives and policies for managing change in the Plan area for the next two decades. This draft Plan was the subject of a further consultation exercise in January - March 2015, which involved a leaflet giving an overview of the Plan document being distributed to all households in the Plan area.

Amendments were made to the Draft Plan taking into account comments received from statutory consultees, other consultees and local residents to produce a Submission Draft Plan which was the subject of further publicity conducted by the County Council. An Independent Examination has been undertaken on the Submission Draft Plan. The Independent Examiner recommended that, subject to a number of modifications being made to policies in the Plan, it meets the 'basic conditions' and may proceed to referendum. The County Council considered those recommendations and resolved to accept all modifications proposed by the Examiner. This document is the final modified version of the Plan which will be put to local referendum in 2016.

Planning Policies and Community Actions: A 'neighbourhood plan' is a plan that sets out policies and proposals in relation to the development and use of land in the whole, or a particular part, of a neighbourhood area. Within this document such land use policies are identified as **Planning Policies**. Development proposals in the plan area will be determined in accordance with the planning policy framework of the MNP, strategic and national planning policies and any other material consideration. The proposed planning policies of the MNP are intended to meet plan objectives and help realise the vision for the plan area and its communities. **Planning Policies are set out in Part A of this document.**

The MNP also includes wider community actions than those directly relating to the use and development of land. These measures are intended to encourage action and influence decisions taken by relevant bodies to achieve the vision and objectives of the MNP. It is acceptable to include such matters within a neighbourhood plan as they will also help to meet plan objectives and to realise the vision of the plan. These are identified as **Community Actions** within this document and carry the reference prefix 'CA'. Whilst community actions are important, in legal terms only the planning policies of the MNP have 'statutory weight'. The Local Planning Authority will only have regard to the adopted planning policies of the MNP when determining planning applications. It will be the responsibility of the town and parish councils and other appropriate bodies to take forward the community actions. A community action that forms part of an integrated package of policies and proposals and sits within a neighbourhood plan, and which has been the subject of community consultation, is likely to be given greater status by relevant bodies when it comes to securing support and possible funding. **Community Actions are set out in Part B of this document.**

After each planning policy and community action the relevant objectives are identified.

FOREWORD

This Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan is our plan for land use in our area – Morpeth and the parishes of Hebron, Hepscott, Mitford and Pegswood, prepared by volunteers and local residents. Morpeth Town Council and the four parish councils are indebted to all the volunteers who gave so unstintingly of their time to help us fulfill our ambition to have a Neighbourhood Plan for the area.

Over the next couple of decades, we can expect the population of Morpeth to grow by well over 20% and this Plan helps determine where and how that development will take place. The Plan's Vision is that our town remains vibrant and our villages retain their individual character so that our new residents identify themselves as part in our communities and our existing residents continue to be proud of where we live.

The Plan is designed to enable us to shape the development of our communities over the next two decades without loss of their special and distinctive character.

Nic Best, Mayor of Morpeth, 2014-2015



View across Morpeth town centre

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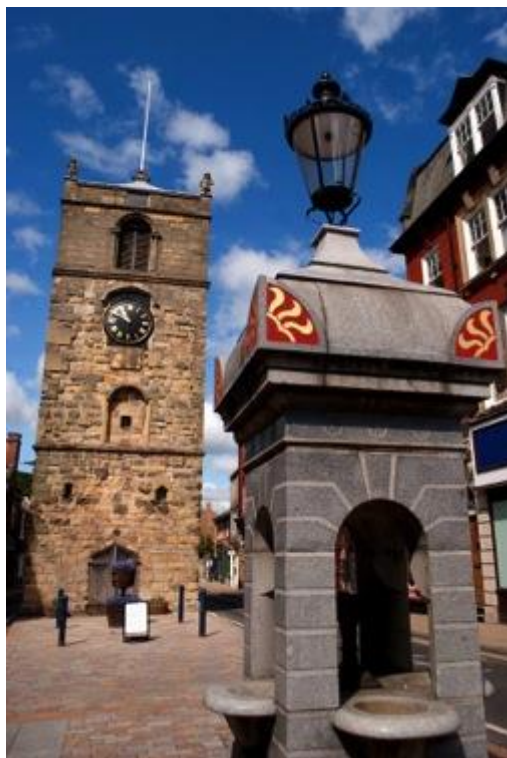
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1 Introduction

1.1.1 The Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan (MNP) will shape development in our area over the next 20 years. Neighbourhood plans are part of the Government's reforms to devolve greater power to local communities to manage development in their area. They form part of the statutory development plan, which must be taken into account in reaching planning decisions. The MNP provides a proactive approach to managing change on the basis of the local community's priorities, rather than relying on a reactive approach, often in the form of resisting change, in response to developer pressure.

1.1.2 The process of plan preparation has been led by Morpeth Town Council as 'qualifying body' for neighbourhood planning purposes within the Morpeth Neighbourhood Area. Support and endorsement of the Plan has been provided by the adjoining Parish Councils representing the civil parishes of Hebron, Hepscott, Mitford and Pegswood all of which lie within the Morpeth Neighbourhood Area.



Hollon Fountain and Clock Tower

1.1.3 The project to prepare a neighbourhood plan was launched in October 2012. Volunteer residents have worked within topic groups to gather information and examine the key issues facing Morpeth and its adjoining communities – Hebron, Hepscott, Mitford and Pegswood. From this work, and a series of public workshops, technical Topic Group reports were produced and their findings consolidated into an 'Issues and Options Consultation Report'.

1.1.4 Consultation and engagement about the Issues and Options Consultation Report with local communities and key stakeholders took place for a six week period between 18th September 2013 and 30th October 2013.

1.1.5 A leaflet and short questionnaire summarising each topic area, the key issues to be addressed and options for dealing with the issues, were distributed to households across the Morpeth Neighbourhood Area. The main purpose of the short questionnaire was to check that the issues to be addressed had been properly identified, and to get feedback on initial ideas and options. As the Issues and Options leaflet only gave an overview, residents were also encouraged to view the main 'Issues and Options Consultation Report' and the technical Topic Group reports, which were available online and in hard copy at Morpeth Town Hall. They were also asked to complete a more detailed main questionnaire.

1.1.6 A Pre-Submission Consultation Draft Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan was prepared during 2014 and this, together with leaflet 'Consultation Draft Summary and Questionnaire' which was distributed to all households in the Plan area, was the subject of a consultation exercise in January, February and

March 2015. This comprised the statutory consultation period required by legislation to be undertaken by the Town Council on the Neighbourhood Plan prior to submission to the County Council.

1.1.7 A Consultation Report detailing the consultation process and results has been prepared and is part of the submission suite of Plan documents.

1.1.8 The MNP was submitted to the County Council as Local Planning Authority in June 2015 and was subject to publicity and an Independent Examination during summer 2015. The Independent Examination concluded in September 2015 with the Examiner's report recommending that, subject to certain modifications, the Plan may proceed to referendum. The policies and supporting text have been modified in accordance with each of the recommendations made by the Independent Examiner. This is the final version of the Plan which will now be put to local referendum allowing local residents to vote on whether the County Council should use the policies in the Plan when making decisions on planning applications in the Morpeth Neighbourhood Area.

2 A Vision for the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan Area

2.1 About Morpeth, Hebron, Hepscoth, Mitford and Pegswood

2.1.1 Morpeth is an historic rural market town, classified within the Northumberland draft Core Strategy documents as a main settlement, due to its role as a rural service centre catering for a wide hinterland, especially to the north and west. The adjoining communities of Hebron, Hepscoth, Mitford, and Pegswood have a strong functional relationship with Morpeth in terms of local services, retail offer, education and employment. The Morpeth Neighbourhood Area is shown on the map below. The area has a population of 19,236 people residing within 8,582 households (2011 Census).



2.1.2 Morpeth lies 15 miles north of Newcastle upon Tyne in the valley of the River Wansbeck, which forms a huge loop through the town, which, together with the local topography effectively divides the town into various distinctive areas.

2.1.3 The town, with a population of around 14,000, expanded onto the plateau land to the north and south of the original settlement in the post-war period but in an unobtrusive way, avoiding ribbon development and with clearly defined boundaries. The town has therefore maintained its character as an historic, rural market town, set in a wooded valley and surrounded by open countryside. It acts as a rural service centre with an extensive hinterland to the north and west of the town. Morpeth is an attractive and popular place to live and it has a role as a dormitory settlement for South East Northumberland and Tyneside.

2.1.4 Pegswood lies approximately 2 miles north east of Morpeth and has a parish population of around 3,280. Previously it was a colliery village, but the coal mine closed in 1969, so the village has increasingly become a dormitory settlement with residents travelling to work in Morpeth, Ashington, Cramlington, North Tyneside and Newcastle upon Tyne. The pit head buildings, spoil heaps and adjoining land have been cleared and landscaped and, during the 1970s and early 1980s new housing has extended the village westwards.



Pegswood Centre

2.1.5 Hebron is situated within an extensive rural parish approximately 3 miles north of Morpeth and has a parish population of 422. Whilst there has been a small amount of development, it has not been considered appropriate to develop beyond the established settlement boundary, as it would adversely affect the built form and character of the village and encroach upon open countryside.



Hebron Village

2.1.6 Hepscoth is approximately 2 miles south east of Morpeth. It has a parish population of 1,069 and is a popular place to live because of its attractive rural setting in woodland with the Hepscoth Burn running through the village. Development beyond the established settlement boundary has not been considered appropriate because the setting and wooded character of the village would be damaged.



Hepscoth Village Hall

2.1.7 Mitford is a largely un-spoilt parish situated approximately 2 miles west of Morpeth. With a parish population of 448, Mitford is a dispersed settlement with two main residential groupings at Fontside and Stable Green. The topographically complex and special setting of the village led to it being included in an area defined as being of High Landscape Value through policies contained in the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan (2003) in order to protect it from development that could detract from its character. Only limited infill development within the established settlement boundary has therefore been permitted.



Mitford Village

2.1.8 Morpeth's location enables good connectivity with South East Northumberland, the Tyneside conurbation, and north Northumberland. The A1 Morpeth Bypass lies to the west of the town with connecting junctions to the south and north of the town at Clifton and Fairmoor respectively. The A1 provides a direct route to Tyneside and destinations towards London to the south and North Northumberland and Scotland northwards. The A192 provides access to Bedlington and Cramlington to the south of the town; the A197 provides access to Pegswood and Ashington to the east and the former Rural Coalfield and Northumberland Coast to the north east. Morpeth has a rail station on the East Coast Main Line with local rail services to Tyneside, national services to London and Scotland, as well as cross-country routes to Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham and the South West. Service improvements in recent years have contributed to increasing rail use, with increased car parking being provided at the station. Newcastle Airport is situated some ten miles to the south west of Morpeth.

2.1.9 Morpeth and the surrounding area is a very attractive, pleasant place to live with a high intrinsic 'quality of life'. The aspects that make the area special include: the rural setting of the market town and villages; the character of the river; the well-tended and wooded areas of Carlisle Park; woodland, including well-established street trees; and the panoramic views (landscapes, townscapes and treescapes). This 'special character' is a major factor in both the housing market and the visitor economy, but it is also vulnerable.

2.1.10 Morpeth's heritage interests and its local environmental setting are its defining assets but the town's scale and character as a market town also make it attractive to housing developers. Local residents are proud and protective of the features that give the town its sense of place and identity and in the face of developer pressure there are concerns that Morpeth should not merely become a dormitory settlement. There must be sensitive management of change that reflects the local community's priorities with plans that can achieve the right development in the right locations.

2.1.11 Retaining a strong green buffer between the villages and Morpeth town and preserving their integrity to avoid coalescence with Morpeth is a key objective of the MNP. The MNP also supports Pegswood Parish Council's aim to make the village a more sustainable community with a stronger sense of identity.

2.1.12 Preparation of the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan provides the opportunity to help shape future patterns of growth and development in the medium term in a way that reflects local community priorities.

2.2 Planning Context

2.2.1 Currently (2015), the Local Plan for Northumberland consists of the saved policies of the six Local Plans of the former Local Planning Authorities that made up Northumberland before Local Government Reorganisation in 2009. For the Morpeth Neighbourhood Area, these saved policies derive from the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan adopted in 2003. The Local Plan is considered to be out of date in some respects and does not provide a wholly appropriate strategic context for an up-to-date Neighbourhood Plan. In addition, saved Policy S5 of the Northumberland County and National Park Joint Structure Plan (2005) proposes an extension of the Tyne & Wear Strategic Green Belt around Morpeth.

2.2.2 Northumberland County Council (NCC) is currently preparing a new Northumberland wide Core Strategy which will establish the strategic planning policies covering the county until 2031. To date, the County Council has consulted on the emerging Core Strategy on a number of occasions, most recently through the publication of a Pre-Submission Draft Core Strategy in October 2015. Work will continue on the preparation of the Core Strategy which the County Council anticipates will be adopted towards the end of 2016.

2.2.3 The MNP has been prepared in parallel with the County Core Strategy preparation process using a shared evidence base where relevant. It is being submitted ahead of adoption of the Core Strategy in order to facilitate plan-led development within the Morpeth Neighbourhood Area, but with the intent and recognition that it will be fulfilled and, in some aspects, superseded by the Core Strategy in due course.

2.2.4 The key draft strategic policies of the emerging Core Strategy which the Neighbourhood Plan reflects cover: housing; employment land supply; town centres; tourism; leisure facilities; protecting Northumberland's natural, historic and built environment; biodiversity; landscape; flooding; heritage assets; connectivity; community well-being; recreational open space and green infrastructure.

2.2.5 A full analysis of the alignment of the Neighbourhood Plan with both the pertinent saved policies from the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan (2003) and the emerging Northumberland Core Strategy is provided in the Basic Conditions Report (BCR) linked to this Plan. The BCR also describes in detail the compliance of the Plan with national policy and guidance which provides the national strategic context for the Plan and for the emerging Northumberland Core Strategy.

2.3 Vision Statement

2.3.1 Local residents are proud and protective of those features that give the town its sense of place and sense of identity which stem from its character and setting. The Neighbourhood Plan Vision seeks to maintain Morpeth's defining assets as an historic market town including: the essentially rural setting of both town and villages; a wide range of heritage assets; the green, open aspects of all approaches to the town; the character of the river upstream, through the town and downstream of Morpeth; Carlisle Park, especially the way it combines well-tended and wooded areas; woodland embedded within the town; well-established street trees; open green spaces; wildlife corridors; and, panoramic views –

landscapes, townscapes and treescapes – best summed up in the town motto “inter silvas et flumina habitans” (‘living between woodland and rivers’).

2.3.2 The Vision for the Morpeth Neighbourhood Area embraces the following elements:

- maintain and strengthen Morpeth’s role and competitiveness as a rural service centre, with a strong retail sector and broad mix of local and visitor attractions – a place to live, work and play;
- maintain and protect Morpeth’s integrity and distinctive identity – its rural setting, green approaches, character of the river and woodland running through the built up area, and the town’s heritage as an ancient market town.
- develop Pegswood as a more sustainable settlement, with a vibrant village centre, more housing choice, a better range of services and facilities and increased local employment. Pegswood can offer a more affordable housing market, including sheltered accommodation and social housing; and,
- retain the existing characters and identities of Hebron, Hepscoth and Mitford; they will continue to look to Morpeth as a local service centre, but retain their separateness from the town.

2.3.3 The Morpeth Northern Bypass (MNB), due to be completed in Autumn 2016, will provide Pegswood village with direct connectivity to the A1 and the Parish Council is seeking more housing choice, a better range of local services, more local employment and a more vibrant village centre. Pegswood can offer a more affordable housing market, including: housing for older people; supported housing developments; and affordable housing. The Vision also includes: sites for business use to increase employment opportunities; improved sports and leisure facilities and footpaths; enhanced public transport services; and retention of a strong green buffer between Pegswood and Morpeth.

The Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan Vision

By 2031, Morpeth will be recognised as an historic market town, based in a rural setting, with a vibrant town centre. It will have harnessed its growth potential, whilst retaining its strong local identity and distinctiveness.

Pegswood will be a more sustainable settlement with a strong sense of identity. The four settlements of Hebron, Hepscoth, Mitford and Pegswood will continue to look to Morpeth as a local service centre, but retain their distinct characters and separateness from the town.

3 Plan Objectives and Strategy for Sustainable Development

3.1 The Plan Objectives

3.1.1 The Plan objectives have been informed by our understanding of the key issues that are faced in the Morpeth Neighbourhood Area and experienced by local residents. In turn, the planning policies and community actions brought forward in this Plan deliver these objectives. The Plan Objectives relevant to each planning policy and community action, set out in Section A and Section B respectively, are indicated after the planning policy or community action.

Plan Objective 1 – Historic Market Town Character (PO1)

Develop Morpeth’s strong sense of place, community and local identity; and its integrity, character and rural setting, including the green approaches, as an historic market town.

Plan Objective 2 – Rural Service Centre (PO2)

Strengthen Morpeth’s role and competitiveness as a rural service centre, with a strong retail sector and a broad mix of local and visitor attractions.

Plan Objective 3 – Accommodating Growth (PO3)

Accommodate growth and support new economic activity and economic diversification in a sustainable manner.

Plan Objective 4 – Developing Pegswood (PO4)

Develop Pegswood as a more sustainable settlement.

Plan Objective 5 – Character of the Villages (PO5)

Retain the existing characters and village identities of Hebron, Hepscott and Mitford.

Plan Objective 6 – Reducing Flood Risk (PO6)

Reduce flood risk, to people and property, from all sources across the whole plan area.

Plan Objective 7 – Community Wellbeing (PO7)

Address the challenges of an aging population, foster a sense of community, and promote wellbeing.

Plan Objective 8 – Natural and Heritage Assets (PO8)

Protect and enhance the natural environment and heritage assets of the Plan area.

Plan Objective 9 - Connectivity (PO9)

Improve connectivity within Morpeth, with its adjoining communities and the wider region.

3.1.2 Objectives 1, 2 and 3 are in line with the County Economic Strategy (February 2015), which identifies the economic roles of market towns and rural service centres in the county and the need for sustainable growth, and is itself aligned to the North East Strategic Economic Plan (April 2014). The

County Economic Strategy establishes an Investment Zone to promote employment and economic growth in South East Northumberland and a Growth Network to support the role of market towns in the rural part of the county. Morpeth is on the boundary between these, and so the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan recognises that the town has two roles: as an employment hub for South East Northumberland and a market town and rural service centre; as well as being a commuter centre serving Tyneside and beyond.

3.1.3 Morpeth has a history of flooding and experienced a serious flood in 2008 and again in 2012. Surface water flooding is also a major issue in Hepscoth. New flood defences and alleviation measures completed in Spring 2015 should reduce the risk from flooding of the River Wansbeck, but there remain many other causes of flooding in the Plan area. Objective 6: to reduce overall flood risk is complemented by the Northumberland Flood Action Plan and Morpeth Community Agreement, to which Morpeth Town Council is a partner. These address issues of community flood resilience and education which the Neighbourhood Plan cannot cover.

3.1.4 Tackling climate change is a key role for the planning system by contributing to the delivery of the most sustainable development and by increasing the resilience of communities and infrastructure. This will be critical for a Plan extending over the next twenty years. Through its alignment with the strategic principles of the emerging Northumberland Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework, the Neighbourhood Plan is committed to addressing climate change. However, a need for a distinctive local objective and policies specific to the Plan area has not been identified.

3.1.5 Similarly, the emerging Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework set out strategic principles addressing the need for the prudent use of natural resources and the conservation of natural capital. Whilst no need has been identified for a distinctive specific local objective and policies, the objectives relating to local identity, accommodating growth, reducing flood risk and protecting heritage and natural assets are all aligned with these strategic principles. In addition, the policies that stem from those principles address biodiversity, green infrastructure and sustainable water management in an appropriately local manner.



River Wansbeck from High Stanners

3.2 Relationship between Plan Objectives and Strategic Environmental Assessment Objectives

3.2.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a way of ensuring that the environmental implications of plans are fully taken into account before decisions are taken. Accordingly an SEA has been carried out in parallel with the development of the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan. SEA objectives were compared with Plan objectives and with reasonable alternative development options. This helped to inform the preparation of policies contained in the Plan. An Environmental Report setting out the outcomes of the SEA process was published alongside the Submission Draft Plan and this showed how the MNP objectives map on to the SEA objectives.

3.2.2 An Environmental Report is included as part of the MNP submission suite of documents. This report includes a Sustainability Study which confirms that the objectives and policies in the Plan will contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development.

3.3 The Strategy to Deliver a Sustainable Community

3.3.1 Morpeth has important roles as a market town serving a large rural area and as a local employment hub. It has increasingly developed as a dormitory town with a growing proportion of the population commuting to work in Tyneside. The town is an attractive place to live with good access by road and public transport into Tyneside and beyond. The completion of the Morpeth Northern Bypass in Autumn 2016 will open up opportunities for the future expansion of the town for new business and housing areas. The Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan sets out a framework to steer the future development of the town to ensure that it grows in accordance with the sustainable development principles set out in Policy Sus1.

3.3.2 The strategy of the Neighbourhood Plan for Morpeth is to ensure that: -

- Morpeth continues to develop its economic role to provide a range of employment opportunities with the development of new sites adjacent to the A1 / Northern Bypass junction and with the retention of the County Hall / Fire Station complex for employment-generating uses;
- new residential areas are developed to meet objectively assessed needs as identified in the emerging Northumberland Core Strategy, with a mix of house types and tenures and in a manner that contributes to the attractive character of the town and provides for the expanded community;
- new housing in locations with a good standard of accessibility to the town centre or with appropriate public transport provision, is developed to meet the needs of older people and those with special housing needs;
- the town centre continues to be a vibrant shopping destination and develops to serve the retail, business, community and leisure needs of the town and visitors alike through the conversion or redevelopment of redundant sites and buildings;
- the riverside corridor becomes the focus for sports and leisure facilities to attract visitors and serve local residents, with the emphasis on: the enhancement of the riverside environment; improving the outdoor sports and leisure activities at Carlisle Park and riverside walks; and with the possible inclusion of sports and leisure facilities and/or a hotel, but in any case to include restaurants and cafes;
- the historic character of Morpeth and particularly the town centre is conserved and enhanced; and,
- the landscape character of the riverside, roadsides and the setting of the town is safeguarded and enhanced by new development.

3.3.3 The strategy for the rural areas is to retain the identities of the villages and to improve the natural environment in and around them. The development of Pegswood as a more sustainable community will be supported by providing residential development proportionate to the needs of the community and improvements to the village centre. New small scale retail and business uses will be encouraged to support a healthy rural economy particularly where it will make use of redundant sites and buildings. Improvements to community facilities, the footpath network and the countryside and wildlife environment in and around the villages will be encouraged.



High Stanners, Morpeth from the air

Strategic Requirements from the emerging Northumberland Core Strategy

3.3.4 The adopted Local Plan covering the Morpeth area is the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan of 2003. This is considerably out of date and policies may not accord with newer national policies in the NPPF.

3.3.5 The emerging Northumberland Core Strategy is well advanced. Consultation has taken place on a Pre-Submission Draft Plan in October 2015. The evidence supporting the Core Strategy is the most up to date available and has been used in the preparation of the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan. Extensive consultation has been carried out on the emerging Core Strategy and, whilst it is recognised that the Core Strategy has not been finalised and may change, the general strategic approach has been followed in the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan.

3.3.6 The emerging Core Strategy sets out a hierarchy of settlements and the types of development appropriate in each. Morpeth is identified as a main town. It is proposed to be a key hub for housing, employment, education, healthcare and retail, and so will be the main focus for development to underpin social, economic, environmental and cultural regeneration.

3.3.7 In the villages, development of a suitable scale will be allowed in or on the edge of the settlements to support local social, economic or cultural needs or to enhance services and facilities.

3.3.8 In the open countryside, development will be permitted where it requires a countryside location in accordance with the NPPF (paras 28 and 55).

3.3.9 The emerging Core Strategy identifies a need to plan for at least an additional 2100 dwellings between 2011 and 2031 within Morpeth. This represents an increase from 1700 additional dwellings in the plan period proposed in a previous version of the emerging Core Strategy. Proposals are included for the allocation of land at the St Georges Hospital as a strategic housing allocation.

3.3.10 The emerging Core Strategy recognises the need for further employment land in Morpeth. The Northumberland Economic Strategy proposes economic growth to achieve the vision by 2025 of a "prosperous Northumberland founded on quality jobs and connected communities". It seeks to secure better jobs in Northumberland and in particular emphasises the economic benefits of the construction of the Morpeth Northern Bypass.

3.3.11 Morpeth is defined as a main town centre in the emerging Core Strategy as it has a good level of retail provision along with wide ranging town centre community facilities. The centre is also reasonably well provided for in terms of accessibility by public transport and a good level of off-street car parking. It is regarded as a community hub for a large population and wide hinterland; the retail and other services that it offers and the relatively good accessibility mean that it can be categorised as a 'Main Commercial Centre'. The overall imperative of the emerging Core Strategy 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.

3.3.12 The emerging Core Strategy defines boundaries for the Town Centre and the Primary Shopping Area and the boundaries shown on the MNP Proposals Map accord with these.

3.3.13 Priority is given in the emerging Core Strategy to the location of proposals for tourism related development including hotels and accommodation in or on the edge of main town centres.

Sustainable Development

3.3.14 The MNP acknowledges that the presumption in favour of sustainable development underpins the planning system. The Plan supports this presumption by:

- Reinforcing Morpeth's role as a rural service centre, through new housing and employment, while protecting the character of the town and its rural setting;
- Growing Pegswood village through the redevelopment of brownfield sites, new housing development and support for more employment land;
- Allowing limited infill development in character with the settlements of Hebron, Hepscott and Mitford to protect their attractive characters and identities as small rural villages, and
- Restricting development in the open countryside other than in certain defined circumstances.

The Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan

Morpeth Pegswood Hebron Hepscoth Mitford

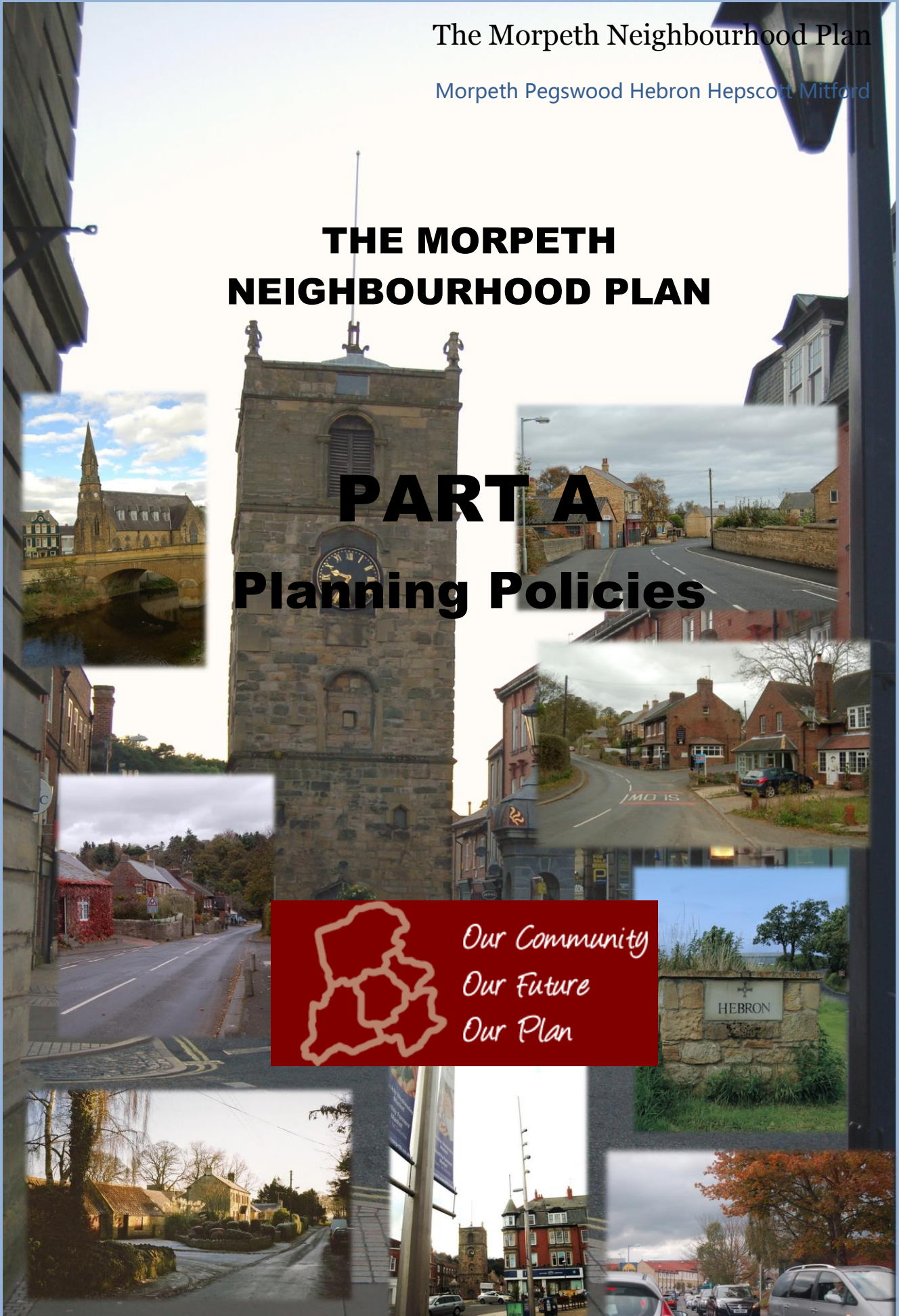
THE MORPETH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

PART A Planning Policies



*Our Community
Our Future
Our Plan*

HEBRON



4 Sustainable Development Principles

4.1.1 In support of the 'Strategy to Deliver a Sustainable Community' the following policy sets out how sustainable development will be supported across the Plan area.

Policy Sus1 - Sustainable Development Principles

Proposals for new development will be supported at a scale and in locations that accord with policies contained elsewhere in the Neighbourhood Plan where they support the continued sustainability and viability of communities in the Plan area by providing:

- A. New homes, including affordable, self-build and local needs housing, to meet the objectively assessed housing needs established in the Development Plan;**
- B. New and expanded business premises;**
- C. Tourism related development and tourist accommodation; or,**
- D. Infrastructure associated with leisure, recreational pursuits and social, community, business and educational activities throughout the Plan area.**

A presumption in favour of sustainable development will be exercised across the Plan area. Proposals will be expected to conform to the following development principles by demonstrating that they:

- 1. Contribute to the sustainability of settlements and their communities;**
- 2. Can be accommodated within settlement boundaries defined in the Neighbourhood Plan other than in those circumstances defined in Policy Set1;**
- 3. Contribute to maintaining the market town and village character of Morpeth, Pegswood, Hebron, Hepscoth and Mitford respectively;**
- 4. Have regard to the need to make efficient use of land by encouraging the reuse of previously developed land;**
- 5. Follow the principles of good quality design which respects the character and appearance of the setting of the development and the surrounding area; and**
- 6. Can provide the physical and community infrastructure on site where it is necessary to make the development acceptable, or mitigate the impact of the development by measures implemented off-site either through direct provision or by way of financial contribution.**

4.1.2 This policy contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO1 (historic market town character), PO2 (rural service centre), PO3 (accommodating growth), PO4 (developing Pegswood), PO5 (character of the villages), PO6 (reducing flood risk), PO7 (community wellbeing), PO8 (natural and heritage assets) and PO9 (connectivity).

4.2 Design Principles

4.2.1 The NPPF attaches great importance to the design of the built environment (Para. 56). The evidence base for the emerging Northumberland Core Strategy supports high quality design for housing developments.

Policy Des1 – Design Principles

Development proposals will be supported where they accord with the policies, site allocations and designations in the Neighbourhood Plan and elsewhere in the Development Plan.

Subject to assessment of viability all development proposals should make a positive contribution to their surroundings in terms of the following: -

- A. Ensuring that the design and layout of the development achieves a sense of place by protecting and enhancing the quality, distinctiveness and character of settlements;
- B. Respecting or enhancing the character of the site and its surroundings in terms of its proportion, form, massing, density, height, size, scale, materials and detailed design features;
- C. Ensuring development of and in proximity to designated and local heritage assets and their settings conserves, preserves, reflects and enhances the historic asset and the historic environment in accordance with their significance;
- D. Ensuring development safeguards, respects and enhances the natural environment, the biodiversity, landscape and wildlife corridors and the countryside;
- E. Incorporating, where appropriate, biodiversity, landscaping and public and private open spaces which meet the County Council's open space standards and supports the creation of wildlife corridors;
- F. Ensuring that the layout and design take account of the potential users of the development to provide safe, convenient and attractive links within the development and to existing networks for people with disabilities and restricted mobility, pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users;
- G. Providing vehicular access and parking suitable for the development's use and location;
- H. Ensuring that the development does not cause an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenities of occupiers of existing or proposed nearby properties;
- I. Avoiding locations that would put the environment or human health or public safety at unacceptable risk including from contamination and land instability and where necessary incorporate appropriate mitigation, treatment or remediation measures necessary to allow development to proceed without posing adverse impacts on the environment, human health or public safety;
- J. Incorporating sustainable design and construction techniques to meet high standards for energy efficiency and water efficiency,
- K. Ensuring appropriate provision for the storage of waste and recyclable materials;
- L. Incorporating sustainable drainage systems with maintenance regimes to minimise vulnerability to flooding and climate change;
- M. Encouraging the use of renewable and low carbon energy technology, as appropriate;
- N. Ensuring that adequate infrastructure, services and community facilities are, or will be, made available to serve the development; and
- O. Ensuring that site layout and design helps to create a safe and secure environment.

4.2.2 This policy supports the delivery of all nine Plan Objectives.

4.2.3 A Community Action (Quality Open Space) to support this land use policy is included in Section B of the Plan.

Justification

4.2.4 Developments of any scale can make a positive contribution to making Morpeth and the villages better for people. Respecting and improving the quality of the built and natural environment particularly of the public spaces, river and roads corridors in Morpeth will improve the attractiveness of the town centre for residents and visitors and improve economic performance. Ensuring that new residential areas are designed around the needs of residents will help to reinforce Morpeth as an attractive place to live.

4.2.5 The Neighbourhood Plan encourages developers to design new development so that it reflects and reinforces the historic and landscape character of Morpeth and the villages so as to deliver the Plan's objectives. Developers will be asked to demonstrate through their Design and Access Statements how they have taken the local vernacular into account in preparing the design and layout of the new development and how the proposed scheme will reinforce the distinctive character of Morpeth and the villages as relevant.

4.2.6 Incorporating sustainable designs into new development can contribute to reducing energy and improving water management. Sustainable drainage systems can help to manage the flow of rainwater and reduce flood risk. Much of the plan area is located within the 'Development High Risk Area' defined by The Coal Authority. In these areas planning applications, except householder proposals, will need to be accompanied by a Coal Mining Risk Assessment to address the risk of land instability associated with mining. The Assessment will also need to identify what mitigation, treatment or remediation measures are necessary to allow development to proceed. These requirements will also apply to the sites allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.2.7 A range of documents is available which promote high quality design, such as "Building for Life 12" by CABI at the Design Council, "Good Design – It All Adds Up" (2012) by Royal Institute of British Architects and "Sustainable Design and Construction" (Aug 2012) – a cross sector document by various institutions including Royal Town Planning Institute, Building Research Establishment, and Landscape Institute.



The Chantry Footbridge

4.3 Settlement Boundaries

4.3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has identified settlement boundaries around Morpeth and each of the villages to support sustainable development and maintain the compactness of settlements.

4.3.2 The spatial distribution of development within the Plan period 2011 - 31 will be positively directed and shaped through the use of settlement boundaries. The settlement boundaries provide for a supply of land to meet the requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan and the strategic requirements of the emerging Core Strategy. They have been defined using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent. This follows an assessment of the setting of settlements, existing settlement edges and the full consideration of potential development sites.

4.3.3 The levels of development identified in the Plan will be predominantly delivered in the settlements of Morpeth and Pegswood through land use allocations for housing, employment and retail/town centre uses. In the smaller villages of Hepscoth, Mitford and Hebron a lower level of development will be supported where it reflects scale, sustainability, character and policy objectives of the Plan. Housing development needs over the plan period, other than some existing housing approvals at 31st March 2015, will be accommodated within these settlement boundaries.

Policy Set1 - Settlement Boundaries

Settlement boundaries are defined on the Proposals Map. Development proposals will be supported within settlement boundaries subject to being in accordance with other relevant policies in the Development Plan including the Neighbourhood Plan.

Areas outside the settlement boundaries will be treated as open countryside where development will only be supported where it serves or supports the following purposes or activities: -

- A. farming and other land based rural businesses, or the sustainable diversification of these activities; or**
- B. existing businesses and enterprises; or**
- C. a sustainable visitor attraction that is related to the experience or interpretation of the countryside or a sustainable leisure development which respects the character of the countryside where needs are not met by existing facilities within settlement boundaries; or**
- D. the development of local services and community facilities to support a rural community; or**
- E. housing that meets the criteria in paragraph 55 of the NPPF; or**
- F. appropriately designed extensions to existing buildings, including extensions to dwellings, which are subservient to and respect the scale and appearance of the existing building.**

4.3.4 This policy contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO1 (historic market town character), PO3 (accommodating growth), PO4 (developing Pegswood), PO5 (character of the villages) and PO8 (natural and heritage assets).

4.3.5 These settlement boundaries should reduce the risk of urban sprawl and coalescence between settlements in the plan area, and prevent the encroachment of the settlements into the open countryside. They should preserve and protect the setting and approaches to Morpeth, Hebron, Hepscoth, Mitford and Pegswood, and encourage the use of brownfield land.

Development in the Villages

Pegswood

4.3.6 Pegswood is the largest village in the Plan area with a population of over 3000 people. The Plan provides for development in Pegswood of an appropriate scale to provide housing development of around 200 homes with two sites on the northern edge of the village being allocated under Policy Hou1.

This development will help to support the improvement of the “Heart of the Village” development area to provide employment, retail and community facilities under Policy Emp3. The new housing development will provide the opportunity to create a footpath and open space link along the northern edge of the village.

4.3.7 The Plan provides for limited development within the settlement boundaries of the small villages of Hebron, Hepscott and Mitford, which are different in character.

Hebron

4.3.8 Hebron is small, cruciform in shape with the parish church to the north, and East and West Farms occupying their geographic namesakes, interspersed with modern houses and bungalows. To protect this character the policy seeks to restrict development to extensions to existing houses and to development at East and West Farms that is related to their function and which would protect the landscape setting of the village.

Hepscott

4.3.9 Hepscott is the largest of the three villages, with small groups of houses arranged on either side of the main road through the settlement. There is some potential for a small amount of infill with new houses.

Mitford

4.3.10 The settlement comprises the village “core” and outlying groups of houses; their respective settings are characterised by enclosing woodland. There is therefore limited scope for new development if the existing character of the village and its setting is to be protected.

Policy Set2 - Development in Hebron, Hepscott, Mitford and Pegswood

Development that respects and maintains the character of the villages of Hebron, Hepscott, Mitford and Pegswood will be supported within the settlement boundaries as defined on the Proposals Map, where it comprises: -

- A. A new dwelling or building which fills a small, restricted gap in the continuity of existing frontage buildings or on other sites within the settlement boundary, where the site is closely surrounded by buildings and where, in either case, the footprint, scale and mass of the development respects the density of, and separation between neighbouring properties; or,**
- B. The re-use or development of previously developed land provided that the new development would not adversely impact on the amenity of nearby residents by way of siting, design, scale, massing, or through noise and disturbance; or,**
- C. An extension to an existing dwelling or building, where the design of the extension respects the design of the original and nearby dwellings or buildings and does not adversely impact on the amenities of the occupiers of nearby property.**
- D. Development associated with the use of East and West Farms, Hebron for transport or agriculture, where the proposals would not have a significant impact on the landscape setting of the village or an adverse impact on the living conditions of residents.**
- E. Housing development in Pegswood allocated under Policy Hou1 and the improvement of employment, retail and community facilities in the Heart of the Village development area allocated under Policy Emp3.**

Unless the benefits of development outweigh the loss, proposals should retain mature trees within application sites, and include on-site measures to protect mature trees both within and adjacent to the site.

4.3.11 This policy contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO4 (developing Pegswood) and PO5 (character of the villages).

5 Rural Setting, Sense of Place and Local Identity (Environment and Heritage)

5.1.1 Local residents are proud and protective of those features that give the town its sense of place and sense of identity which stem from its character and setting. The Neighbourhood Plan Vision seeks to maintain Morpeth's defining assets as an historic market town including: the essentially rural setting of both town and villages; a wide range of heritage assets; the green, open aspects of all approaches to the town; the character of the river upstream, through the town and downstream of Morpeth; Carlisle Park, especially the way it combines well-tended and wooded areas; woodland embedded within the town; well-established street trees; open green spaces; wildlife corridors; and panoramic views – landscapes, townscape and treescape – best summed up in the town motto "inter silvas et flumina habitans" ('Living between woodland and rivers').

5.2 Landscape and Wildlife Corridors

5.2.1 Part of the essential character of the Plan area is the manner in which the urban areas are pierced by natural landscape and wildlife corridors linking back into the surrounding countryside.

5.2.2 The Plan includes measures to protect Morpeth's green corridors and approach roads, the open character of the River Wansbeck; burns and other water courses; and the place-defining characteristic setting of Morpeth and the surrounding villages, hidden in the landscape.

5.2.3 In addition to the alongside the approach roads, Landscape Corridors are also defined along all the railway lines within the Plan area and along the line of the Morpeth Northern Bypass. The latter corridor is designed both to screen any development on the St George's site and to provide connectivity for the wildlife corridors along the Cotting Burn and the How Burn.

5.2.4 Wildlife Corridors are designated to provide connectivity between the open countryside around the urban area and the wildlife habitats within the built up areas. Most of these are along watercourses.

Policy Env1- Landscape and Wildlife Corridors

Landscape and Wildlife Corridors defined on the Proposals Map will be protected from development, other than that required to maintain, enhance or interpret their landscape or wildlife purposes.

Development proposals should demonstrate they take the opportunity to enhance and extend the network of Landscape and Wildlife Corridors as a means of mitigating development impact with a focus on increasing biodiversity, wildlife value and general amenity value of these corridors.

Where Landscape or Wildlife Corridors are disrupted as an unavoidable consequence of adjacent or nearby development, developers will be required to minimise the impact and to carry out remedial action in accordance with a scheme that shall be secured by way of planning condition or planning obligation as appropriate.

5.2.5 This policy contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO1 (character and setting of Morpeth) and PO8 (natural and heritage assets).

5.2.6 Wildlife Corridors provide ecological connectivity between the open countryside and the wildlife habitats within the built up areas. They should ideally not include footpaths and culverting, so a balance needs to be struck between the creation and protection of Wildlife Corridors and the creation of a footpath network and reduction of flood risk.

5.2.7 Landscape Corridors create the green approaches to, and the rural setting of Morpeth and the surrounding villages. They help to screen existing development, enhance the green and leafy character of built up areas and also support the ecological network maintained by the Wildlife Corridors and Local Wildlife Sites.

5.3 Local Green Space, Protected Open Space and Allotments

5.3.1 Open green and wooded spaces within the built up areas are essential to the rural character and attractiveness of the Plan Area and may form part of Wildlife or Landscape Corridors or links to footpaths and cycle routes. They may be landscaped areas, small patches of woodland, formal sports pitches, informal playing fields, play areas, allotments, river banks, common land, and other open grassed areas. They provide important opportunities for people of all ages to get out in the open air for casual recreation purposes that are essential to a healthy lifestyle.

Local Green Space

5.3.2 All contribute to the green infrastructure of the area and, where these areas are cherished by the local community, are appropriate for designation as Local Green Space (LGS) in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (paras. 76, 77). The LGS sites designated in the Plan are all local in character, do not comprise extensive tracts of land and have been assessed against the NPPF criteria which require the sites to be important to the local communities they serve by virtue of their:

- Beauty;
- Historic significance;
- Recreational value (including as a playing field);
- Tranquillity; and,
- Richness of its wildlife.

5.3.3 Appendix A outlines how the designated LGS sites meet these criteria. Statutory allotments and cherished sites outside the settlement boundaries have been excluded from the assessment.

5.3.4 Morpeth Common, southwest of Morpeth, although special to the local community and of major significance to the town with the wooded Star Plantation, ancient ridge and furrow, facilities for golf, football etc. does not merit LGS designation because it is an extensive area. However, the Common is protected under the Morpeth Common Act of 1974, so the area is already preserved for formal and informal recreation purposes. The former Wannie Line, which is now a bridle path, runs across the Common and is designated within this Plan as a Wildlife Corridor.

Policy Env2 - Local Green Space

Those areas defined in Appendix A of the Plan and identified on the Proposals Map shall be protected as Local Green Space. New development will only be allowed within designated Local Green Spaces where very special circumstances can be demonstrated in accordance with Green Belt policy established in the National Planning Policy Framework.

5.3.5 This policy contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO1 (character of Morpeth), PO7 (community wellbeing) and PO8 (natural and heritage assets).



Carlisle Park and River Wansbeck

Protected Open Space

5.3.6 There are also numerous small areas of open green space and woodland within the settlements of the Morpeth Neighbourhood Area which are valued for their local amenity value and for informal or formal recreational purposes but which do not meet the full LGS criteria. Many of these sites also contribute to Wildlife and/or Landscape Corridors. In line with the National Planning Policy Framework para 74, the Plan designates these sites as Protected Open Space with the intention that they should be safeguarded and development only permitted in exceptional circumstances.

5.3.7 Appendix A lists the sites designated as Protected Open Space, with an indication of their public amenity value.

Policy Env3 - Protected Open Space

Those areas defined in Appendix A of the Plan and identified on the Proposals Map shall be protected as Protected Open Space. Each of these areas contributes to local amenity, character and green infrastructure, and development will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where, as part of the proposal: -

- A. new and appropriate alternative provision can be demonstrated to compensate for localised loss of public amenity and community wellbeing; or,**
- B. it can be demonstrated that any damage to green infrastructure and/or local character can be rectified or the existing situation enhanced.**

5.3.8 This policy contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO1 (character of Morpeth), PO4 (developing Pegswood), PO5 (character of villages), PO7 (community wellbeing) and PO8 (natural and heritage assets).

Allotment Land

5.3.9 There are a number of valued allotment sites across the Morpeth Neighbourhood Area, with an expectation of more being created to meet demand arising from new development. Some, but not all, of the allotments in the Area are owned by parish councils and therefore have statutory status, which means that if allotment land is lost, then it must be replaced with suitable alternative land. However,

some public allotments taken into ownership by Castle Morpeth Borough Council when it was formed in 1974, were not transferred to Morpeth Town Council when that was formed in 1984, and were subsequently accidentally transferred to a housing association as part of a large scale housing stock transfer. There is a long-term aim to bring these allotments into parish council ownership so they obtain statutory status, but pending that, it is appropriate to include a local policy to replicate that statutory status for all allotments in the Plan area.

Policy Env4 - Protection of Allotments

Development which would result in the loss of allotment land in the Plan area will not be permitted, unless suitable land, of at least equivalent quality and quantity, in a convenient location for the users, is provided fit for use, prior to the loss of the allotment land or any part of it.

5.3.10 This policy contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO1 (character of Morpeth), PO7 (community wellbeing).

5.4 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)

5.4.1 Local Wildlife Sites are areas that hold important, distinctive and/or threatened species or habitats. They provide refuges for wildlife and show local character and distinctiveness to complement nationally designated sites of wildlife importance. The Plan carries forward those locally designated sites previously identified in the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan. It also seeks to provide planning policy protection to those sites designated subsequently through the Local Sites Partnership which comprises Northumberland County Council, North Tyneside Council and Newcastle City Council. The Partnership is administered and reviewed by the Northumberland Wildlife Trust. All these Local Wildlife Sites are shown on the Proposals Map.

Policy Env5 – Local Wildlife Sites

Those areas identified on the Proposals Map shall be protected as designated Local Wildlife Sites. There is a presumption against development of or near these sites, which will harm or put at risk their effectiveness as a wildlife habitat or refuge, as described in their designation. Any development impacting on any of these sites must include mitigation measures that ensure that the sites maintain their function effectively.

5.4.2 This policy contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO1 (historic market town character), PO3 (sustainable location of development, PO7 (community wellbeing).



River Wansbeck wildlife corridor

5.5 Enhancement of Heritage Assets

5.5.1 Morpeth and its surrounding area has a wealth of historic buildings, monuments and open areas. There is a significant social heritage associated with local characters such as Admiral Lord Collingwood and suffragette Emily Wilding Davison. As an ancient market town, Morpeth has a number of significant heritage assets, particularly notable early examples are Morpeth Castle and Ha' Hill (dating back to the 11th Century), the remains of the 12th Century Newminster Abbey and the 13th Century Chantry.

5.5.2 Within the Morpeth Neighbourhood Area there are over 90 listed buildings of which three are Grade I (Morpeth Castle, the Church of St Mary and the Chantry) and six are Grade II*. Many of these are located in the Morpeth Conservation Area, which is tightly drawn around the historic town centre. The Morpeth Conservation Area was designated in 1970; however, the proposal to review it in 2003 was never undertaken and a character appraisal and management plan have not been prepared.

Locally Important Heritage Assets

5.5.3 Other measures seek to identify locally important historic assets to ensure that their significance is properly understood when considering development proposals affecting them. Policy Her1 sets out how development affecting locally important heritage assets will be considered.

5.5.4 The Plan seeks to secure appropriate means to safeguard heritage assets, both designated and undesignated at risk.

5.5.5 The quality and appearance of the public realm in the town centre greatly affects the visual character of the conservation area. Measures to improve the appearance of the street scene are proposed. This will support the Plan's objective to improve economic vitality of the town centre and to strengthen the attractiveness of the town for visitors and tourists.

5.5.6 The historic character of Morpeth and the villages also depends on the many ancient green amenity spaces, historic woodland and farmland both within and around the settlements.

Policy Her1 – Locally Important Heritage Assets

The impact of a proposal on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be properly considered. There should be a balanced consideration of the impact of the proposed development upon the asset and its setting, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss. The presumption shall be that the heritage asset should be retained and re-used wherever practicable and proposals that cannot demonstrate that the harm will be outweighed by the benefits of the development will not be supported. Where public benefits that are necessary and cannot be met in any other way outweigh loss or harm this should be minimized.

5.5.7 This policy helps to deliver Plan Objective PO8 (natural and heritage assets).

Justification

5.5.8 There is a wealth of locally important heritage assets that are not formally designated but which are valued and cherished by the local community, ranging from small assets such as boundary walls to larger buildings and structures and historic landscapes.

5.5.9 It is proposed that the local list of buildings of local architectural or historic interest be agreed.

Heritage Assets at Risk of Harm

Policy Her2 - Heritage Assets at Risk of Harm

Proposals that contribute positively towards the long term sustainable use or re-use of heritage assets at risk of harm, including those listed in the Historic Environment Record and any unlisted assets, will be supported provided that the development proposed conforms with relevant policies in the Development Plan and is sensitively designed in relation to the merit and heritage value of the asset and its setting.

5.5.10 This policy helps to deliver Plan Objective PO8 (natural and heritage assets).

5.5.11 Community Action CAHer1 supporting and complementing this land use policy is included in Section B of the Plan.

6 Local Economy

6.1.1 Although it is a rural service centre with a vibrant retail sector, Morpeth does not have a balanced local economy that can support the existing working population. The population of the five parishes in the Morpeth Neighbourhood Area was 19,236 (2011 Census). Of these, 48% are economically active, but only 27% of these work within the Plan area. So, about three quarters of working residents commute out of the area. One of the major employers, Northumberland County Council has suffered significant job losses in recent years, and is currently considering a relocation of its administrative functions away from Morpeth. The closure of County Hall at Loansdean, in the south of Morpeth, would seriously deplete the already deficient local employment opportunities. Apart from County Hall, there are few other major employment sites in the Plan area. A major pharmaceutical manufacturer is located on the western outskirts of Morpeth and there is a well-established business park at Coopies Lane on the south-eastern edge of the town, but it does not have sites available of a size that would attract major investment. However, Coca Cola Enterprises bought out a local water-bottling company (Abbey Well) in 2008, and are operating from the existing plant on Coopies Lane. They have expanded production significantly and are planning a £23M on-site investment in the near future.

6.1.2 Morpeth urgently needs to create additional employment to redress current imbalances and the on-going reduction in public sector jobs. The situation is likely to be exacerbated by the level of housing growth proposed unless it is mitigated by the retention and creation of local employment. Without intervention, the trend is clearly set for Morpeth's role and character to change from a market town to a commuter settlement.

6.1.3 As a commercial location Morpeth has considerable potential for strong employment growth in the right economic climate, due to its own attractive surroundings and accessibility to Tyneside. The new Morpeth Northern Bypass completing the South East Northumberland Strategic Link Road may also increase the town's attractiveness to new investment. However, Morpeth suffers from a lack of strategic employment sites. Until recently there were three long-standing allocated employment sites at Fairmoor, north of the town. These sites already have direct access to the A1 and the new Morpeth Northern Bypass was set to improve their attractiveness with a new north to south intersection and connection eastwards to South East Northumberland. The MNP supports the retention of these sites as locations for strategic serviced business park development. Despite this and their long-standing designation in the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan and the emerging Northumberland Local Plan, recent planning decisions taken in the absence of an up-to-date adopted Local Plan have granted new housing on two of these potential strategic employment sites.



Market Square, Morpeth

6.1.4 The proposed relocation of the County Council administrative headquarters opens up the County Hall site for re-development. The Plan seeks to ensure that a preference is given to retaining this site for employment uses if it becomes available for redevelopment.

6.1.5 There are other weaknesses in the local economy that need to be addressed: -

- although there is a mix of local heritage attractions and events, there are no major visitor attractions;
- there are limited empty premises in the town centre;
- the town centre suffers from traffic congestion;
- visitor accommodation is very limited;
- there are few bulky goods retailers; and,
- public sector funding for economic development is limited.

6.1.6 The MNP plans to strengthen the economic role of both Morpeth as a rural service centre and the wider Plan area. In addition to providing strategic employment sites to attract inward investment, Morpeth also needs to create more service jobs by taking full advantage of the town centre as an economic driver, and its potential to act as a tourism 'hub'. Morpeth has a good retail offer with a mix of independent stores and national multiples. This combines with the quality and ambience of the town to give the town centre vibrancy. The MNP supports additional developments and initiatives that might further strengthen the town centre's role. New development areas in or adjacent to the town centre, and the development and use of redundant buildings are highlighted. Developing new sites, coupled with a heritage centre or museum and new sports, arts and leisure facilities would considerably strengthen Morpeth's visitor offering.



Busy summer's day at Carlisle Park

6.1.7 The 'Morpeth Town Team', a partnership between the Town Council, the Chamber of Trade, the Greater Morpeth Development Trust (GMDT) and the Sanderson Arcade, is developing a co-ordinated approach to the development of the town centre to strengthen the range of visitor attractions, leisure and cultural facilities and accommodation choices for visitors. This will include taking full advantage of redevelopment opportunities in the town centre.

6.1.8 Pegswood Parish Council has a key objective to develop the local economy to help the village to become a more sustainable community, and to promote growth and diversification of the rural economy. These ambitions are complementary to those for Morpeth within the overall Plan.

6.1.9 Plan Objective PO3 supports new sustainable economic activity and economic diversification in a sustainable manner, contributing to delivering the Plan Vision of harnessing growth potential to maintain and develop Morpeth as a successful market town with a vibrant town centre. Plan Objective PO2 aims to strengthen the role of Morpeth as a modern rural service centre for the outlying villages. Plan Objective PO4 sets out the intent to make Pegswood a more sustainable settlement which must

include more local employment. Plan policies therefore seek to reduce the amount of out-commuting by promoting the provision of quality employment locally.

6.1.10 Emerging from the Vision and Objectives and the analysis of the local economy in Morpeth, the five main elements of the economic strategy within the Plan are: -

- To maintain the vibrancy of the town centre as an economic driver;
- To develop Morpeth as a key hub in the region's tourism economy;
- To provide a range of employment sites and business accommodation that enables Morpeth to develop a more sustainable economy;
- To further develop the local economy in Pegswood in order that it becomes a more sustainable community; and,
- To promote the growth and diversification of the rural economy.

6.1.11 Since the current average local household size is around 2.2 persons, the provision of at least 1,700 extra dwellings implies a minimum increase in population of around 3,700 provided that household size does not decrease substantially. Merely to maintain the status quo in terms of out-commuting would involve the creation of at least an additional 460 jobs employing local people. Non-local people taking up these jobs would increase the number of new jobs required. To rebalance the economy in line with the Vision and Objectives would involve substantially more than 460 new jobs in the Plan area.

6.1.12 In line with the NPPF presumption in favour of sustainable development, the Plan actively seeks to increase the opportunities available to people who may wish to work locally, by appropriate land allocations in tandem with related actions.

6.2 Morpeth Town Centre

Introduction

6.2.1 A key Objective (PO2) for the Plan is to strengthen Morpeth's role and competitiveness as a vibrant rural service centre serving as an important retail destination for the surrounding rural area. Visitors are attracted to the town from nearby towns, Tyneside and beyond because of the excellent range of independent shops and cafes, the attractive historic character of the town and the riverside walks and parks. Morpeth's town centre provides an important location for employment and has the potential to develop further through the reuse and redevelopment of vacant sites and premises to provide additional retail, leisure and business accommodation.

6.2.2 Morpeth continues to be a relatively dynamic and successful market town that has been improved by both the redevelopment of Sanderson Arcade, which provides a high quality shopping environment accommodating national retailers, and the development of a new edge of town centre supermarket.

6.2.3 The town has a distinctive retail offer with its many independent shops, ample car parking, good public transport and an attractive ambience with its streets lined with historic buildings leading to the tree lined riverside. Together these have contributed to Morpeth's success as a retail centre.

6.2.4 The Northumberland Town Centre and Retail Study Update (January 2013) revealed that, in the short term, it is unlikely that there will be an increase in demand for retail floorspace in Morpeth. Trends in the national retail context point to increasing pressure on small to medium sized centres. In Morpeth, the Sanderson Arcade was re-opened in 2009 after a £35M investment and is now performing well. More recently the new Morrison's supermarket (2,136 sq.m) was opened in 2013 and is expected to 'mop up' any growth in available convenience spending in the first half of the Plan period. The former supermarket building is still vacant although proposals are currently coming forward to divide it into three non-food retail outlets, effectively offering additional comparison goods floorspace. No significant increase in new-build shopping floorspace is envisaged in the Plan.

6.2.5 A Town Benchmarking Survey carried out by the Town Team in November 2014 found that 69% of the units in the Primary Shopping Frontage Area are in A1 use. Within the Primary Shopping Area vacancy rates are relatively low with only 6.5% vacant.

6.2.6 Morpeth currently has a successful day visitor economy and its vibrant retail centre could provide the basis for developing Morpeth as a tourism hub for the County. This is an ambition set out in the Morpeth 'Welcome Study', 'Destination Planning for Morpeth', 2009, commissioned by Greater Morpeth Development Trust (GMDT). The Plan supports and develops that ambition. The need to improve the number and range of visitor attractions and the range and choice of visitor accommodation are highlighted, and the provision of a wider choice of visitor accommodation is particularly important to help develop Morpeth's tourism economy beyond its current 'day-visitor market'. Specifically the Plan supports a number of alternative options for hotel development.

Policy Emp1 – Morpeth Town Centre

Development proposals within Morpeth Town Centre will be supported where it is demonstrated they:

1. contribute to the creation of a lively and vibrant centre with:

- A. the Primary Shopping Frontage mainly in retail use;**
- B. an improved range of places to eat and drink within the Primary Shopping Area and associated with new and improved sports, leisure, hotel, cultural and community facilities within the Town Centre, but outside the Primary Shopping Area and on the riverside corridor;**
- C. other businesses, particularly those catering for visitors located in the Town Centre mainly outside the Primary Shopping Area;**
- D. new and improved residential properties that provide accommodation for small households, older people and those with special housing needs in the Town Centre, but outside the Primary Shopping Area and through the conversion of upper floors above shops and businesses;**
- E. the reuse or redevelopment of Key Development Opportunity Sites and vacant buildings and sites within the Town Centre as a town centre use or sports, leisure, hotel, cultural or community use appropriate to its location;**
- F. residential development, supported as part of mixed use schemes or where it is demonstrated that the reuse or redevelopment of the building or site for a retail, leisure or business use would not be viable; and**
- G. an adequate well managed supply of car parking in the town centre,**

and/or

2. Enhance the character and attractiveness of the town centre by:

- H. conserving and enhancing the historic character of the Morpeth Conservation Area, its setting and the historic assets, both designated and undesignated, in the town centre;**
- I. safeguarding and enhancing the landscape setting along the riverside corridor;**
- J. ensuring that new development is of a scale appropriate to the town centre, is well designed and is of a mass and materials appropriate to the character of the town centre;**
- K. improving the public realm in the town centre;**
- L. improving the town centre environment for pedestrians and cyclists.**

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

- M. proposals for more than 1000m² net retail floorspace outside the**

Primary Shopping Area

N. proposals for leisure-related buildings of 2500m² gross floorspace, not linked with wider open space activities or hotel use, that are outside the Town Centre; and

O. proposals for office uses that are more than 2500m² gross floorspace outside the Town Centre.

6.2.7 This policy contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO1 (historic market town character), PO2 (rural service centre), PO3 (accommodating growth), PO7 (community wellbeing) and PO8 (natural and heritage assets).

Justification

6.2.8 The Primary Shopping Frontage, Primary Shopping Area, Town Centre and Morpeth Conservation Area are included on the Proposals Map. Definitions of the planning terms used in Policy Emp1 are given in Appendix B.

6.2.9 The identification of a town centre river corridor is intended to highlight the economic and environmental value that the River Wansbeck contributes to riverside sites as it flows through the town centre. It runs from the Stepping Stones upstream through to the Blue Bridge river footbridge downstream. It includes the riverside walks in the High Stanners Local Green Space and Carlisle Park, the site of the Riverside Leisure Centre, the Chantry Creative Quarter, the edge of the Castle Square cluster of sites and the Library and Willows sites.

6.2.10 The strategy is to safeguard and enhance the town centre for appropriate uses in each sub-area and to enhance its environment. The policy recognises the importance of the town centre as an employment location for a wide range of businesses and seeks to develop the centre to attract more visitors both to the shops and the leisure and cultural facilities.



Bridge Street on Morpeth Fair day

6.2.11 There are several vacant or underused buildings and sites on the edge of the town centre which are identified on the Proposals Map as Key Development Opportunity Sites. Sites along the riverside corridor containing publicly owned buildings have been identified under Policy Lac1 as having the potential for redevelopment or improvement to provide a new indoor sports and leisure facility, library and an Arts, Performance and Heritage Centre. There may also be the scope to develop a hotel and a public house/ restaurant / café taking advantage of the riverside frontage to provide a focal point for tourists and visitors. The Key Development Opportunity sites in the riverside corridor include the sports centre, library and associated office buildings at The Willows, the police station together with the Court House and nearby temporary parking area, and the former garage site immediately to the north west of Telford Bridge. The Plan identifies the potential of these sites to contribute to the overall strategy of improving the sports, community and leisure facilities to attract tourists and visitors to the town and improve facilities for residents.

6.2.12 Mixed use schemes including limited new residential development will be supported as part of redevelopment that provides retail or other town centre uses. In view of the high standard of

accessibility to shops, services and public transport, preference will be given to residential development that provides homes for small households, older people and people with special housing needs.

6.2.13 There is a resilient market for office space in Morpeth due to a healthy professional services sector supported by a large but diminishing public sector presence. Some 57% of office provision is in the town centre, with another cluster of office space at Telford Court, near to County Hall. An overall vacancy rate of 12% (draft Commercial Demand Study, 2015) indicates that the market is broadly in equilibrium.



Sanderson Arcade Precinct, Morpeth

6.2.14 New retail, leisure and office development should be located in the town centre. Proposals for large scale development of these uses outside the town centre will be expected to undertake a sequential assessment to demonstrate there are no more suitable alternatives in, or close to, the town centre. An impact assessment should also be submitted in accordance with the NPPF.

Policy Emp2 – Development within Morpeth Town Centre

Within Morpeth Primary Shopping Frontage, support will be given to retail developments (Class A1 uses) which improve the range of shops.

Proposals for changes of use of ground floor premises within the Primary Shopping Frontage to non Class A1 uses appropriate to a shopping area will be permitted if: -

- A. it can be demonstrated that the use will add to the vitality and viability of the Town Centre; and**
- B. the use would result in not more than 30% of the total number of units in the Primary Shopping Frontage being in non-A1 uses.**

Within the Primary Shopping Area outside, and on upper floors, of the Primary Shopping Frontage, the following uses will be permitted: shops (A1), financial and professional services (A2), restaurants and cafes (A3), drinking establishments (A4), hot food takeaways (A5) and Sui Generis uses appropriate to a town centre.

Within the Town Centre and outside of the Primary Shopping Area, the following additional uses will be permitted: Business (B1), Hotels and Guesthouses (C1), Residential Care Homes (C2), Dwellinghouses (C3), Non Residential Institutions (D1), Assembly and Leisure (D2).

Development in the town centre should demonstrate that it: -

- A. would not have an unacceptable impact on residential amenity;**
- B. would have appropriate access and car parking provision; and**
- C. would not harm the character of the historic environment.**

6.2.15 This policy contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO2 (rural service centre), PO3 (accommodating growth), PO7 (community wellbeing) and PO8 (natural and heritage assets).

Justification

6.2.16 The policy aims to retain the main shopping area for retail development and to make provision for the introduction of other suitable town centre uses that will support the vitality and viability of the town and provide local employment opportunities.

6.2.17 Outside the main retail area, a wider range of uses will be acceptable to support the ambition to develop the attractiveness of the town centre for visitors and residents and to provide scope for the development of leisure, arts and cultural facilities including a hotel. The town centre is one of the main employment locations in the town and there may be the opportunity to accommodate further offices or other community uses including a children's day nursery or care homes.

6.2.18 Morpeth is proud of its character as an ancient market town, and development that recognises and seeks to enhance the historic environment of the town centre, even outside the Morpeth Conservation Area, should contribute to maintaining that character.

6.3 Pegswood Village Centre

6.3.1 Pegswood is a large former mining village with a population of over 3,000 and a range of shopping, employment and community facilities. The Plan aims to develop Pegswood village as a more sustainable settlement with more housing choice, a better range of services and facilities, more local employment and a more vibrant village centre.

Policy Emp3 – Pegswood Village Centre

Within the “Heart of the Village” development area a mix of retail, commercial and residential uses will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the development adds to the vibrancy of the village and would help to create an improved village centre. Development should demonstrate that it: -

- A. would not have an unacceptable impact on residential amenity;**
- B. would have appropriate access and car parking provision; and**
- C. would enhance the appearance and environment of the village centre.**

6.3.2 This policy contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO4 (developing Pegswood), PO5 (character of the villages), and PO7 (community wellbeing).

Justification

6.3.3 The “Heart of the Village” development area shown on the Proposals Map has been identified as a mixed use development opportunity. The site includes the former factory site at East Farm and the site of the former Ex-Servicemen's Club, both of which are brownfield sites. A proposal for retail, residential and commercial development and the development of a pub/restaurant is under consideration. The Co-op relocated to this area in June 2015.

6.3.4 Two sites on the northern edge of the village are allocated for residential development under Policy Hou1 such that, taking into account existing commitments, a total of about 200 houses will be built in the village over the Plan period.

6.4 Economic Strategy

Introduction

6.4.1 As part their Core Strategy evidence base, the County Council commissioned a countywide Employment Land Study (ELS) from consultants NLP, which was completed in 2011. To supplement this, the County Council commissioned a Commercial Demand Study which was published in June

2015, after the Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to the County Council. This second study is intended to update understanding of demand for employment land as the national economy shows signs of recovery after the 2008 recession and will inform the emerging Core Strategy. The Neighbourhood Plan draws largely on the evidence in the 2011 ELS.

6.4.2 In order to contribute to the emerging Core Strategy proposals for growth and to ensure that the town develops as more a sustainable settlement, Morpeth needs a high quality portfolio of employment sites and business accommodation to provide local employment and to complement the planned growth in housing.

6.4.3 Morpeth is a commercially attractive location with considerable economic potential for strong economic growth in the right economic climate due to its attractive setting as a rural market town, its location on the A1 and East Coast Main Line, and accessibility to the Tyneside conurbation. The completion of the SE Northumberland Link Road with the construction of the Morpeth Northern Bypass will further strengthen regional connectivity and will open up potential sites for economic development.

6.4.4 Morpeth has a well-established business park at Coopies Lane, mainly accommodating local traders, wholesalers and automotive businesses, though with a number of national and international businesses, notably Coca Cola Enterprises. It is important to the local economy in providing employment opportunities and premises for local businesses. There appears to be a good mainly local demand for vacant units as they become available. Although there is limited space for new development and fragmented ownership would make refurbishment or redevelopment difficult, its retention for employment generating uses remains a priority.



Coopies Lane business park, Morpeth

6.4.5 There is a well-established single user employment site on the Whalton Road in the rural area to the west of Morpeth currently operated by the firm Piramal. There are no known plans for expansion of this site.

6.4.6 Three sites were allocated in the adopted Castle Morpeth District Local Plan for employment development at Fairmoor to the north of Morpeth adjacent to the then proposed Northern Bypass. The development of these sites has been dependent on access from the bypass which is now under construction and due for completion in Autumn 2016. The continued allocation of the three sites for employment development was advocated in the County Council's 2011 Employment Land Study. However, planning permission has since been granted for residential development on two of the sites in view of the lack of a 5 year housing land supply. These sites are shown as C1 and C2 on the Proposals Map. The remainder of the second site plus the third site, to the northeast (East Lane End, *Emp4-2*) and the southwest (West Lane End, *Emp4-1*) of the A197 respectively, are allocated for employment development in this Plan.

6.4.7 In view of the loss of most of the land previously allocated for future employment development in Morpeth, it is vital that existing employment areas in the town are safeguarded for employment generating uses.

6.4.8 Northumberland County Council is a main employer in the town with County Hall currently the principal administrative offices of the local authority. It is an attractive, high quality office building set in landscaped grounds. Adjacent to it, on the site of the former fire station, is a business park containing several office blocks, many currently used as public sector offices. The site has a good standard of accessibility by public transport and road. The County Council is currently undertaking a review of its office requirements and is considering relocating its main headquarters to Ashington. The Plan safeguards the site so that, should the County Hall site become surplus to County Council requirements, it should be retained for mixed employment uses.

6.4.9 The emerging Core Strategy has a rural employment policy that seeks to promote growth and diversification of the rural economy and will apply outside main towns and service centres. It is an overarching policy framework that covers the re-use of redundant buildings; the diversification of existing businesses; and the establishment of new businesses in new premises.

6.4.10 There are some existing employment-generating businesses outside settlement boundaries in the Plan area, including Heighley Gate Garden Centre, Newcastle University's agritech research centre at Cockle Park, and Dungait Transport in Hebron village.

6.4.11 Pending adoption of the Core Strategy Policy Set1 provides an appropriate level of flexibility to support the local rural economy.

6.4.12 Further employment generating activities may be supported in rural areas provided that they are of a scale and type that do not impact on residential amenity or the character and appearance of the area. Also, in some instances, such businesses can help maintain the built fabric and heritage of local rural communities.

Policy Emp4 – Allocation of Employment Sites

The following sites shown on the Proposals Map are allocated for industrial and business development (Classes B1, B2 and B8 uses). Proposals that include a hotel and roadside services will be supported on the sites. Development proposals must identify appropriate access arrangements and be accompanied by a Transport Assessment and a Travel Plan to demonstrate how sustainable transport will be promoted.

- A. Land to the south of Fairmoor (West Lane End [Emp4-1], 8 hectares)**
- B. Land to the south of Northgate Hospital (East Lane End [Emp4-2], 2 hectares)**

Policy Emp5 – Safeguarding of Employment Sites and Additional Employment Sites

Existing employment sites shown on the Proposals Map will be safeguarded for employment purposes subject to those limitations identified as follows: -

- A. Coopies Lane Business Park: -**
 - a. For Classes B1, B2 and B8 Uses and for the sale of bulky comparison goods in the following categories: Furniture, DIY, bulky electrical goods, carpets and floor coverings, motor vehicles, and camping, boating and caravanning.**
 - b. Proposals for the sale of bulky goods with a floorspace greater than 1000 square metres will be subject to sequential and impact testing as referred to in Policy Emp1. It will be necessary for any proposal below that threshold to include an impact study, which demonstrates that the development will not harm the vitality or viability of Morpeth Town Centre, and that there is no available site closer to the town centre.**

B. The County Hall and Fire Station site: -

- a. **Should the site become surplus to the requirements of the County Council, the uses that may be acceptable include: Business (B1), Hotels (C1), Residential Care Homes (C2), Non Residential Institutions (D1), Assembly and Leisure (D2).**
- b. **Should the site become surplus to the requirements of the County Council, a Masterplan shall be prepared to consider the future development of the site. Any redevelopment of the site or reuse of the buildings should retain the landscaped setting of the site; provide sufficient parking for employees and visitors and should not adversely impact on the amenity of adjacent residents.**

C. The pharmaceutical factory site at Whalton Road near Morpeth for a large scale B2 General Industrial use; and

D. Pegswood Industrial Estate for B1, B2 and B8 uses.

Any additional development proposal for B1, B2 or B8 uses or other employment uses will be supported where it can be demonstrated that: -

- 1. The site would be accessible by pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport; and in particular is well related to bus routes;**
- 2. The site has suitable vehicular access and the necessary level of locally available car parking, or includes proposals to increase car parking provision;**
- 3. The proposed development would not have a severe unacceptable impact on the local highway network;**
- 4. The site can accommodate delivery vehicles or other forms of logistical support without adversely impacting upon traffic circulation;**
- 5. The development does not result in a significant loss of amenity for local residents or other adjacent uses;**
- 6. The development includes adequate landscaping or screening; and**
- 7. The development does not conflict with other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan or other Development Plan policies.**

6.4.13 This policy helps deliver Plan Objectives: PO2 (retail sector, visitor attractions); PO3 (sustainable economic activity and diversification) and PO4 (developing Pegswood).

6.4.14 The County Hall site, together with the adjacent site of the former Fire Station and existing commercial office provision are all safeguarded for employment-generating uses. It is intended that proposals for the redevelopment of these sites, should they become available, will be coordinated with redevelopment of sites owned by the County Council in the town centre and elsewhere. This should be delivered through a masterplan in consultation with the local community and other stakeholders so that all interests are considered fully, and redevelopment contributes to the regeneration of the town and the Vision and Objectives of this Plan.

6.4.15 The industrial estate in Pegswood provides premises for local businesses and should be retained for employment generating uses. There may also be scope in the longer term for additional employment uses on the field alongside and to the south of the existing waste management site.

7 Housing

7.1.1 One of the most important aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan is to consider the amount, type and location of new housing in the Morpeth Neighbourhood Area for the next 15 to 20 years. Morpeth is an attractive town with good schools and good transport links to Tyneside and other towns in south east Northumberland and consequently has a strong housing market. The Plan's Vision and Objectives are to ensure that the town accommodates growth in a sustainable manner whilst protecting the town's identity as an historic market town and retaining its rural setting. There is concern to maintain a balance between the level of new housing development and the amount of employment and community infrastructure available or that can be provided to meet the needs of future residents so as to avoid the town increasingly becoming a dormitory settlement.

7.2 Housing Requirement

7.2.1 As part of the preparation of the emerging Northumberland Core Strategy, the County Council has undertaken research on the housing requirement for the County. This has included the full objectively assessed requirement for housing, which 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.

7.2.2 The Neighbourhood Plan has to support the delivery of the strategic development requirements set out in the Core Strategy. Strategic planning policies set out in the emerging Core Strategy establish a housing requirement for all of the main towns and service centres throughout Northumberland. The housing requirement for Morpeth was originally identified as 1,700 new dwellings during the Core Strategy plan period in an earlier draft version of that plan. This figure was subsequently revised upwards to 2,100 new dwellings in the more recent draft Core Strategy. It is recognised that this figure will not be finalised until the Core Strategy is adopted.

7.2.3 In view of the uncertainties around the county housing requirement and the lack of an up-to-date Local Plan, having regard to the available evidence, the Neighbourhood Plans proposes a realistic figure of at least 1,700 dwellings to be delivered within the Neighbourhood Plan period to 2031. This is recognised as a minimum requirement and, should there be a demonstrated need for additional dwellings during the Plan period, this can be met by bringing forward development phased for construction beyond the current Plan period on the St George's Hospital site.

7.2.4 An assessment has been carried out to demonstrate that the requirement for at least 1700 additional dwellings in the Plan period can be provided through: dwellings already built and under construction; sites that currently have planning approval; and sites allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan. The St George's Hospital site is identified as the principal location for additional residential development, providing a planned integrated housing development. There are some small-scale brownfield housing sites that could contribute to housing choice over the Plan period and can contribute flexibility in terms of housing supply in the event of under-delivery elsewhere. With the St George's Hospital site identified both as the principal location for housing growth in the Plan area and as one of two strategic housing development locations in the county by the emerging Northumberland Core Strategy, the aggregate housing provision in the Neighbourhood Plan will contribute towards meeting the objectively assessed housing requirement within the Plan period through to 2031.

7.3 Location of New Housing



Manchester Street, Morpeth

7.3.1 As part of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan four alternative scenarios were developed for the distribution of housing development in Morpeth and three were developed for Pegswood. These scenarios were subsequently assessed as part of preparing the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The results of this assessment were then taken forward as a preferred option for the broad location of housing for Morpeth and Pegswood.

7.3.2 The focus of development options in Morpeth were as follows: Scenario 1 was an urban extension around St. George's Hospital; Scenario 2 considered the distribution of growth around the whole settlement; the focus of development in Scenario 3 was the key communication corridor to the north west of the town up to Fairmoor (A192); Scenario 4 considered growth around the southern edges of the town.

7.3.3 The preferred Housing Scenario for Morpeth concentrates development to the north of Morpeth as this approach was shown, through the SEA, to be the most sustainable location. Focusing development to the north of Morpeth will allow development in a location which is well-related to the town, providing good access to services and facilities. In addition, development in this location will be more widely accessible via the Morpeth Northern Bypass. The preferred development scenario involves a sustainable urban extension on the St. George's Hospital site. This site has a good standard of accessibility to the town centre; provides the opportunity to reuse a site that is partly previously developed; would enable the extensive landscaping and varied slopes of the site to be used to screen the large scale development; and provides scope to incorporate community infrastructure and environmental benefits within the site from a master-planned development.

7.3.4 For Pegswood, alternative scenarios for housing development to the north, west and south of the village were assessed. The main railway line forms a strong southern boundary to the settlement and development to the west would be visually prominent in open countryside. In general terms, sites to the north east of the settlement were found to be most sustainable due to their proximity to village services and their contribution to community identity.

7.3.5 The assessment of the housing development scenarios also included an assessment of the cumulative effects of housing sites being clustered in the scenario locations. The assessment of the alternative options for Morpeth and Pegswood is included in the Housing Sites Assessment Report and the SEA.

7.3.6 In addition to the testing of housing development scenarios, an assessment of individual housing sites has been undertaken. All potential sites included in the County Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) in Morpeth and Pegswood, including sites discounted in the SHLAA, have been further assessed. The results of this assessment are set out in the Plan document 'Housing Site Allocation – Outline Methodology and Potential Sites'. Firstly the sites were assessed against the SEA objectives taking account of guidance in the NPPF and feedback from consultation. The next stage was to consider technical information and feedback from the Neighbourhood Plan Developer Engagement Group. Finally sites were prioritised taking account of how well each site delivered the Plan's Vision, Objectives and strategy.

Policy Hou1 – Housing Development

At least 1700 dwellings shall be developed in the Neighbourhood Plan area in the Plan period, from the following existing commitments and allocations: -

- A. Existing commitments in Morpeth & Pegswood (as set out in Table 1)
- B. St Georges Hospital site (*Hou1, AM1*)
- C. North of Longhirst Road, Pegswood (*Hou1, AP1*)
- D. North of Hebron Avenue, Pegswood (*Hou1, AP2*)

Proposals Map references are in shown brackets

7.3.7 This policy contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO3 (accommodating growth) and PO4 (development of Pegswood).

Justification

7.3.8 The existing commitments in Pegswood together with the two sites in Pegswood allocated in Policy Hou1 will deliver about 200 dwellings, in line with the strategy to make the village a more sustainable settlement.

7.3.9 Table 1 below sets out a summary of the housing supply and commitments in the Plan area at 31 March 2015.

Table 1 - Morpeth Housing Supply as at 31st March 2015

Status	No. Approved	Planning Reference
Completions 2011 – 2013	53	
Under construction	60	
Commitments:		
Former Davidsons Garage (<i>Hou1, CM1</i>)	60	12/00042/FUL
Northgate Hospital (<i>Hou1, CM2</i>)	225	14/02316/REM
Loansdean South (<i>Hou1, CM3</i>)	200	13/0073/FUL [186 units] & 11/02454/FUL [200 units]
Stobhill South (<i>Hou1, CM4</i>)	396	13/02416/FUL
Fairmoor (<i>Hou1, CM5</i>)	255	13/02105/OUT
St George’s Hospital, Initial Phase (<i>Hou1, CM6</i>)	375	14/02750/FUL
Other Sites incl. Pegswood	114	<i>Detail included in ‘Housing Site Allocation – Outline Methodology and Potential Sites’</i>
TOTAL	1,738	

Proposals Map references are shown in brackets

7.3.10 The document "Housing Site Allocation – Outline Methodology and Potential Sites" contains more detail on committed housing supply, preferred sites in the Plan and further potential housing sites that would be compliant with Plan Objectives and Policies. The document also forecasts build-out rates for all committed, proposed and possible sites in five year blocks to demonstrate that the Plan will deliver against the objectively assessed evidence of needs for a five year supply of housing land.

Policy Hou2 – St George’s Hospital, Morpeth

The St George’s Hospital Site, Morpeth shall be developed as a sustainable urban extension for around 1000 homes. A masterplan shall be prepared for the St George’s Hospital Site, Morpeth and shall be agreed by the Local Planning Authority. The masterplan shall include: -

- A. the phasing of the development;**
- B. provision for a mix of house types, sizes and tenures;**
- C. the creation of a new village centre incorporating a local shopping centre;**
- D. a community hall;**
- E. open space with equipped and informal children’s play areas;**
- F. landscaped greenways and wildlife corridors; and**
- G. pedestrian and cycleway routes to link the development to the town centre, schools and the networks of the surrounding area.**

If the need is demonstrated, provision shall be made on site for a Primary school or First school, and community sports field with changing facilities. The delivery of the community infrastructure shall be secured in a timely manner by planning condition or planning obligation as appropriate. The scale of obligations, including those arising from conditions attached to a planning permission, shall not be such as to threaten the viability of the development in accordance with paragraph 173 of the Framework.

7.3.11 This policy contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO1 (character of Morpeth); PO3 (accommodating growth) and PO7 (sense of community).

Justification

7.3.12 The St George's Hospital site has been identified as the principal location for additional residential development in the Plan area in the medium to long term, including future growth beyond the Plan period. Planning permission was granted in March 2015 for 375 houses, with full planning permission for 119 and outline planning permission for 256. The overall development of the site is expected to deliver housing both during and beyond the Plan period.

7.3.13 The site has the benefit of mature landscaped grounds and is readily accessible from the town centre. Further development beyond the existing planning permission is dependent on the provision of an access road from the Northern Bypass, and this road should be linked into the rest of the development to create a coherent community and to provide access from all parts of the development to the town centre. A masterplan should be prepared for the site to steer the overall layout of the site and to ensure the delivery of a range of facilities to serve the new community. The layout of the development should be designed to take full advantage of the attractive landscaped grounds, mature trees and hedgerows and changes in level through the creation of greenways, local play areas and open spaces to link all parts of the development.

7.4 A Range of Housing Types, Sizes and Tenures

Introduction

7.4.1 The NPPF requires that local planning authorities should plan for a mix of housing, including the needs of families with children, older people and people with disabilities and other special needs (Para. 50). Locally, the need to rebalance the housing market in the Plan area has been identified along with the need to improve housing choices for both younger and older people.

Policy Hou3 – Housing Mix

- A. Housing development shall be designed to include a range of property sizes, types and tenures including affordable housing and housing for younger and older people, so as to promote a balanced housing market.**
- B. Within Morpeth town centre and Pegswood village centre, support will be given to new housing development as part of a mixed use scheme for small households, younger and older people and people with special housing needs.**
- C. The promotion of ‘Lifetime Neighbourhoods’ will be supported in Morpeth town centre and the St Georges urban extension.**

7.4.2 This policy helps deliver Plan Objectives: PO1 (Morpeth’s sense of community); PO4 (developing Pegswood as a sustainable settlement); PO7 (community wellbeing).

Justification

7.4.3 The County Council has undertaken an Ageing Well study that 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 where there is better access to health, leisure, education and transport facilities to allow people to remain in their communities, which in turn helps to 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.

7.4.4 There is evidence of older people moving from the villages into Morpeth in order to have easier access to shops and services. To meet this need, the Plan proposes that new housing should be designed with the needs of older people and those with special housing needs in mind with a good standard of accessibility to the town and village centres.

7.4.5 Subject to evidence of need, the provision of specialist accommodation for older people, including Extra Care Housing, will be promoted in suitable locations within the Plan area.

7.4.6 The aim is to provide more choice of housing to enable older people to be more appropriately accommodated. This would enable better use of the existing housing stock by freeing up larger homes for young families.

7.4.7 The building of both market and affordable homes to the ‘Lifetime Homes’ standard or the proposed Housing Technical Standards Category 2 Accessible Housing is encouraged, so that more housing will become available that is easier to adapt to meet the changing mobility needs of residents over time. The development of a proportion of housing constructed to comply with the proposed Category 3 Wheelchair Accessible and Adaptable Housing, and to meet the needs of people with disabilities will also be encouraged. The proportion of new housing to be built in each category will be determined through the Core Strategy or other Development Plan Documents.

7.4.8 The promotion of ‘Lifetime Neighbourhoods’ will be supported in Morpeth town centre and the St George’s Hospital site urban extension. Lifetime Neighbourhoods 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; and,

- The safety and sociability of public spaces.

7.4.9 Many younger people move away from Northumberland for education and work. A lack of suitable rented affordable housing and housing for first time buyers makes it difficult for them to return. The Plan aims to provide wider choice of housing to enable younger people to remain in or move into the Plan area.

7.4.10 The Plan seeks to ensure that a balanced housing stock is maintained in the Plan area so that there is a good choice of housing available that meets the needs of people at all stages of their life from setting up home for the first time, to bringing up a family, and seeking homes that meet needs in older age. With improving longevity, housing that meets the needs of older people will be increasingly important so that they can maintain their independence.

7.5 Affordable Housing

7.5.1 The emerging Northumberland Core Strategy will contain a detailed policy requiring the provision of affordable housing. However, the evidence base has not yet been tested so cannot be relied on for the Neighbourhood Plan. Policy Hou4 provides an interim statutory basis for the provision of affordable housing.

Policy Hou4 – Delivering Affordable Housing

Proposals for developments resulting in a net gain of ten dwellings or more will be expected to provide affordable housing on the site, in accordance with the Development Plan or an up-to-date housing needs assessment. In exceptional circumstances, where it can be justified, affordable housing will be accepted off-site; this must be on a site that is agreed as being in a suitable location relative to the housing need to be met, ideally within the same town or village, or if this is not feasible, then within another village in the Neighbourhood Area.

7.5.2 This policy helps deliver Plan Objectives: PO1 (Morpeth's sense of community); PO4 (development of Pegswood as a sustainable settlement); PO7 (community wellbeing).

Justification

7.5.3 The term 'affordable housing' is considered to be as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework.

7.5.4 A community's need for an appropriate balance and mix of housing, including the provision of affordable housing, is recognised at national level as a material consideration in determining planning applications for housing development. Government policy seeks to create sustainable communities that offer a wide range of housing types and tenures and are socially inclusive.

7.5.5 The threshold of ten dwellings for requiring the provision of affordable housing is in line with National Planning Policy Guidance for non-rural areas, which is how DCLG regards the Morpeth Neighbourhood Area.

7.5.6 In future, where evidence, such as local housing needs studies or housing market assessments, indicates a change in the housing need of the area, these thresholds and any percentage requirements included in the emerging Core Strategy may be varied.

7.5.7 Through fixed discount and shared ownership housing, affordable housing can support broader home ownership through initiatives such as housing designed specifically for first time buyers or which allow families to grow.

7.5.8 Affordable housing should normally be delivered without public subsidy and provided on site in order to meet the needs of residents of the local community. In exceptional circumstances, where it can be justified, affordable housing will be accepted off-site; this must be on a site that is agreed as being in a suitable location relative to the housing need to be met, ideally within the same town or village, or if this is not feasible, then within another village in the Neighbourhood Area.

7.6 Infrastructure Serving Housing Developments

Policy Hou5 – Infrastructure to serve new Housing Development

Housing development should, subject to viability testing in accordance with paragraph 173 of the Framework, make provision for, or contributions towards, the infrastructure and community requirements arising from the development including, as appropriate, children’s play areas, playing pitches and open space, allotments, landscaping, habitat enhancement, sports and community facilities, schools, roads, pedestrian and cycling routes and facilities, water, sewerage, sewage treatment capacity and public transport.

7.6.1 This policy contributes to the delivery of Policy Objectives: PO1 (character of Morpeth); PO3 (accommodating growth); PO4 (developing Pegswood as a sustainable community); PO5 (village identity); PO7 (reducing flood risk) and PO9 (connectivity).

Justification

7.6.2 The type of benefit required will depend on the scale and location of the development.

7.6.3 The type and level of infrastructure and community benefit will be negotiated on a site-by-site basis by Northumberland County Council and secured through a planning condition or legal agreement. Developments should meet the infrastructure requirements arising from the new housing either on site or through contributions towards new or improved facilities in the locality, secured through legal agreements.

8 Getting Around (Transport)

8.1.1 Transport policies need to be integrated with policies for the economy, the environment, and the commercial, educational and social development of the town. This will enable a comprehensive and integrated vision for the development of Morpeth as a quality place to live, work and spend leisure time. The challenge is to plan for the most acceptable balance between ease of travel and the impacts of transport systems, by embracing the different needs of all sectors of the community; recognising the different functions of transport for various activities; and minimising the adverse effects of transport in those places where they are most significant.



Traffic congestion on the Telford Bridge, Morpeth

8.1.2 Morpeth is a relatively prosperous market town serving a large rural catchment and this role has been enhanced in recent years by the renewal of Sanderson Arcade and the new Morrisons supermarket. Planning policies have supported the concentration of retail and leisure developments in the town centre area (north of the River Wansbeck), whilst resisting such development on the periphery of the town.

8.1.3 Currently, some 71% of existing homes in Morpeth are to the south of the River Wansbeck while the great majority of facilities are north of the river. From a transport perspective, further residential development south of the town should be resisted as it will add to pressure on the approaches to the Mafeking roundabout and over the Telford Bridge pinch-point.

8.1.4 The continuing growth in the amount of traffic, together with the limited number of routes into the town centre and across the river, results in increasing traffic congestion on the approaches to the central area, not just at peak hours, but at all times throughout the day. The general growth of the town and its surrounding communities, plus the increasing numbers of visitors to the town centre, has combined to aggravate the situation.

8.1.5 Traffic flow across the town is constrained by the limited number of crossing points on the railway and the River Wansbeck. The Morpeth Northern Bypass, due to be completed in Autumn 2016, is expected to relieve the town centre of some through traffic. This should allow road space to be devoted more to the requirements of those accessing the town centre.

8.1.6 However, with more than 20% housing and population growth proposed for the area during the Plan period, there is a real need to improve the use of sustainable travel modes for access to the town centre and so minimise road traffic growth.

8.2 Road Network Improvements

8.2.1 In the absence of a comprehensive traffic assessment, and in view of the majority of the town's current housing being located south of the river, while the main shopping and other essential facilities are north of the river, a number of improvements to the strategic road network have been identified: -

- A road link between the Morpeth Northern Bypass and King Edward VI School (KEVI): Currently, KEVI can only be accessed through the town centre and the narrow residential Cottingwood Lane,

which is unsuited to the volume of traffic at school times and cannot be used by school buses. Direct access to the High School from the new bypass will remove traffic from the north town centre and from Cottingwood Lane, though traffic accessing the town centre from the north could increase with the new four-way junction onto the A1 at West Lane Ends.

- A link road between Stobhill and Loansdean passing under (or over) the East Coast main line railway would divert traffic from the Mafeking roundabout congestion point and provide a more direct access route to the Coopies Lane Business Park from the A1.
- Road junction improvements at: -
 - Coopies Lane/A192 (Morpeth Station) to improve access to Coopies Lane Business Park;
 - The Sun Inn/A197 to improve access to High Church and Kirkhill estate; and,
 - St George's Hospital/A197 (foot of Whorral Bank) to improve safety accessing the Health Centre and to facilitate access to the initial phase of the St George's Hospital site development.

- A four-way junction onto the A1 either on the Whalton Road or at Clifton.

With north facing access onto the A1 from south of the river northbound traffic could access the A1 without passing over the Telford Bridge and through the town centre. However, although this would be of significant benefit to Morpeth, the Clifton junction is in Stannington parish and outside the Neighbourhood Plan area, so this can only be suggested here as a matter for future consideration.

- Assessment of the need for a further river crossing.

The nineteenth century stone built Telford Bridge is the town's only major river crossing point. Its ongoing maintenance and longevity, and its capacity to deal with further traffic as the town grows, are critical to Morpeth's daily transport needs.

8.2.2 The assessment, evidence-base and detailed planning of such schemes fall to the County Council as Highway Authority or to the Highways England (formerly the Highways Agency), rather than to a Neighbourhood Plan. A Community Action (CATra1) in Section B commits to encouraging and supporting these schemes being brought forward by the Highway Authority or Highways England as appropriate.

Policy Tra1 – Stobhill-Loansdean Link Road protection

To be supported, proposals that would prejudice the implementation of the preferred alignment for the Stobhill-Loansdean Link Road must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that the Link Road is not required.

8.2.3 This policy contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO3 (sustainable economic activity) and PO9 (connectivity).

Justification

8.2.4 The route of the proposed link was safeguarded in the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan and was seen as a priority route worth preserving in the second Northumberland Local Transport Plan (2006-11). It is considered desirable to continue to retain and safeguard this route. The access spurs to the Stobhill and Loansdean link are in place, though funding has not been secured to construct the required crossing of the railway line.

8.3 Alleviation of Traffic Congestion

8.3.1 The river crossing at Telford Bridge is recognised in the Northumberland Local Transport Plan (2011-26) and the emerging Northumberland Core Strategy as one of the worst congestion points in the county. Town centre congestion is caused by a combination of: -

- through northbound traffic which cannot access the A1 south of the town;

- through traffic heading for the northern parts of SE Northumberland;
- traffic from the residential estates south of the river accessing facilities (Middle and High Schools, Health Centre, shops, leisure centre etc.) north of the river; and
- traffic with destinations in the town centre

Increasing town centre traffic congestion will be addressed in order to: improve the viability and local environment of the primary retail area; increase road space available for cycling and pedestrian priority within the retail areas; reduce conflicting vehicle turning movements at Telford Bridge; and improve traffic flow.

8.3.2 The Northern Bypass is expected to remove a proportion of through traffic, but the new housing developments at south Stobhill and south Loansdean are likely to increase traffic passing through this bottleneck. In addition, this Plan's economic strategy includes increasing visitor numbers to the town centre.

8.3.3 While it is evident that town centre congestion is a problem and likely to increase, until the Northern Bypass comes into operation and the new developments to the south of the town begin to be occupied, it is difficult to predict the ongoing scale of the problem. Policy Tra2 encourages appropriate measures to be brought forward to route through traffic away from Morpeth town centre, while still providing access for public transport, and to enhance town centre pedestrian and cycle routes.

Policy Tra2 –Traffic Congestion

Subject to compliance with other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan and elsewhere in the Development Plan, proposals will be supported where it can be demonstrated that: -

- A. they will not severely adversely impact on traffic congestion in Morpeth town centre or at key junctions within the town or wider plan area, achieved through appropriate mitigation as necessary; and**
- B. additional opportunities to alleviate traffic congestion on the highway network and through improvements to pedestrian and cycling routes have been identified, considered, assessed and will be implemented subject to viability testing in accordance with paragraph 173 of the Framework.**

8.3.4 This policy contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO1 (character of Morpeth); PO2 (rural service centre, visitor attractions); PO3 (sustainable economic activity); PO7 (community wellbeing); PO8 (natural and heritage assets) and PO9 (connectivity).

8.3.5 Evidence produced to meet the requirements of this policy is expected to be proportionate to the level of visitors and/or traffic the proposed development is predicted to generate.

8.3.6 This policy is complemented by Community Action CATra2 in Section B, which makes a commitment to promoting specific measures to address town centre congestion.

8.4 Transport Requirements for New Development

8.4.1 In the interests of the environment and the safety and wellbeing of residents, the Neighbourhood Plan encourages a modal shift towards prioritising walking, cycling and public transport use, and the minimisation of car use.

Policy Tra3 – Transport Requirements for New Developments

Subject to compliance with other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan and elsewhere in the Development Plan, proposals will be supported where, subject to viability testing in accordance with paragraph 173 of the Framework, it can be demonstrated that: -

- A. The cumulative impact on traffic flows on the highway network,**

including the roads within and leading to the town centre, will not be severe, unless appropriate mitigation measures are undertaken;

- B. It makes provision for accessible and efficient public transport routes within the development site or the improvement of public transport facilities to serve the development;**
- C. It incorporates improvements to pedestrian and cycle routes to serve the development, where appropriate, to provide safe, convenient and attractive routes to shops, employment, schools and community facilities and which are integrated into wider networks;**
- D. It retains existing rights of way or provides acceptable modifications; and**
- E. It incorporates adequate parking and manoeuvring space within the development in accordance with the Highway Authority's standards.**

8.4.2 This policy contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO3 (accommodating growth); PO4 (sustainable development of Pegswood); PO7 (community wellbeing) and PO9 (connectivity).

Justification

8.4.3 When considering proposals for new development, the impact of the development on the wider highway network, in particular on traffic in the town centre and at known congestion points, will be considered. Where necessary, appropriate highway improvements may be required to mitigate the effects of the new development.

8.4.4 Developers should consider how they can provide safe pedestrian and cycle routes through the development to link up with routes to shops, schools, local employment areas and community facilities. Major development schemes should consider layouts that would support public transport routes, whether public transport routes could be included within the scheme, or whether improvements could be made to local public transport facilities.

8.4.5 Space for parking and manoeuvring of vehicles should be provided to the Highway Authority's standards. Developers will be required to submit Travel Plans for major schemes to demonstrate how the promotion of travel by sustainable means is to be encouraged.

8.5 Sustainable Transport

Active Transport

8.5.1 The Morpeth Neighbourhood Area is threaded through with footpaths, cycle routes and bridleways. Since 2008, the Greater Morpeth Development Trust (GMDT) has carried out improvements to riverside and woodland footpaths between Mitford and Bothal under the "Castles, Woods & Water" project. GMDT also runs an annual Walking Festival in conjunction with the Morpeth Footpath Society. Cycling and horse-riding are also very popular leisure and holiday activities in the county, although few of the established long-distance routes are well-linked to Morpeth.

8.5.2 Increased opportunity to walk or cycle to work, school or to access town centre and other facilities can lead to decreased car use, reduced congestion, reduction of pollution, and improving public and individual health.

8.5.3 Without taking the needs and advantages of active travel into consideration, development and road network improvements can lead to the fragmentation and diminishing of provision for walking and cycling. Policy Tra4 sets out a framework for opportunities to enhance, combine and integrate active travel to be taken.

Policy Tra4 – Development of Footpath and Cycleway Networks

Measures to join up footpaths and cycleways into comprehensive networks will be supported with priority being given to: -

- A. creating or improving routes between the main residential areas and Morpeth town centre and essential facilities such as the Health Centre;**
- B. creating or improving pedestrian priority routes in Morpeth town centre between the principal car parks, the bus station, the rail station and shopping areas;**
- C. developing traffic-segregated pedestrian and cycle routes between schools and residential areas;**
- D. improving and extending the public rights of way network and circular routes around the villages of Hepscott, Hebron, Mitford and Pegswood and between the villages and Morpeth;**
- E. linking the local footpath network to long distance footpaths;**
- F. the exploration of developing the old Wannie Line as a long distance footpath;**
- G. improving the network of cycle routes within the Plan area,**
- H. linking the local cycle route network to the international North Sea Cycle Route;**
- I. developing access to the Coast-to-Coast Cycle Route, the Coast and Castles Cycle Route, the Reivers' Way and Hadrian's Cycleway; and**
- J. identifying and adopting other key strategic additions to the public rights of way network.**

8.5.4 This policy contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO1 (sense of place); PO2 (local and visitor attractions); PO3 (sustainable economic activity); PO4 (sustainable development of Pegswood); PO5 (character of the villages); PO8 (natural and heritage assets); PO7 (community wellbeing) and PO9 (connectivity).

Justification

8.5.5 The creation of well-maintained long distance and circular off-road routes is an established means of attracting visitors and tourists wishing to cycle or walk. The Plan area has the potential to develop routes linking Morpeth and the surrounding villages, and to connect to the established long distance footpath and cycleway routes in the county.

8.5.6 The provision of safe off-road routes provides improved opportunities for people to walk or cycle to work and improved access to the countryside and local wildlife sites, provided that they do not conflict with wildlife corridors or areas of ecological sensitivity. Walking and cycling will help in the promotion of healthy lifestyles.

Public Transport

8.5.7 Morpeth and Pegswood are on the East Coast Main Line (ECML). Intercity, cross-country and local rail services call at Morpeth rail station with approaching 300,000 passengers a year using the station. Pegswood has a limited local rail service, but there is an aspiration to improve provision as part of the Plan to make the village more sustainable. The emerging Northumberland Core Strategy supports the introduction of passenger services on the Ashington-Blyth-Tyne railway (ABT) and the County Council is actively working on this project with Network Rail. This project could usefully be linked with Morpeth to provide better integrated rail services. The South East Northumberland Rail User Group (SENRUG) has lobbied successfully since 2003 and continues to campaign for improved rail services and facilities. Introduction of passenger services on the ABT including a link onto the ECML at Morpeth is one of their main campaign issues.



Morpeth rail station

8.5.8 Morpeth also has the most active bus station in the county with services to Newcastle; to Alnwick, Berwick and the mid and north Northumberland coast; and to south east Northumberland. Local in-town services and services to the rural villages to the north and west are relatively poor. The Morpeth 'bus service hub' contributes considerably to the existing day-visitor economy, particularly amongst older people who benefit from free bus travel.

8.5.9 Public transport provision needs to be maintained and improved to meet increased demand arising from housing growth in the Plan area, and the sustainable economic strategy that seeks to attract more customers, day-visitors and tourists to the town and create more local jobs.

Policy Tra5 – Public Transport

Improvements to facilities at rail and bus stations will be supported.

The site adjacent to Pegswood station (shown on the Proposals Map) has been allocated as a station car park.

8.5.10 This policy contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO2 (Morpeth's competitiveness); PO3 (sustainable economic activity); PO4 (sustainable development of Pegswood) and PO9 (connectivity).

Justification

8.5.11 The Plan aims to support travel by public transport in order to reduce congestion on the roads. There is scope to improve rail and bus stations to make them more attractive for travelling members of the public.

8.5.12 Improved access to the rest of the North East and beyond is crucial if the settlements in the Morpeth Neighbourhood Area are to remain sustainable. If increased rail services were to be provided to Pegswood, a car parking facility would be required near the existing Pegswood Station. A reserve site has been identified for a station car park on land opposite the station.

8.5.13 This policy is complemented by the Community Actions CATra5 and CATra6, in Part B, which promote engagement with rail and bus operators to improve local and long distance services.



Morpeth bus station

8.5.14 This policy contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO4 (developing Pegswood) and PO9 (connectivity).

9 Leisure and Culture

9.1.1 Sports, Arts and Leisure are an integral part of any healthy social community. They involve a discretionary use of personal time enabling both individual and collective happiness. They can also facilitate learning and development, through participation in new activities or enhancing existing skills. They should also provide opportunities for all members of the community.

Sports Activities & Facilities

9.1.2 Morpeth is currently well served with a wide range of sports available across age groups, although the quality of facilities is considered variable and benefit could be gained from more 'joined up' interactions and sharing.

9.1.3 The Riverside Leisure Centre offers a swimming pool, fitness gym, and multi-functional indoor sports hall. Carlisle Park has a recently refurbished bowling pavilion and bowling greens, tennis courts, skate park, and boating and kayaking on the River Wansbeck. Carlisle Park tennis courts were repaired and refurbished in October 2014. The park would also benefit from the addition of a public all-weather sports pitch for training purposes and match hires. There is also a BMX track at Morpeth Common.

9.1.4 Morpeth's sports clubs include Morpeth Rugby Football Club, Morpeth Town Association Football Club, Morpeth Sporting Club (junior football), Morpeth Harriers, Morpeth Golf Club; and, Morpeth Cricket, Hockey & Tennis Club although this is located at Longhirst.

9.1.5 Pegswood Parish Council wants to develop the Welfare Park playing fields and pavilion, and possibly expand into the fields to the west. It also wants to improve footpath provision. Apart from Mitford Cricket Club the other villages have minimal sports facilities.

9.1.6 Opportunity exists to improve sports and leisure facilities, and actively encourage more 'joined up' partnerships and facility sharing. Improvement, expansion or replacement of the leisure centre and swimming pool is needed, and ongoing improvement of facilities in Carlisle Park.

9.1.7 The Riverside Leisure Centre is an essential facility in supporting future community health and wellbeing, but is widely acknowledged not to be up to modern day standards. With 20% housing and population growth proposed, there will be considerably more demand for leisure centre facilities. Relocation should be considered if a better site can be found, but a town centre location with access to long-term car parking is considered preferable as the Leisure Centre contributes to the viability of the town centre.



Morpeth Leisure Centre

9.1.8 The existing Morpeth Riverside Leisure Centre facility is dated and insufficient for future needs given the likely growth in households over the Plan period. There is strong public support for an improved, extended or a completely new sports and leisure facility. The County Council announced a major capital investment for replacement of Morpeth Leisure Centre in February 2015. This is a major strategic development opportunity for the provision of sports and leisure facilities to serve the Morpeth Neighbourhood Area. The replacement of the existing sports facilities needs to be assessed in line with

the Sport England document “*Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities – How to undertake and apply Needs Assessment for Sport.*”

9.1.9 National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) states that any proposal to re-locate a Leisure Centre from a town centre location to an edge of town centre should be subject to a sequential test.

Arts and Performance Activities & Facilities

9.1.10 Various groups use a scattered range of locations (e.g. KEVI, Town Hall, church halls) including the St George’s Community Players, the Morpeth Pantomime Society and the Morpeth Music Society. These locations are not always ideal due to issues such as seating capacity, views, limited equipment and facilities, and lack of changing areas.

9.1.11 There is strong local support for a commercially sustainable ‘Arts and Performance Centre’, possibly to include a Heritage Museum visitor attraction. A case can be made for a new facility combining all of these elements, making a major contribution to the development of Morpeth’s visitor economy and the cultural life of the town. The combination of functions into one new facility provides the maximum scope for economies of scale in building and running such a facility, but in order to be viable from a footfall and revenue perspective it needs to be located within the town centre area and fully integrated into the visitor economy. The new Centre would then have easy access to shops, pubs, cafes, restaurants, public transport facilities and town centre parking. The key to achieving this aspiration will be setting up the partnership arrangements and mechanisms to obtain funding to build the Centre in a manner and location that provide the best opportunity for ongoing viability. The Neighbourhood Plan provides support for the development of such a facility.

9.1.12 Having reviewed possible locations it is considered that the current Willows and Library riverside area would be a good site for a ‘Community Arts, Performance and Heritage Centre’. It is large enough, it has a positive vista with views of the river, the Telford Bridge, Morpeth Court and the Castle, and it can take into account the designated wildlife corridor along the river. The Willows is also a heritage asset, and a community development would offer good preservation opportunities in design terms. It would be sensible to include a replacement library in such a community development, as a multipurpose facility could prove to be the most viable proposal.

Policy Lac1 – Location of a Sports & Leisure and a Arts, Performance & Heritage Centre

The development of a new sports and leisure facility and an Arts, Performance and Heritage Centre or facilities for these uses in town centre locations will be supported where it can be demonstrated that: -

- A. the facility would be accessible by pedestrians, cyclists and public transport; and in particular is well related to bus routes and Morpeth Bus Station;**
- B. the site has suitable vehicular access and the necessary level of locally available car parking, or includes proposals to increase car parking provision;**
- C. the site can accommodate delivery vehicles or other forms of logistical support without adversely impacting upon traffic circulation;**
- D. the development does not result in a significant loss of amenity for local residents or other adjacent uses; and**
- E. the development does not conflict with other Plan policies or proposals.**

Any proposal to develop such a facility in a location outside the town centre will need to comply with the above criteria, and additionally demonstrate that there are no alternative town centre locations that could accommodate such a development, or that the benefits of the proposed location significantly outweigh any dis-benefits that may arise.

9.1.13 This policy contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO1 (historic market town character), PO2 (rural service centre), PO7 (community wellbeing) and PO8 (natural and heritage assets).

9.1.14 A Community Action CASpo1 in Section B of the supports and complements this land use policy.



Willows site

10 Flooding and Sustainable Drainage

10.1.1 Morpeth has a combined sewer and surface water system near the town centre, and separate systems in the more recent developments away from the town centre.



Morpeth town centre flooding, 2008

10.1.2 Decisions about new housing have tended to be taken incrementally, without a strategic overview. New developments have fed into the existing combined sewerage system in Morpeth, which tends to overflow following heavy rain, and also discharged surface water to the many burns feeding into the River Wansbeck. In recent years weather conditions have challenged the existing drainage network, leading to numerous serious localised surface water issues and discharges into burns have exacerbated the situation. Historically the town is susceptible to flooding from the River Wansbeck, while Hepscoth, which lies on the River Blyth system and not the Wansbeck, also has serious localised flooding issues in intense weather conditions. In 2008 nearly 1000 properties in the Morpeth Neighbourhood Area were damaged and many people evacuated from their homes for months on end, causing widespread distress and cost. A further serious incident followed in 2012. It is in the light of this history that the flood policies in the Neighbourhood Plan should be particularly robust.



New flood defences at High Stanners

10.1.3 Ideally, there should be a comprehensive long term strategy in the Neighbourhood Plan and emerging Core Strategy to achieve optimal drainage solutions for new development within the Morpeth Neighbourhood Area. However, recent planning decisions to allow significant numbers of new houses have been taken in isolation, so the scope for such a strategy has already been much reduced.

10.1.4 Work with all parties involved in flood risk management must continue in order to manage and reduce flood risk and to create robust local policies using a whole system model that includes the promotion of grey water and sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

Policy Inf1 – Flooding and Sustainable Drainage

Development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they will minimise flood risk to people, property and infrastructure from all potential sources by:

- A. 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.**
- B. Ensuring that the development will not increase the risk of flooding in particular areas known to have experienced flooding.**
- C. Ensuring that development proposals separate, minimise and control surface water runoff, with sustainable drainage systems being the preferred approach.**
 - i. Surface water should be disposed of in accordance with the hierarchy of preference, which states that surface water should be directed to:**
 - **Infiltration (i.e. a soakaway), or if that is not feasible due to underlying ground conditions or site constraints,**
 - **A watercourse, unless there is no alternative or suitable receiving watercourse available;**
 - **A surface water sewer;**
 - **A combined sewer 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 must match the equivalent greenfield run-off rate for the same rainfall event and wherever possible should aim to reduce the existing greenfield run-off rate. Where previously developed sites are to be developed, surface water run-off rates should aim to discharge surface water at the equivalent greenfield run-off rate. Where this is impractical, discharge rates shall be reduced by a minimum of 50% of the existing site run-off rate subject to viability testing in accordance with paragraph 173 of the Framework.**
- D. Incorporating robust drainage plans for the lifetime of the development which address design, construction and maintenance of sustainable drainage features, and that are clear and detailed. Maintenance plans should have regular timescales and accountability (including financial responsibility) spelt out.**

10.1.5 This policy contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO3 (accommodating growth), and PO6 (reducing flood risk).



School pupils viewing the Morpeth Protection Scheme

11 Education

11.1.1 Policy and legislative changes have resulted in Local Management of Schools by Governing Bodies of Schools in England. This has reduced the role of English Local Education Authorities (LEAs), resulting in schools being largely autonomous, and the LEAs reduced to having responsibility for ensuring a sufficient supply of school places and a supporting role in the provision of education.

11.1.2 The Middle Schools and High School in the Morpeth Neighbourhood Area are currently run by the Three Rivers Trust, which is completely independent of LEA control, with the First Schools in Morpeth being run independently with support from an Early Years and Schools Service Education Trust set up by the County Council.

11.1.3 The Morpeth Schools Partnership represents a considerable economic asset, and the quality of education can be regarded as a key driver in the future growth of the town and the local housing market. However, whilst all the Morpeth schools are full, or almost full, the LEA reports that demographic trends indicate that, overall, First Schools in the MNP area will experience falling rolls within historical catchment areas, and that this is unlikely to be reversed entirely by additional housing to be provided within the Plan period. Morpeth schools attract considerable numbers of pupils from outside catchments, and it is vital for their continued sustainability in the short to medium term that they continue to attract pupils from a wider area. However, this should decrease as a necessity as the Plan period moves forward. As the Plan area's population grows over the Plan period and beyond, it is also vital that our schools are able to offer sufficient places to cater for that growth.

11.1.4 One area of concern is that two First Schools on the extremities of the town have one form entry and do not have sufficient places for housing growth that is already approved in their immediate areas i.e. Stobhillgate First in the South and All Saints in the North.

11.1.5 Since the success of schools in the Plan area is in the best interests of children and the local economy, expansion of existing schools should be accommodated. There may be circumstances where site conditions do not allow for expansion, leading to a need for relocation to be considered as the best option to cater for the required growth. Therefore, there may be a need for appropriate sites for new schools within the Plan area. Additionally, public consultation raised concerns about the condition of schools and the need for good quality buildings and facilities that are well maintained.

11.1.6 Travel to school is a major factor leading to congestion in Morpeth. The location of Morpeth's schools generates traffic flow through the town centre at school start and finishing times, especially the morning peak travel period. Although the central location of Morpeth First School (known as "Goosehill") is valued by many, it is in a particularly awkward position in the congested Telford Bridge area.

Policy Edu1 – Expansion of Schools

Proposals for the expansion of existing schools in the Plan area will be supported where it can be demonstrated that: -

- A. expansion would not exacerbate existing access related or traffic circulation problems, or that suitable mitigation measures are being brought forward as part of the proposal;**
- B. the development would not result in a significant loss of amenity to local residents or other adjacent users; and**
- C. the development does not conflict with other Plan policies or proposals.**

11.1.7 This policy contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO2 (rural service centre), PO3 (accommodating growth) and PO7 (community wellbeing).

Policy Edu2 – New Schools

Where expansion of an existing school is not possible, and / or a proposal for a new school is brought forward, the proposal will be supported where it can be demonstrated that: -

- A. the development would be safely accessible by pedestrians and cyclists and is well related to bus routes and/or there is adequate provision for waiting school buses to park;**
- B. the development has appropriate vehicular access and does not adversely impact upon traffic circulation;**
- C. the development would not result in a significant loss of amenity to local residents or other adjacent uses; and**
- D. the development does not conflict with other Plan policies or proposals.**

11.1.8 This policy contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO2 (rural service centre), PO3 (accommodating growth) and PO7 (community wellbeing).

12 Proposals Map

12.1.1 The Proposals Map, an integral part of the Neighbourhood Plan, is published as a separate document.

The Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan

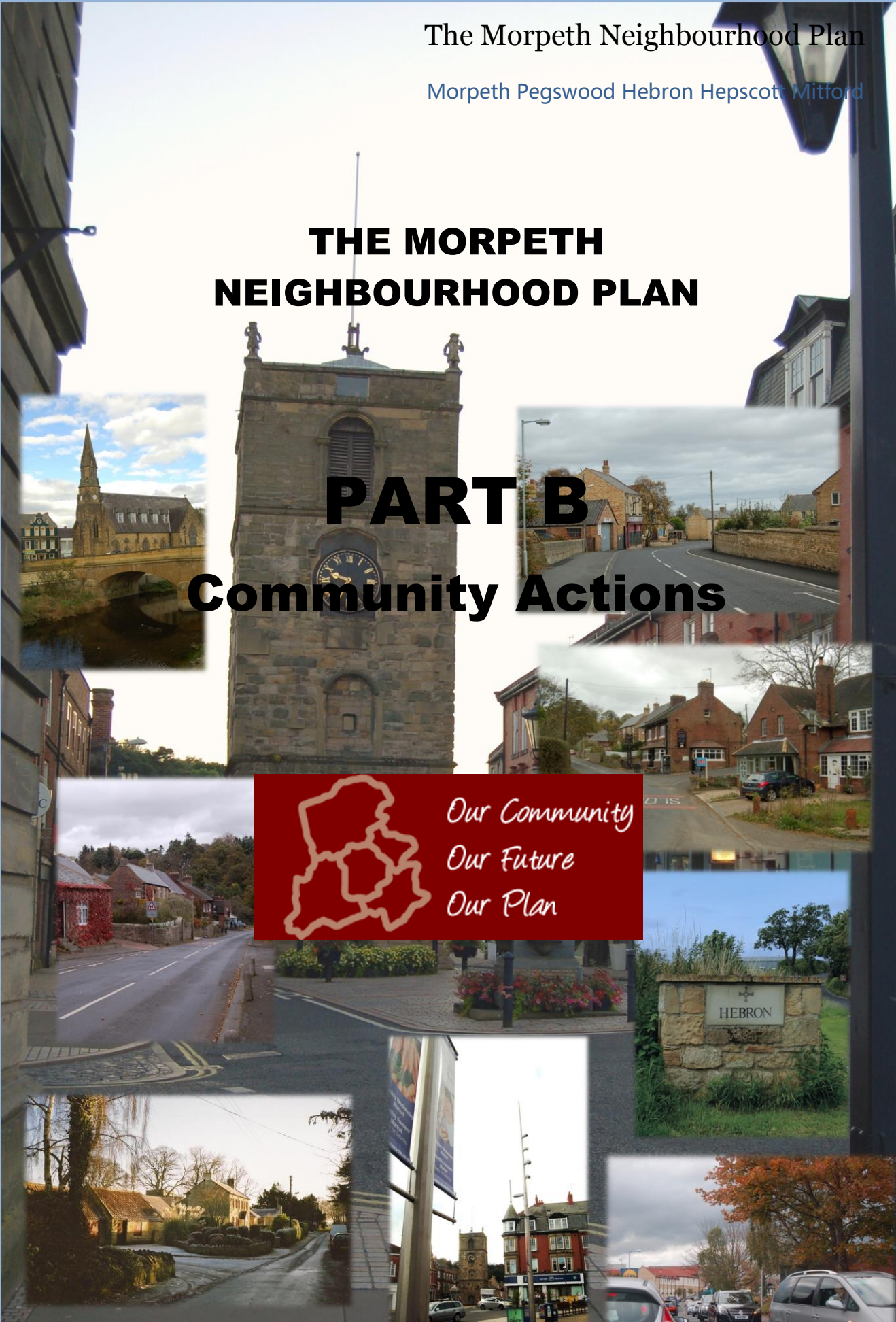
Morpeth Pegswood Hebron Hepscott Mitford

THE MORPETH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

PART B Community Actions



*Our Community
Our Future
Our Plan*



13 Introduction

13.1.1 These Community Actions have two purposes: -

- a) to establish a framework of commitments and actions that the Town and parish councils need to undertake to deliver the Vision, Objectives and planning policies of the Plan. If needed, these may be developed into a Neighbourhood Implementation Plan
- b) to cover those actions that are natural to a community-based plan, but which cannot be expressed or framed appropriately as planning policies.

13.1.2 The list follows the sequence of the sections in Part A and should be read in conjunction with the planning policies in the parallel sections.

14 Rural Setting, Sense of Place and Local Identity (Environment and Heritage) – Community Actions

14.1 Watercourse Maintenance

14.1.1 To fulfil their dual roles both as wildlife corridors and as effective land drainage routes, watercourses need to be maintained in good order by the appropriate responsible agencies.

Community Action CAEnv1 – Watercourse Maintenance

The Town and parish councils will request that appropriate agencies bring forward a strategy for tackling over grazing of banks, poor channel morphology and local pollution issues along wildlife corridors.

14.1.2 This community action contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO1 (historic market town character), PO7 (community wellbeing) and PO8 (natural and heritage assets).

14.2 Tree Management and Street Tree Replacement



Mature trees in Carlisle Park

14.2.1 A programme of street tree replacement, planting and tree management around buildings has been adopted in the MNP drawing upon the existing NCC tree strategy. This will be supported by guidance for dealing with existing problems, such as loss of light and root damage, and guidelines for planting around new development.

Community Action CAEnv2 – Tree Management

The MNP encourages the adoption of an active approach to tree management to include:

- A. a programme of street tree replacement and planting in Morpeth town centre;
- B. guidance to address problems arising from poor use of trees on existing developments, including the wrong choice of species for sites that are or will block light to properties and have potential for root / subsidence damage; and
- C. establishing guidelines for planting of appropriate trees in new developments.

The Town and parish councils and other appropriate organisations will develop and establish a protocol for responsible active tree management, minimising loss or damage to existing trees.

14.2.2 This community action contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO1 (historic market town character), PO3 (accommodating growth), PO7 (community wellbeing) and PO8 (natural and heritage assets).

14.3 Heritage Assets



Bridge Street from the Chantry

14.3.1 There is an existing local list of valued but under-protected buildings and monuments. This list will be developed with a view to adding new items to support their conservation against future threats.

Community Action CAHer1 – Locally Valued Heritage Assets and Heritage Assets at Risk of Harm

The Town and parish councils and other appropriate organisations, working in conjunction with NCC conservation team and local organisations, will agree lists of key local assets and unprotected buildings that are valued locally and which may be under threat.

14.3.2 This community action contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO1 (historic market town character), PO2 (rural service centre), PO5 (character of villages) and PO8 (natural and heritage assets). It will inform policies Her1, Her2, and Her3 in Part A of the Plan.

14.3.3 Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance. Their special character derives from many factors including individual buildings, building groups, the relationship between those buildings with open spaces, architectural detailing, materials, views, colours, landscaping and street furniture. The Morpeth Conservation Area was designated in 1970; but the scheduled review in 2003 was not undertaken. This Plan supports a review of the Morpeth Conservation Area including its existing boundaries together with preparation of a character appraisal and a management plan.

14.4 Locally Important Vistas

14.4.1 Within each settlement there are vistas that residents cherish or feel are important, for example, the view of Morpeth Castle from the Chantry footbridge and Wansbeck Street. The area around the castle has been recently cleared allowing an unobstructed view from the town. A visual appraisal involving the Town and parish councils, civic and antiquarian societies will be undertaken to identify other key vistas that might be threatened by future development.

Community Action CAHer2 – Important Vistas

The Town and parish councils and other appropriate organisations, working in conjunction with NCC conservation team and local organisations, will develop a strategy to protect important vistas in the Plan area. This will include agreeing a list of important vistas (setting or view of a heritage asset) which merit protection, outlining the reason for their selection in relation to a character assessment of the local area, and assessing whether possible new developments might affect them or could make a positive contribution to them.

14.4.2 This community action contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO1 (historic market town character), PO4 (sustainable development of Pegswood), PO5 (character of villages), PO7 (community wellbeing) and PO8 (natural and heritage assets).

Safeguarding Heritage Assets

14.4.3 The Scheduled Monument at Newminster Abbey in Morpeth is on English Heritage's Buildings at Risk Register. There are a number of locally important historic buildings and sites in and around the town centre that have been identified as vacant or in need of improved maintenance. These include The Willows and Beechfield, the Court House, the old Girls Grammar School, the Registry Office, the Old Gaol and the Queens Head hotel. Scheduled Monuments at Mitford Castle and Lady Chapel and Lady's Well in Bothal Woods, are in need of improved maintenance. There are several examples of agricultural, railway, industrial and mining heritage features in the Plan area that contribute to the local heritage and are in a poor state of repair. There were race courses on both Morpeth Common and Cottingwood Common and their historic features are in danger of being lost.

Community Action CAHer3 - Safeguarding Heritage Assets

Proposals to safeguard, conserve and/or enhance the area's heritage assets will be supported. The following projects have been identified:

- A. Review of the Morpeth Conservation Area and preparation of the Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan supported by the introduction of Article 4 Directions where appropriate;**

- B. Agree the list of locally important heritage assets;**
- C. Secure funding for the restoration and future maintenance of and, where appropriate, alternative uses for buildings at risk;**
- D. Improve the appearance of the urban realm in Morpeth town centre by ensuring the Market Place, footways, alleyways and yards are well maintained using appropriate materials; that an agreed range of street furniture and street lighting is used; that shop signs are well designed and traffic signage is kept to a minimum; and**
- E. Safeguarding the open areas within and adjacent to Morpeth town centre and within the villages.**

14.4.4 This Community Action helps to deliver Plan Objective PO8 (natural and heritage assets).

Justification

14.4.5 The Community Action aims to secure measures to better appreciate the character and significance of the historic town centre. This is in order to improve its conservation and management and to ensure that any new development in the town centre is designed appropriately to a high quality to enhance the area. The review should include an assessment of the important vistas that contribute to the setting of the conservation area and significant historic assets such as Morpeth Castle.



Collingwood House, Oldgate

15 Local Economy - Community Actions

15.1 Strengthening the Morpeth Visitor Economy

15.1.1 Improvement and expansion of the visitor economy is a key element of the Plan's economic strategy. Much of this involves activity that cannot be covered by planning policies alone.

15.1.2 This following community action will be applied in conjunction with Policies Emp1, Emp4 and Emp6 in Part A of the Plan.

Community Action CAEmp1 – Improving the Visitor Economy

Morpeth Town Council working in partnership with Northumberland County Council, Greater Morpeth Development Trust and other appropriate local organisations, will promote and support measures that strengthen Morpeth’s visitor economy and its role as a tourism hub for the region and which either:

- A. increases the number and range of visitor attractions;**
- B. improves the range and choice of visitor accommodation;**
- C. improves the range and choice of food and drink establishments; or,**
- D. improves the evening economy.**

15.1.3 This community action contributes to the delivery of Plan Objective PO2 (rural service centre) and PO3 (accommodating growth).



Sanderson Arcade

15.2 Employment Land Supply and Distribution

15.2.1 Local promotion, marketing and coordination of employment land is needed to ensure appropriate and sustainable development that delivers the Plan’s Vision and Objectives.

Community Action CAEmp2 – Employment Land Supply

Morpeth Town Council working in partnership with Northumberland County Council, Greater Morpeth Development Trust, the surrounding parishes and other appropriate local organisations, will seek to maintain a continuous supply of employment land and business premises. The opening up of the West Lane End and East Lane End Employment Sites, facilitated by the development of the Morpeth Northern Bypass, will be a key delivery priority.

15.2.2 This community action contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO2 (rural service centre) and PO3 (accommodating growth).

Community Action CAEmp3 – Employment Land at Pegswood

Requirement for further employment land allocation in Pegswood beyond the Plan period will be subject to investigation and safeguarding through the Green Belt designation process in the Northumberland Core Strategy.

15.2.3 This community action will be undertaken in conjunction with policies Emp4, Emp5 and Emp6 in Part A of the Plan and contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO2 (rural service centre), PO3 (accommodating growth) and PO9 (connectivity).

15.2.4 There may be scope in the longer term for additional employment uses on the field alongside and to the south of the present Sanders waste management facility.

16 Housing – Community Actions

16.1.1 Housing work for the Neighbourhood Plan has been based on guiding principles, which have helped to decide WHAT should be built, WHERE it should be built, and HOW this should be achieved. Some of these principles have been incorporated into Policy Sus1 of the Plan. Other more housing specific principles are set out below.

- Morpeth will be acknowledged as a main town for future population growth;
- a range of well-designed property types and sizes should be provided including affordable housing and housing for younger and older people, so as to promote a balanced housing market;
- new housing should contribute to well designed, high quality living environments and neighbourhoods, and maintain local distinctiveness;
- housing development must be linked to sufficient capacity and investment in local services, transport and employment opportunities in sustainable locations: e.g. schools, health services, roads, water, sewerage, sewage treatment capacity, public transport;
- advantage should be taken of opportunities presented by the new Morpeth Northern Bypass, scheduled for completion in Autumn 2016;
- use of previously developed land (brownfield sites) should be prioritised where viable in preference to greenfield sites;
- mixed development (e.g. housing and commercial) should be considered to promote viability of the local economy, and to enhance sustainability of Morpeth and Pegswood;
- effective use should be made of existing housing stock and other vacant property;
- high standards of energy efficiency in all housing stock should be encouraged.

16.2 The St Georges Hospital Site Masterplan

16.2.1 The development of the St George's Hospital site represents a significant urban extension to Morpeth. Policy PPHou2 sets a requirement for a detailed Masterplan covering the whole of the site. Community Action CAHou1 highlights the urgency of bringing forward that Masterplan in time to inform individual full planning applications and so ensure an integrated sustainable urban extension. This action complies with NPPF requirements (Para. 7 and elsewhere), which encourages the co-ordination of infrastructure provision in relation to major developments.

Community Action CAHou1 - St George's Hospital Site Masterplan

The Town Council will engage actively with NCC, the Homes & Communities Agency and relevant organisations as a matter of urgency to bring forward the Masterplan for the whole of the St George's Hospital site prior to commencement of development on the site.

16.2.2 This community action contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO1 (historic market town character), PO3 (accommodating growth), PO6 (reducing flood risk), PO7 (community wellbeing) and PO9 (connectivity).

16.3 Effective Use of the Existing Housing Stock

16.3.1 Some 80% of the housing in the Plan area that will exist in 20 years' time, i.e. by the end of the Plan period, already exists today. It is therefore important that the Plan promotes improved housing conditions in the existing stock and its appropriate occupation, to ensure that it continues to effectively meet housing needs in the future.

16.3.2 The NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to identify and bring back into residential use empty housing and buildings in line with local housing and empty homes strategies (Para. 51). The aim is to ensure that the current housing stock is able to meet the needs of the future.

Community Action CAHou2 – Effective Use of the Housing Stock

The Town and parish councils and other relevant organisations, working with NCC and local organisations, will promote: -

- A. the improvement of the condition and energy efficiency of the existing housing stock in the Plan area;**
- B. the maintenance of low vacancy rates in the housing stock of the Plan area;**
- C. the conversion of appropriate properties, not currently used for residential purposes, where there is no longer a demand for that use (e.g. a retail property or former storage over a shop), to provide residential accommodation in a sustainable location; and**
- D. measures to enable residents who are under-occupying or over-crowding their current home in the Plan area, to have the option to move to more appropriately sized accommodation.**

Subject to funding from developer contributions, the Town and parish councils will develop an 'Existing Housing Plan' and establish a 'Co-ordinator' post to implement a co-ordinated approach in relation to the existing housing stock and deliver this Community Action.

16.3.3 This community action contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO1 (historic market town character), PO3 (accommodating growth), PO4 (sustainable development of Pegswood), PO5 (character of villages) and PO7 (community wellbeing).

17 Transport – Community Actions

17.1 Strategic Road Network

17.1.1 The road network in Morpeth is constrained by pinchpoints at the railway bridge and the Telford Bridge main river crossing, with congestion exacerbated by the concentration of housing south of the river and of facilities north of the river. Through traffic in the town centre may be reduced with the completion of the Northern Bypass in Autumn 2016, but the new developments at south Stobhill and south Loansdean are predicted to generate levels of traffic which will negate this reduction. In addition, the economic strategy encouraging visitors to the town centre could further increase congestion unless measures are taken to promote sustainable modes of transport.



The Telford Bridge, Morpeth

17.1.2 A number of highways modifications have been identified to improve the road network in and around Morpeth, but these need to be developed by the Highways Authority and/or the Highways England and cannot be brought forward as planning policies in this Plan.

17.1.3 Community Action CATra1 identifies the proposed road improvements and commits to bringing them forward.

Community Action CATra1 – Strategic Road Improvements

Measures to develop and bring forward: -

- A. at the earliest opportunity, a road link between the Morpeth Northern Bypass and KEVI school;**
- B. a Stobhill-Loansdean Link Road;**
- C. junction improvements at Coopies Lane/A192 (Morpeth Station), Sun Inn/A197 at St George’s Hospital/foot of A197 (Whorral Bank)**
- D. four way junctions on the A1 Trunk Road at Whalton Road or Clifton; and**
- E. an assessment of the need for a further river crossing;**

will be encouraged and supported, working in conjunction with NCC and the Highways England.

17.1.4 This community action contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO2 (rural service centre) and PO9 (connectivity).

17.1.5 Community Action Tra2 sets out options outside the planning system to reduce town centre congestion, and is intended to complement Policy Tra2 in Part A of the Plan.

Community Action CATra2 –Town Centre Traffic

The Town and parish councils and other relevant organisations, working in conjunction with NCC Highways will actively promote measures to: -

- A. remove unnecessary vehicular traffic from the central area through comprehensive signing of alternative roads, and thereby to improve the local environment within the shopping area;**
- B. facilitate making more road space available for walking and cycling, and pedestrian priority within the Primary Shopping Area;**
- C. ensure that an appropriate maintenance regime for Telford Bridge is**

adopted; and
D. reduce conflicting vehicle turning movements at Telford Bridge and improve traffic flow.

17.1.6 This community action contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO1 (historic market town character), PO2 (rural service centre) and PO7 (community wellbeing).

17.2 Sustainable Transport

17.2.1 In the interests of the environment and the safety and wellbeing of residents, the Plan encourages a modal shift towards walking, cycling and use of public transport, and the minimisation of car use.

17.2.2 Policy Tra3 in Part A gives planning policy support to measures to develop footpath and cycleway routes and networks. The Town and parish councils, working in conjunction with NCC and other relevant organisations will supplement this with appropriate measures outside the planning system.

17.3 Car Parking Provision

17.3.1 Policy Tra3 Clause E in Part A sets out requirements for provision of car parking in new developments. This Community Action supplements that policy with a commitment to manage and provide adequate public car parking capacity as the town expands.

Community Action CAtra3 – Car Parking
Morpeth Town Council and other relevant organisations, will work with NCC to monitor car park use and occupancy, to plan and ensure an adequate supply of car and cycle parking spaces, and to manage available car parking space, so as to discourage demand in excess of available supply in accordance with the agreed standard.

17.3.2 This community action contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO2 (rural service centre) and PO3 (accommodating growth).



Town centre car parking

17.4 Public Transport

17.4.1 Good public transport services should provide acceptable alternatives to car use, so reducing congestion and potentially pollution and carbon emissions.

17.4.2 Reliable and frequent rail services can contribute both to sustainable local travel options and long distance and intercity travel.



Morpeth train station

Community Action CATra4 – Improved Rail Services and Facilities

Rail providers are encouraged to make improvements to local rail services to Morpeth and Pegswood, and an increased number of stopping services on the ECML and Cross Country services; improvements to local stations and their facilities; and support measures to improve the accessibility of local stations.

17.4.3 This community action contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO2 (rural service centre), PO4 (sustainable development of Pegswood) and PO9 (connectivity).

17.4.4 Morpeth also has the most active bus station in the county with services to Newcastle; to Alnwick, Berwick and the mid and north Northumberland coast; and to SE Northumberland. Local in-town services and services to the rural villages to the north and west are relatively poor. The Morpeth 'bus service hub' contributes considerably to the existing day-visitor economy, particularly amongst older people who benefit from free bus travel.



Morpeth bus station

Community Action CATra5 – Bus Routes and Facilities

Bus providers are encouraged to maintain and improve the existing network of bus routes, and to protect and enhance passenger facilities at Morpeth Bus Station.

17.4.5 This community action contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO2 (rural service centre) and PO9 (connectivity).

Community Action CATra6 - Integrated Public Transport System

All public transport providers are encouraged to work together to ensure an integrated public transport system that encourages non-car use and provides maximum benefit to the community, including a park & ride system.

17.4.6 This community action contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO2 (rural service centre), PO7 (community wellbeing) and PO9 (connectivity).

18 Leisure and Culture – Community Action

18.1.1 The following community action will be applied in conjunction with Policy Spo2 in Section A of the Plan.

Community Action CASpo1 - Sports and Leisure Facility

The Town and parish councils will work with NCC, Active Northumberland, the Greater Morpeth Development Trust and other relevant organisations to upgrade, extend or rebuild a sports and leisure centre, and to build an arts and performance centre, possibly including a heritage museum visitor attraction, and establish sustainable arrangements for managing and running that facility in the Plan period. If it is deemed desirable to relocate existing sports and leisure activities, the best alternative use for the existing Morpeth Riverside Leisure Centre should be found that makes a strong financial contribution to the new sports and leisure facilities.

18.1.2 This community action contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO1 (historic market town character), PO2 (rural service centre), PO7 (community wellbeing) and PO8 (natural and heritage assets).

19 Capacity and Performance of the Drainage System and Sewage Treatment - Community Action

19.1.1 Further investment to increase sewage treatment works capacity at Morpeth and Pegswood will be required to allow for future development over the Plan period. The capacity of the sewerage network is similarly under pressure and will need to be increased over the plan period, both to accommodate further development and to mitigate flood risk. An extension to Morpeth sewage works started in April 2013 will accommodate an additional 700 houses. However, Northumbrian Water Ltd has confirmed that there is sufficient space at the existing Parish Haugh site for the expansion of capacity in line with likely Plan housing requirements. Further sewage treatment capacity and expansion of the sewerage network will be needed to deal with new housing within the Plan period.

19.1.2 The following community action will be applied in conjunction with Policy Inf1 – Flooding and Sustainable Drainage in Section A of the Plan.

Community Action CAInf1 – Drainage System Capacity and Performance

The Town and Parish Councils will work with developers and agencies including Northumbrian Water, NCC as the Local Lead Flood Authority and the Environment Agency to reduce flood risk wherever possible across the Plan area through the use of sustainable water management measures throughout the Plan period.

19.1.3 This community action contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO3 (accommodating growth) and PO6 (reducing flood risk).



Development of Morpeth Sewage Treatment Works

20 Broadband

20.1.1 The County Council has prepared a Local Broadband Plan for the County that seeks to accelerate the delivery of a superfast broadband infrastructure. This should address current deficiencies in broadband services especially in the more rural parts of the MNP area. The infrastructure investment is intended to help build a dynamic and knowledge based business economy, help to eliminate the digital divide and tackle the inequalities in education provision created by the disparities in quality and consistency of broadband services from the school and home.

21 Education Community Action

21.1.1 The Plan supports schools in the Plan area, the Local Authority and the associated Trust boards in securely planning education provision.

21.1.2 The following community action will be applied in conjunction with Policy Edu2 – Expansion of Schools in Section A of the MNP.

Community Action CAEdu1 – Planning Education

The Town and Parish Councils will work with the associated Trust boards and the Local Authority to ensure that there are sufficient school places in advance of demand; in appropriate geographical locations; and that admission policies are such that the schools will accommodate: -

- A. pupils from within the Plan area as a priority; and**

B. those who wish to attend but live outside the Plan area, especially those who are either already within the system or have siblings already within the system.

21.1.3 This community action contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO2 (rural service centre), PO3 (accommodating growth) and PO7 (community wellbeing).

22 Community Infrastructure and Community Benefit

22.1.1 Provision of the necessary physical and community infrastructure arising from proposed development is a critical component of the Plan. Many diverse elements of required infrastructure are not necessarily of direct commercial benefit to developers, but nevertheless are essential and their provision needs to be timely if infrastructure deficiencies are to be avoided. These include school provision; improvements to the road network; pedestrian facilities; increased and improved sewerage capacity; affordable housing; flood defences; playing fields; allotments and playgrounds. Other potential community infrastructure projects include environmental schemes; community facilities; community initiatives; sports, arts and leisure facilities; cycle and public transport improvements.



Morpeth Sewage Treatment Works

22.1.2 Funding sources for infrastructure are equally diverse including government departments and agencies, often in partnership with the local authority. Utility companies are responsible for funding new provision and improvements to water, gas, electricity, sewerage, telecommunications and broadband networks, both through regulated customer charges and through developer agreements. Developers are directly responsible for funding integral parts of new developments, for example roads, sewerage, utility services, cycle ways and footpaths. Agreement with the responsible utilities companies, local authority and the Environment Agency (EA) is required in order to link these dedicated infrastructure developments to the main networks. They may also be required to contribute into a ring-fenced fund for combined infrastructure provision for a combination of developments.

22.1.3 Planning obligations under the Town and Country Planning Acts related to infrastructure usually take the form of Section 106 (S106) agreements. These involve developer contributions towards the provision of facilities or infrastructure to reduce impact or enhance community facilities in the area. The Northumberland Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is likely to be adopted some time after the County Core Strategy and will, in part, replace Section 106 agreements in Northumberland. Resources raised through a levy on all development will be used to fund key infrastructure improvements across the County identified in the County Core Strategy and its implementation plan. There must be alignment between the MNP and the County Local Plan to ensure that one or more of these key County infrastructure schemes are within the Neighbourhood Plan area. This is particularly crucial given the housing approvals already set against the emerging Local Plan housing target, and the scale of

potential additional approvals resulting from applications under consideration or plans at the pre-application stage.

22.1.4 The CIL also has a local element: 25% of the resources raised through the county CIL on developments within the MNP area will come to the MNP area Town and parish councils. This 'Neighbourhood CIL' will be drawn on to fund key infrastructure and facilities identified in the MNP but not fully funded by the other funding streams.

22.1.5 In order to make best use of available funding infrastructure decisions, a community strategy for infrastructure will be prepared as part of the MNP implementation plan, which takes account of all the potential competing demands for the infrastructure funding arising from initially, Section 106 agreements and then the Northumberland Community Infrastructure Levy. Funding decisions will be taken on a case-by-case basis in the light of the overall community strategy and related to achieving optimal 'community benefit' from the funds available.

Community Action CACom1 – Community Infrastructure

The Town and parish councils, working with NCC and other relevant organisations, will: -

- A. prepare a community infrastructure strategy which considers all existing and likely competing demands for infrastructure funding arising from Section 106 agreements and the Northumberland Community Infrastructure Levy; and**
- B. make funding decisions on a case-by-case basis in the light of the overall community strategy and related to achieving optimal 'community benefit' from the funds available.**

22.1.6 This community action contributes to the delivery of Plan Objectives: PO3 (accommodating growth) and PO7 (community wellbeing).

23 Appendix A – Designated Green & Open Spaces

23.1 Local Green Space (Policy Env2)

The following locations, shown on the Proposals Map, have been designated as Local Green Space having been assessed as meeting the criteria in NPPF (para 77).

LG1 Carlisle Park: (Grid Ref NZ 19755 85672)

Proximity	In the town centre
Beauty	Formal gardens & informal grass and woodland.
Heritage	Land donated to town of Morpeth by Countess of Carlisle in 1916, opened in 1929. Includes Ancient Monument sites of original 11 th century castle (Ha' Hill) and 13-14 th century Morpeth Castle. William Turner Garden opened in 2000.
Recreation	Play area & paddling pool. Tennis courts, bowling green, skateboard park etc. Aviary. Rowing boats.
Tranquillity	Riverside walk
Wildlife	Wooded area includes Castle Woods Local Wildlife Site. A mixture of mature and younger trees, including oak, beech, ash, sycamore and hazel; fox, roe deer, rabbits or grey wagtails, great spotted woodpecker, chiff chaff, robins; bluebells, wild garlic, wood anemones and wood sorrel; red and (sadly) grey squirrels.
Cherished	Green Flag winner every year 2004-14 (excl. 2006). Sports facilities are well used and the paddling pool is a big visitor attraction through the summer.
Size	11.8ha
SHLAA	No
Comments	Owned by Northumberland CC

LG2 Pond at County Hall: (Grid Ref NZ 20439 84252)

Proximity	Adjacent to housing estates and offices
Beauty	Naturalised pond
Heritage	Pond was pumping station on original Newcastle-Berwick rail line, featured on 1890 OS map.
Recreation	Very well used for walking, jogging, dog walking,
Tranquillity	Quiet location in busy office and suburban setting
Wildlife	Pond life and wetland habitat, including sighting of an otter. Drains into Catchburn/Coalburn.
Cherished	Cited by 27 respondents at Issues & Options; by 31 at draft Plan consultation. Local residents protest featured in Morpeth Herald 19th Feb 2015
Size	1.03ha
SHLAA	Adjacent to 6915, 3290
Comments	Owned by Northumberland CC

LG3 Farquhar Deuchar Park (Grid Ref NZ 20135 85392)

Proximity	Adjacent to A197 and Deuchar Park housing estate
Beauty	Major element leading to Mafeking roundabout contributing to green, open approach to Morpeth. Flower beds contributing significantly to town's repeated success in In Bloom competitions. Includes a "Field of Hope" made up of daffodils, an arboretum, with non-native specimen trees, and a mature tree belt.
Heritage	Was reclaimed by Farquhar Deuchar in the late 19 th Century for the people of Morpeth. The Park contains a Memorial Stone dedicated to Farquhar Deuchar
Recreation	Walking, dog walking
Tranquillity	Relative tranquility of trees next to busy road
Wildlife	Associated with mature tree belt. Part planted and maintained for wildflowers, bees etc (joint NWT/NCC "Growing Wild" project)
Cherished	Includes a "Field of Hope" made up of daffodils, an arboretum, with non-native specimen trees donated by Morpeth Rotary Club and local individuals, and a mature tree belt.
Size	2.94ha
SHLAA	No
Comments	Owned by Northumberland County Council, part of landscape corridor and southern gateway to town centre

LG4 High Stanners Riverside (Grid Ref NZ 19560 86205)

Proximity	Town centre
Beauty	Mature trees along river bank with views across river to steep bank and rear of 19th century town centre buildings
Heritage	Access to Stepping Stones, views of Collingwood's Poopdeck
Recreation	Riverside walk
Tranquillity	Riverside
Wildlife	Well established trees, wildlife corridor along river
Cherished	Local residents rejected first proposed EA flood defence scheme in 2003 largely due to impact on character of site.
Size	1.64ha
SHLAA	No
Comments	Flood defences

LG5 Millennium Green (Grid Ref NZ 19744 86038)

Proximity	Just off Newgate Street in town centre
Beauty	Delightful green haven in town centre
Heritage	Community Garden established in 2001; Millennium wildlife mosaics created by school children; Wicker statue of suffragette Emily Wilding Davidson sited there
Recreation	Much used as focus for peace and tranquillity in town centre. Community

	events throughout year: garden party, music, carol singing
Tranquillity	Peaceful haven in heart of town
Wildlife	Planting to support insects, birds etc.
Cherished	Green Pennant winner every year since 2003. Owned and managed by community group.
Size	563 sq. m.
SHLAA	No
Comments	www.millenniumgreenmorpeth.org.uk

LG6 Montrose Gardens Doorstep Green (Grid Ref NZ 19657 85438)

Proximity	One of three designated play areas in the Kirkhill part of the town – this area is located to the east of Kirkhill
Beauty	Open grassland in housing estate
Heritage	Restored wasteland, opened in 2005
Recreation	Informal play, toddlers' play area, walking, teen shelter, wooden sculptures and other civic art
Tranquillity	Can be peaceful in edge of Castle Woods
Wildlife	On edge of Castle Woods Local Wildlife Site, Carlisle Park
Cherished	Supported by High Church Action Group; cited by 3 respondents at Issues & Options
Size	0.552ha
SHLAA	No
Comments	Owned by Northumberland County Council

LG 7 The Kylins Secret Garden (Grid Ref NZ 19909 84700)

Proximity	In heart of new Loansdean Wood housing development and adjacent to The Kylins housing estate
Beauty	To be laid out afresh as a formal garden, possibly including a piece of artwork and surrounded by trees and shrubs
Heritage	Formerly the bowling green of Loansdean House, the original 1890's house on the site, built as residence for Farquhar Deuchar in the late 19 th century, with a plaque indicating its history. Explicitly retained as a formal garden through at least three changes of use or redevelopment.
Recreation	Informal recreation.
Tranquillity	Tranquil location in suburban estate
Wildlife	Site of mature trees and shrubs with associated wildlife
Cherished	Supported by Kylins Res Assocn; cited by 4 respondents at Issues and Options, by 3 at draft Plan. Now maintained at residents' expense.
Size	0.172ha
SHLAA	No
Comments	Designated under CMLP Policy MC7

23.2 Protected Open Space (Policy Env3)

The following locations, shown on the Proposals Map have been designated as Protected Open Space, in line with NPPF para 74:

In Morpeth:

County Hall: Fields	Deliberately retained as open space for public amenity when County Hall was built, includes football pitch registered with Sport England, but neglected. Popular for walking, dogwalking, informal ball-games. SHLAA sites part 6915, 3290
County Hall: Woodland strip - Southgate Wood	Part of the woodland that formed part of the grounds of the former 19 th Century Southgate Wood house.
Woodland strip along railway	Planted to screen the railway line. Donated by the Duke of Northumberland when County Hall was built in the 1980s.
Deuchar Park Estate: two open areas of land	Part of the original design of this residential estate and forming an essential part of its green, wooded character.
High Church: Storey Park football pitches	Well used football pitch with changing rooms in Community Centre. Adjacent to parish church with historic churchyard and so forming part of the setting
Kirkhill: Land between The Pastures and High Moor	Open space key to character of estate, dog walking, informal games
Land between Abbey Gate and Sylvan Close	One of three designated play areas in the Kirkhill part of the town; informal toddlers' and older children's play, ball games - includes an all-weather area (investment by original housing developers); dog walking; Includes copse of mature trees - excellent roosting and nesting place for birds; Supported and protected by residents through local councillors over very long period (30+ years)
Land between High House Lane, Westgate and Abbey Meadows	Open space key to character of estate, dog walking, informal games
Land between Turners Way, Pilgrims Way and Queensway	One of three designated play areas in the Kirkhill part of the town; informal toddlers' and older children's play, ball games - includes an all-weather area (investment by original housing developers); dog walking; Edged to south and west by pre-housing development hedgerow – excellent environment for nesting of birds and providing a food chain supporting large variety of birds (over 20 recorded); and, with proximity to Borough Woods and the Wansbeck Valley provides a track for a range of mammals; Supported and protected by residents through local councillors over very long period (30+ years)
Land along the northern edge of the estate (at the ends of Turners Way, Vanburgh Gardens, Falcon Hill and Downing Drive)	Open space key to character of estate and running alongside the Wansbeck Valley, dog walking, informal games

Various other small areas of land identified under CMDLP MC7	Open space key to character of estate, dog walking, informal games
The Kylins: Playing Field	Informal recreation, walking and dog walking. Fiercely protected by The Kylins Residents' Association during development procedures
Four small areas of land	Part of the character of the residential estate and important part of the ecological connectivity and green infrastructure.
Lancaster Park: Central Field	Important element of original Leech Estate. Well used for informal games, dog walking and pedestrian access across estate.
Leslie's View	At the entrance to Lancaster Park residential estate and an important aspect in the character of the area. Part of the Landscape Corridor
Loansdean: Heron's Field	Popular open space on edge of estate near town's south western boundary. Walking, dog walking. Organised picnics, ball games. Links to footpaths into the open countryside. Excellent roosting and nesting place for birds including blue, great and long tailed tits. Field is a link in ecological connectivity, which is at risk from new housing development to south. Field was created during the development of the New Loansdean Estate for the enjoyment of residents. Featured extensively in appeal representations by local residents re: Bellway South Loansdean development. S106 agreement with Bellway re: South Loansdean contributing towards NCC maintenance of site. Designated under CMLP Policy MC7
Frontage: Fairway & Long Drive	Green space with trees alongside the A197 into Morpeth and forming an important part of the Landscape Corridor that contributes to the character of Morpeth
Frontage - on the junction of The Fairway & the A197	Marks a gateway to Morpeth on the south west
Low Stanners: Land near cadet huts, Gas House Lane	Used by Scouts, Air Cadets, Army Cadets
Mafeking Park (between Allery Banks and Castle Square)	Steep bank, important for wildlife connectivity
Merley Gate: open land	The only green space within the Merley Gate housing development. Well used by local children and walkers
Stobhill: Avenues Football Pitch	Well used sports facilities in most deprived part of Morpeth, Groundwork project imminent (2016-17)
Land along East side of ECML, to East of County Hall rear car park	Lovely green area with mature trees, screening the railway line and well used by walkers and young children.
Land south of Whinham Way, between the east side of the ECML & Grange House, plus the elongated grassland to the East of this,	Part of the character of the residential estate and important part of the ecological connectivity and green infrastructure

including playground	
Land south west of Stobhill Farm roundabout between Stobhill south development site (SHLAA 3188) & the A192	Forms part of the Landscape Corridor at the south east entrance to Morpeth and makes a statement about the green character of the town
Land north west of Stobhill Farm roundabout – known as “Wembley”	Significant open tract of land at edge of housing estate, highly visible making a significant contribution to the green, open approach to the town. Very popular for walking, dog walking and informal ball games.
Land between Choppington Road & A196	Part of the Landscape Corridor and the last green area along that stretch of the A196 in Plan area
Near Turner Square	Wide landscape corridor, SHLAA 3181

In Pegswood:

Land between Bamburgh Drive and Dark Lane	At the eastern gateway entrance into the village and important to the general appearance and character of the village
Open land between Bentinck Crescent & Stanton Drive	Informal play area surrounded by housing
Land at western entrance to the village and the entrances to the Cookswell estate and Butterwell and Spencer Drives	Western gateway entrance into Pegswood regarded as important to the general appearance and character of the village, where recent environmental improvements have been carried out
Land on Hebron Avenue	Important green areas within Isos (housing association) owned estate
Land south of John Street	A small but locally valued green space surrounded by aged person’s bungalows and houses in the older part of Pegswood
Land within estate south of Stanton Drive	Important informal play area and used for walking, public right of way to larger field outside settlement boundary.
Kirkharle Drive	Informal play area
Land between Castle Way and the railway	Locally valued green area and with footpath route through to the Community Woods
Areas of land south of Edward Street	Local valued green areas linked by a footpath between housing estate and mainline railway
Open land around Shadfen Crescent, Wansbeck Crescent & Whitefield Crescent	Locally valued green areas within a housing estate
Land north of Stowe Gardens and Longleat Gardens	Intended to be a landscape corridor as development comes forward

In Hebron:

"Village Green": grass area adjacent to the entrance to St Cuthbert's church	Used for village gatherings and games, heart of the village
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In Hepscott:

Community Orchard	Community area used as a village green at special times and a cherished amenity every day; being developed as a community orchard
Woodland along C132 between Fir Tree Copse & South Lodge Wood	Strip of woodland within the village, maintaining its rural character
L-shaped area of light woodland & hedgerow between Thornlea & A192 & along C132 adjacent to Thornlea	Eastern 'gateway' to the village

In Mitford:

Three areas of open grass on Fontside	Registered village greens used for village events such as the Mitford Fair, for games and play. Important for the character of the village.
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24 Appendix B – Definitions Applying to Policy Emp1

The definitions of Town Centres and Town Centre Uses, the Sequential Test and the Impact Test are provided in the NPPF and the NPPG. Beyond the policy framework set out, the plan will also accord with the NPPF whilst taking into account local circumstances.

Town Centre Uses. NPPF Para 23

Retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development.

Town Centre. NPPF Annex 2:Glossary

Town centre: Area defined on the local authority's proposal map, including the primary shopping area and areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area. References to town centres or centres apply to city centres, town centres, district centres and local centres but exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance. Unless they are identified as centres in Local Plans, existing out-of-centre developments, comprising or including main town centre uses, do not constitute town centres.

Edge of Centre. NPPF Annex 2:Glossary

Edge of centre: For retail purposes, a location that is well connected and up to 300 metres from the primary shopping area. For all other main town centre uses, a location within 300 metres of a town centre boundary. For office development, this includes locations outside the town centre but within 500 metres of a public transport interchange. In determining whether a site falls within the definition of edge of centre, account should be taken of local circumstances.

Sequential Test. NPPG Paragraph: 008 Reference ID: 2b-008-20140306

The sequential test guides main town centre uses towards town centre locations first, then, if no town centre locations are available, to edge of centre locations, and, if neither town centre locations nor edge of centre locations are available, to out of town centre locations, with preference for accessible sites which are well connected to the town centre. It supports the viability and vitality of town centres by placing existing town centres foremost in both plan-making and decision-taking.

The Impact Test.

NPPG Paragraph: 013 Reference ID: 2b-013-20140306 to Paragraph: 018 Reference ID: 2b-018-20140306

The purpose of the test is to ensure that the impact over time (up to five years (ten for major schemes)) of certain out of centre and edge of centre proposals on existing town centres is not significantly adverse. The test relates to retail, office and leisure development (not all main town centre uses) which are not in accordance with an up to date Local Plan and outside of existing town centres. It is important that the impact is assessed in relation to all town centres that may be affected, which are not necessarily just those closest to the proposal and may be in neighbouring authority areas.

25 Appendix C – List of Abbreviations Used

ABT – Ashington-Blyth-Tyne (railway)
BCR – Basic Conditions Report
CA – Community Action
CDS – Commercial Demand Study
CES – County (Northumberland) Economic Strategy
CIL – (Northumberland) Community Infrastructure Levy
CMBC – Castle Morpeth Borough Council
DCLG – Department for Communities and Local Government
EA – Environment Agency
ECML – East Coast Main Line
ELS – Employment Land Study
GMDT – Greater Morpeth Development Trust
KEVI – King Edward V1 (School)
LEA – Local Education Authority
LGR – Local Government Reorganisation
LGS – Local Green Space
LWS – Local Wildlife Sites
LPA – Local Planning Authority
MNB – Morpeth Northern Bypass
MNP – Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan
NCC – Northumberland County Council
NE – North East
NPPF – National Planning Policy Framework
NPPG – National Planning Practice Guidance
PO – Plan Objective
SE – South East
SEA – Strategic Environmental Assessment
SENUG – SE Northumberland Rail User Group
SHLAA – Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
SuDS – Sustainable Drainage Systems