

# ACOMB NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2017 - 2032

## SUBMISSION DRAFT PLAN – MARCH 2018



# ACOMB NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

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### FOREWORD

We are very pleased to publicise this Submission version of the Acomb Neighbourhood Plan (The Plan). Its purpose is to set out policies to guide the development of Acomb over the next 15 years. It complements the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and informs developers of policies that they will need to consider when submitting development proposals in the Plan area.

The Plan is based on a Vision and six Objectives, which were developed following public consultation, and were agreed following a Public Questionnaire in 2017.

The Plan sets out ten policies to help us achieve these objectives and will help with protecting the environment and promoting positive development that will benefit our community in an effective way.

The Plan has a statutory basis and will influence future development throughout the Parish.

Your vote in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan will help to protect, preserve and enhance the ancient Parish of Acomb.

Signed.....

Cllr Norman Robson  
Chair of Acomb Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Signed.....

Cllr Charles Enderby  
Chair of Acomb Parish Council

# **ACOMB NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The Parish Council was designated as a qualifying body entitled to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish of Acomb. Northumberland County Council formally designated the whole of the Parish area as a Neighbourhood Area on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2015 under Section 61G (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Acomb Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was appointed by the Parish Council to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Parish of Acomb (the Plan area).

This Plan has been prepared by a Steering Group consisting of members of the Parish Council and other local representatives.

### **What is a Neighbourhood Plan?**

A Neighbourhood Plan, once adopted, will become part of the Development Plan for the area. It will sit alongside other statutory plans. At the moment, that is the Tynedale Local Plan (2000) (saved policies) and the Tynedale Core Strategy (2007). This Plan will be used by Development Management Planning Officers at the County Council to determine planning applications in the Plan area.

### **The Neighbourhood Area**

The Acomb Neighbourhood Plan area (Figure 1) is shown on the map below. The Neighbourhood Plan Area lies entirely within Northumberland County Council (in what was previously Tynedale District Council area prior to the Unitary changes).

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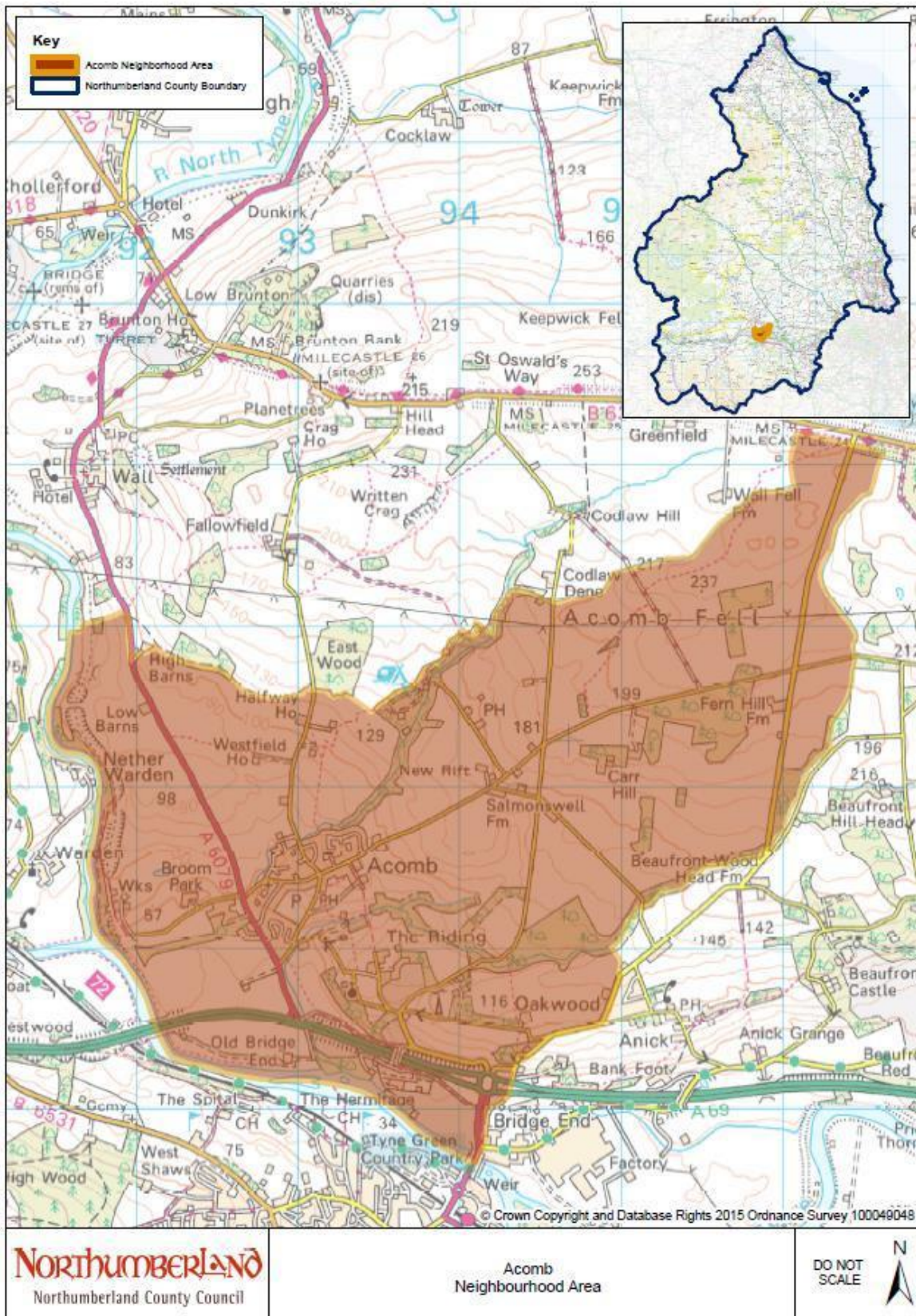


Figure 1: Acomb Neighbourhood Area

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### **National and Local Planning Policy Context:**

The Acomb Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with strategic policies contained in other relevant planning documents. Northumberland County Council have provided a list of 'strategic policies' within which the Plan must be in conformity. Further detail on this is contained in the Basic Conditions Statement.

The National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) (NPPF) provides the most up to date advice from Central Government on Planning Policy. The NPPF supersedes policy contained in some of the local planning documents.

Sustainable Development is at the heart of planning, and should be a 'golden thread' running through all planning documents. Sustainable Development is also at the heart of the community aspirations in Acomb.

The NPPF states that Neighbourhood Plans should: *"provide a practical framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made with a high degree of predictability and efficiency"*. The NPPF also advises that local plans should give "a clear indication of how a decision maker should react to a development proposal"<sup>1</sup>.

This Plan seeks to give clarity to developers and to the local community, about what kind of development will be supported in the Plan area, and important considerations that must be taken into account when determining applications.

### **Local Planning Policy**

The current adopted local plan for the area consists of the Tynedale Local Plan (2000) (saved policies) and the Tynedale Core Strategy (2007).

These Development Plans provide the strategic policy context within which the Acomb Neighbourhood Plan has been produced. Policies in this Neighbourhood Plan will need to be in general conformity with up to date strategic policies in the Development Plan for this area, as well as the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance in order to meet the relevant 'Basic Conditions'

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<sup>1</sup> NPPF Paragraphs 17 and 154

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#### **Pre-submission Consultation**

A pre-submission consultation took place in December 2017, which comprised the final statutory stage of consultation before submitting the Plan to Northumberland County Council for formal Examination. This was called the 'Regulation 14' stage (in line with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2015 (as amended)). This consultation took place over an eight-week period commencing on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2017. An open day was held in the Village Hall, during the Consultation Period, where people had an opportunity to look at the Plan, along with the Policies Map that accompanies it, and discuss any issues with members of the Steering Group. Statutory consultees were also consulted, and many of their comments were incorporated into the Plan. A full list of responses, and how these were incorporated into the Plan, are provided in the accompanying Consultation Statement.

#### **What other consultation has taken place?**

The Steering Group has engaged throughout the process with the local community, through consultation and newsletters, and the provision of information on the website [www.acombneighbourhoodplan.co.uk](http://www.acombneighbourhoodplan.co.uk) .

Following an initial open launch for the Neighbourhood Plan and incorporating many of the results of the Action4Acomb 2014 Parish Questionnaire, a 'Vision' and a set of 'Objectives' were formulated, with suggested Policy Areas.

The last stage of consultation (Spring 2017) was to gain community feedback regarding the proposed Vision, Objectives and the policies which would be put forward. More than 90% approval was received from this consultation. A full report was written following that consultation, and a copy of the report is available on the website.

This final Draft Plan closely reflects the feedback received from the local community and local businesses.

More detail on other consultation undertaken will be provided in the Community Consultation Statement which will be submitted with the Neighbourhood Plan along with a Basic Conditions Statement to Northumberland County Council.

#### **What happens next?**

Pre-submission Consultation on this Neighbourhood Plan was the final formal consultation stage in the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. The final version of the Plan will be submitted to Northumberland County Council.

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Background supporting documents are available on the local community website:  
[www.acombneighbourhoodplan.co.uk](http://www.acombneighbourhoodplan.co.uk)

This includes supporting documents setting out the context for development in the Plan area along with reports into consultation and engagement activity undertaken in developing the draft Plan (the Consultation Statement) and a 'Basic Conditions' report which assesses the Plan against strategic planning policy as well as the other basic conditions that are set out in the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended). It also includes minutes of all the meetings that have been held by the Steering Group.



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### 1.0 CHAPTER 1: ACOMB NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA

#### 1.1 The Settlement and Housing

Acomb Parish is a predominantly rural area, consisting of the Village of Acomb, surrounded by Green Belt and outlying farms. Acomb Village has a school, two churches, a Village Hall, a Sports Pavilion, a Post Office, a Hairdressing Salon and four public houses. Many of these facilities are used by people outside the Parish. There are approximately 550 residential properties in the Parish, and a population of around 1300.

The Plan area has a stable population in total numbers, with Inflow Rates similar to outflow Rates (around 10%). Because of the population stability of over 65s, the community is an ageing one, with the average age being higher than that of Northumberland as a whole. However, new development of 39 houses (available during 2018) on Garden House Bank will bring a significant population growth (about 12%).

#### 1.2 Economy

The Plan area contains around 50 small businesses mostly run and manned by out of parish employees. These businesses are predominantly in the Industrial Estate and surrounding area. There is a higher than average number of self-employed workers (about 8%), working from home.

#### 1.3 Green Belt

Acomb Village is surrounded by Green Belt, virtually up to the edge of the Settlement and this provides adequate and desirable separation from Hexham, 2 miles away. The Green Belt boundary is shown on the Policies Map at the end of this Plan.

#### 1.4 Development Sites

There is only one Allocated Development site in the Parish and this is currently being developed for 39 Residential Properties, including 6 Affordable Homes.

#### 1.5 Heritage/Environment

Within the Parish, Acomb is an old mining and farming village, which, as a settlement, dates back to before mediaeval times. Consequently, there is significant history, and many remains to be found. These include the recently uncovered corn drying kilns (Figure 2) from the 14th or 15th Century. There are a number of listed buildings and places of historic interest within the Plan area. The Village has the highest concentration of listed buildings within the Parish and has a Conservation Area. There are many areas within the Parish which are of significant amenity value, including Watersmeet (an SSSI), the Playing Fields and

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The Gaps. Other smaller areas are shown within this Plan.



*Figure 2: 15<sup>th</sup> Century Corn Drying Kiln off Garden House Bank*

#### **1.6 Transport**

The Plan area is divided by the A69, which runs through the southern part of the Plan area. This makes the area accessible to Hexham, Newcastle and Carlisle, and therefore is a popular commuting base. There are regular but infrequent public transport services to and from Acomb. Most homeowners, therefore, require personal transport. This creates parking issues in the Village (where there are few off road parking facilities) and at times an over-used narrow lane infrastructure. There are no evening/late night bus services, meaning younger people and the elderly can be isolated.

#### **1.7 Flooding**

The Village of Acomb was one of the first five communities in Northumberland to be recognised by the Environment Agency as suffering from severe flash flooding. This is usually caused by the Red Burn and the Birkey Burn being unable to cope with the volume of water coming from their catchment areas on Acomb Fell during significant storms.

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## 2.0 CHAPTER 2: VISION AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE PLAN

- 2.1 Through the consultation responses, and identification of key issues that the Plan should address, the following vision was agreed:

**The Vision for the Neighbourhood Plan area is as follows:**

**Value, protect and promote the Parish of Acomb, by respecting its heritage, appreciating its current community and being aspirational when planning for future generations, ensuring Acomb Parish continues to be a thriving, safe and attractive place to live and work**

- 2.2 To support this vision, a number of objectives were identified:

#### **Objective 1 - Community Facilities and Local Green Space**

**We will protect the community facilities we have and promote new community facilities. Our most highly valued outdoor spaces will be designated as Local Green Spaces.**

#### **Community Facilities**

- 2.3 Acomb has a number of highly valued community facilities. An audit of these facilities has taken place. The most highly valued facilities were identified by the public in consultation events. These were identified as the Village Hall, Pavilion, Village Shop, Post Office, First School and Little Oaks Nursery, the pubs, fish and chip shop, tennis courts and play areas. In addition to those facilities, there are other local businesses which provide a service which are also valued; there is a hairdresser's, Indian take-away, wet-fish retailer and other services provided on the industrial estate.
- 2.4 The main issues identified were:
- Retention of valued community facilities (Village Hall, Pavilion, Shop and Post Office, School, Nursery, Fish and Chip Shop and Hairdressing Salon)
  - The Pavilion and Village Hall are in need of refurbishment
  - Play areas, Tennis Courts and other valued open spaces should be protected

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#### Local Green Spaces

- 2.5 Although Acomb is surrounded by Green Belt, there are important Green Spaces within and on the edge of the settlement. Some of these were identified in the list of 'community facilities'.
- 2.6 Watersmeet was identified as an important area for local people to visit and walk. This area was not identified as a Local Green Space as it was not considered to meet the requirements set out in paragraph 77 of the NPPF, which states that Local Green Spaces should not comprise 'large tracts of land'. In addition, this area is entirely within the Green Belt, and partially designated as SSSI as well. However, it is recognised that this is an area which is also used significantly by Acomb Angling Club as part of its reach.
- 2.7 Issues identified in relation to Local Green Spaces were:
- Local Green Spaces highly valued were identified as Pit Heaps and Woodland Walk, The Gaps, the Playing Field (ultimately defined as a Community and Recreational Space) and uncultivated land south of it, the School Common and Millersfield play area (play equipment recently removed by Karbon)
  - A number of other places were identified outside the settlement of Acomb, and in the Green Belt, such as walks to neighbouring villages, the caravan site, and Hexham

**The following planning policies seek to address those issues identified, and deliver Objective 1:**

- Policy 1: Local Green Spaces – identifies and protects Local Green Spaces that are highly valued by the local community**
- Policy 2: Community Facilities – identifies existing community facilities and seeks to prevent their loss, and supports the provision of improved community facilities**

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#### Objective 2: Flooding

**We will seek to ensure that the impacts of flooding are reduced in Acomb and support measures to reduce those impacts**

#### **Flooding Issues**

- 2.8 Flooding has been a significant problem in Acomb over recent years, with significant episodes of localised flash flooding.
- 2.9 Many of the measures proposed to achieve this objective will be delivered through Community Projects<sup>2</sup>, rather than planning policy. Catchment management is a key mechanism which can be used to reduce the impacts of flooding. This will inevitably be partly beyond the Plan area, and also is implemented outside the planning system. One planning policy in relation to flooding supports the provision of flood defence infrastructure where planning permission is required. The Environment Agency have commissioned hydraulic modelling to inform a business case for a flood alleviation scheme in Acomb. In particular, options including hard defences in the Village and natural flood management in the upper catchment areas of the Red Burn and the Birkey Burn are being considered.

**The following planning policies seek to address those issues identified and deliver that objective:**

**Policy 3: Flooding**

**Policy 6: New Housing (include SuDS measures)**

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<sup>2</sup> Acomb Community Led 5-Year Plan copies of which disseminated to all households and found on [www.action4acomb.co.uk](http://www.action4acomb.co.uk)

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*Figure 3: Bottom of Garden House Bank – June 2012*

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#### Objective 3: Traffic, Walking and Cycling in Acomb

**We will seek to reduce the negative impact that road traffic has on the Village of Acomb. We will seek to enhance and develop the local network of paths and bridleways.**

- 2.10 There was a strong desire to reduce the negative impact that traffic has on the Village of Acomb, as well as a desire to improve footpaths, bridleways and off-road routes to allow villagers to get to Hexham or riverside walks, by means other than the private car. Much has already been done to mitigate the traffic impacts through Acomb.
- 2.11 The impact of traffic along Howford Lane and A6079 was identified as a particular problem, which could potentially worsen if the quarry site were to expand and increase the scale of the operation there. There is a "Major Developed Site" in the Green Belt, in the Tynedale Local Plan, at Howford Haulage Site (also known as Howford Quarry (Recycling Works)) which allows for retention and limited redevelopment for employment uses but within the context of its Green Belt location. The site has already been re-developed as a recycling facility and any intensification in the use of the site could give rise to further traffic pressures.
- 2.12 Other specific issues include:
- Traffic along Howford Lane which is used by walkers, horse-riders and cyclists – there are concerns that this could get worse
  - Need to improve routes and links between settlements and 'missing links' on bridleways and footpaths
  - Speeding traffic through Acomb especially along A6079
  - Impact of on-road parking of vehicles in the Village and parking generally.

**The following planning policies seek to address those issues identified and deliver this objective:**

**Policy 4: Walking, Cycling and Horse-riding**

**Policy 5: Howford Quarry**

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#### Objective 4: Housing

**We will support small-scale housing development within the settlement of Acomb, with a particular emphasis on providing housing that meets identified needs**

#### **Housing**

- 2.13 There was a strong desire to limit the amount of larger scale housing developments coming forward in the Plan area, with an element of support for smaller housing schemes, particularly those that would meet the needs of first time buyers.
- 2.14 Acomb is tightly surrounded by Green Belt, and therefore there are now few opportunities to develop beyond the built-up area of Acomb. There are some brownfield sites that are not within the Green Belt that could come forward for housing.
- 2.15 A detailed study was carried out by Arc 4, of housing needs in Acomb<sup>3</sup>. The findings of that study indicated that there was not a demonstrable housing need in Acomb, but that any policy intervention should be to support more housing for younger families.
- There was a general desire not to see more housing in Acomb, other than small developments within the settlement
  - A desire to restrict any new housing development in the countryside and Green Belt
  - Some respondents said there was a need for bungalows/two bedroom houses
  - Any new housing should be well-designed and reflect the special character of Acomb
  - The Housing Needs Survey did not identify a strong 'affordable' housing need in Acomb – there is a relatively high proportion of social rented housing stock in the Parish (18.8%)
  - There could be a need for more open market/intermediate housing for lower income households – there are currently no shared ownership or intermediate tenures in Acomb
  - Acomb house prices are relatively high in comparison with the rest of Northumberland.
  - The provision of a diversity of tenure options is a key policy consideration arising from the housing study – particularly Starter Homes, or housing that could be

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<sup>3</sup> Acomb Housing Needs Assessment (2016)



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bought by young families

**The following planning policies seek to address those issues identified and deliver this objective:**

**Policy 6:     New Housing**

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#### **Objective 5: Local Employment and Business**

**To support existing local businesses to meet their needs and provide a positive environment for new businesses to flourish**

#### **Economy**

- 2.16 Acomb has a small industrial estate on its periphery, which houses a number of small businesses. A 'demand study' carried out by NCC in 2017 found that there was not a significant demand for more employment land. Two employment sites are protected through the existing Development Plan, and the Neighbourhood Plan proposes to maintain that protection, whilst encouraging the potential for small businesses to grow. A planning policy is proposed to support new local employment opportunities, and support home-working and live-work units.
- The need to support existing businesses on the allocated employment sites
  - Encourage more small businesses/business hubs

**The following planning policies seek to address those issues identified and deliver this objective:**

#### **Policy 7: Local Economy**

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#### **Objective 6 - Heritage, Conservation, Buildings and Design**

**Preserve and where possible, enhance the character of our Conservation Area and wider Parish by requiring any new development to be high quality and reflect the principles in the Acomb Conservation Area Character Appraisal**

- 2.17 The Conservation Area in Acomb was designated in 1991. The adopted Conservation Area Character Appraisal highlights the special significance of the Conservation Area. There are a number of listed buildings in the Plan area, which are protected already through their listed status.
- The need to increase awareness of the Conservation Area, and make sure that it is taken into account in local decision-making
  - Most of the development likely to come forward in Acomb will be in the Conservation Area due to the low density of housing, and potential conversion schemes that could come forward
  - There are a number of buildings and structures in the Plan area that are of historic interest, but are not formally listed, which contribute to the character of the Conservation Area, and the character of other parts of the Parish
- 2.18 A planning policy is proposed to ensure that all new development in or affecting the setting of Acomb's Conservation Area is carefully designed to preserve or enhance that character. Elsewhere, high quality design is expected. A separate policy seeks to protect heritage assets in the Plan area that are not currently designated (non-listed heritage assets). These assets are listed in Appendix A.

**The following planning policies seek to address those issues identified and deliver this objective:**

- Policy 8: Acomb Conservation Area**  
**Policy 9: Non-designated Heritage Assets in Acomb**  
**Policy 10: Design in New Development**

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## 3.0 CHAPTER 3: PLANNING POLICIES

- 3.1 This section of the Acomb Neighbourhood Plan contains planning policies. These policies have been listed under each objective. Planning policies are highlighted in green boxes for clarity. Beneath each policy is a 'policy explanation', which explains what the policy is trying to achieve, and how it is envisaged that the policy will be implemented. Community Projects are shown in Chapter 5. These community actions will be delivered through the Acomb Community Led Plan by the Action4Acomb (A4A) Constituted Group, endorsed by the Parish Council and involving the local community.

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#### **OBJECTIVE 1 - COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND LOCAL GREEN SPACES**

***Objective: We will protect the community facilities we have and promote new community facilities. Our most highly valued outdoor spaces will be designated as Local Green Spaces.***

- 3.2 Policies 1 and 2 seek to deliver Objective 1, by protecting specific green spaces in and adjacent to Acomb Village as Local Green Spaces. Policy 2 identifies Community Facilities which have been shown to be of particular importance to residents in Acomb, and seeks their retention, and seeks to facilitate the provision of additional community facilities.

#### **Policy 1: Local Green Spaces**

**The following Local Green Spaces have been identified in Acomb Parish and are shown on the Policies Map:**

**Acomb Tennis Courts and Play Area(G1)  
Uncultivated land south of Playing Field (G2)  
The Gaps (G3)  
Millersfield Play Area (G4)  
Pit Heaps and Woodland Walk (G5)  
School Common (G6)**

**Proposals for new development in these Local Green Spaces will not be permitted except in very special circumstances, and where they are directly related to the function of the land as a Local Green Space**

**The following site is designated as ‘community and recreational’ land and is shown on the Policies Map:**

**Acomb Playing Field (including Pavilion) (CR1)**

**Proposals for new development in this space (CR1) must not involve the loss of Acomb Playing Field. Proposals for the re-development of the Pavilion, or for the provision of alternative or enhanced community facilities, will be supported on this site providing the remainder of the existing playing field is retained as part of any proposal.**

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*Figure 4: The Gaps - a Local Green Space in Acomb*

#### Policy Explanation:

- 3.3 The Local Green Spaces and Community and Recreational Spaces identified in Policy 1 are highly valued by the local community and were specifically identified through the consultation process. These spaces are largely valued for recreational purposes (particularly the Playing Field, Tennis Courts and the Millersfield Play Area). Other places, such as the Pit Heaps and Woodland Walk and the land south of Acomb Playing Field are valued for their recreational value but also for their biodiversity interest. Other places, such as The Gaps, provide an important open space within the built-up area, and provide informal recreational space. The Gaps was used at one time for allotments. The School Common is an area which is used by the school for “Forest School” activities. It is Common land and is within the Green Belt.
- 3.4 An audit of these green spaces was carried out in order to ensure that (in the case of the Local Green Spaces) they meet the criteria set out in paragraph 77 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which sets criteria for designation of Local Green Spaces. All of the Green Spaces identified have either a biodiversity, educational or recreational value or a combination of one or more of these. Whilst not meeting those criteria, the Riverbank and Watersmeet, used regularly by

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walkers and anglers, are regarded as important Green Spaces and are protected currently by Green Belt and SSSI status.

- 3.5 Although an important green space within the Village, the Playing Field area, (including the Pavilion), is designated as ‘community and recreational’ space. This designation will allow for potential community development proposals on this site, where they involve the provision or improvement of community facilities. The playing field is highly valued, so any proposal must include the retention of the playing field as part of any scheme.

#### **Policy 2: Community Facilities**

**The following community facilities are of significant value to the local community and are shown on the Policies Map:**

**Acomb First School  
Acomb Hair Salon  
Acomb Methodist Chapel and Hall  
Acomb Pavilion  
Acomb Village Hall  
Acomb Village Shop and Post Office  
Fish and Chip Shop  
Little Oaks Community Nursery  
Public Houses in Acomb  
St. John Lee Church and Hall**

**Proposals involving the loss or change of use of any of these facilities will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that the use is no longer required, viable, or if there is the provision of alternative equivalent facilities within the Village, or in another suitable accessible location within the plan area. There will be a strong presumption against the loss of the last shop, public house, or Village Hall in Acomb.**

**Proposals for the provision of new community facilities, or proposals to extend and/or improve existing community facilities will be supported within the settlement of Acomb.**

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*Figure 5: Acomb Village Hall - a community facility*

Policy Explanation:

- 3.6 In a rural village like Acomb, community facilities are of vital importance to cohesion and sustainability of the local community. A healthy provision of local services and facilities means that people are less likely to need to travel and means that communities can become more self-sustaining. This is particularly relevant in light of the new development recently approved at Garden House Bank.
- 3.7 The facilities listed in the policy have been identified through rigorous consultation, as being highly valued by the local community. Proposals that involve the change of use or loss of these facilities would have a significant detrimental impact on the sustainability of the Village. Some facilities named will be registered as Assets of Community Value, which will give residents and the Parish Council the opportunity to buy the facility under the Right to Bid legislation introduced through the Localism Act.
- 3.8 Residents also wanted to protect other Community Facilities, such as the play areas, tennis courts, and Green Spaces that are valued by the local community. These spaces are protected through Policy 1 – Local Green Spaces.
- 3.9
- The Village Hall and Pavilion are both in need of repair and refurbishment. It may be that the re-development of one of these sites may assist in generating the income to redevelop the other. The Parish Council intends to carry out further



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consultation to assist them in determining the best way to regenerate the Village Hall and/or Pavilion for the benefit of the local community. Local community engagement will be important in the future plans for these facilities.

- 3.10 There are four pubs in Acomb – The Mariner’s Hotel near the Caravan Site, The Miner’s Arms, the Queen’s Arms and the Sun Inn.
- 3.11 The Village School and Little Oaks nursery are highly valued. There may be proposals in the future to extend the school. Changes to the educational system, increasing population and moves from a three tier to a two-tier system, could result in pressures on the school to expand to accommodate the larger number of pupils. This could also have major implications for the Little Oaks nursery because of the need to relinquish the current space leased from the school. This policy therefore seeks to support any future proposals to expand the school and ensure that Little Oaks can be accommodated appropriately.

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#### **OBJECTIVE 2 - FLOODING**

***Objective: We will seek to ensure that the impacts of flooding are reduced in Acomb and support measures to reduce those impacts***

#### **Policy 3: Flooding**

Proposals which will contribute to the reduction of the risk of flooding and flood alleviation in the Plan area will be supported. Such proposals must take into account landscape and historic environment impacts, and include, where feasible, natural methods of controlling flood risk, such as tree planting and other land management proposals that will help reduce the risk of flooding in the Acomb Plan area.

Proposals for new development in Flood Zones 2 and/or 3 within Acomb must demonstrate that the Sequential Test has been applied, to steer development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding.

Proposals in Zones 2 and 3 that have passed the Sequential Test must demonstrate, through a Flood Risk assessment, that the development provides wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh the flood risk.

All proposals should demonstrate that they will not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere, and that any future development is not at risk from flooding, or that mitigating measures have been put in place to ensure that it can be flood resilient.

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**Figure 6: Environment Agency Flood Map showing Flood Zones in Acomb**

#### Policy Explanation:

- 3.12 The Village of Acomb is recognised by the Environment Agency as one of a number of communities in Northumberland which face challenging flood conditions.
- 3.13 A number of measures have been brought into practice, including the use of volunteer Flood Wardens, Acomb Flood Plan and Citizen Science monitoring projects at the Red Burn and the Birkey Burn which are taking place in collaboration with the Environment Agency.
- 3.14 Northumberland County Council proposes, in its Strategic Infrastructure Strategy, to implement flood alleviation measures for Acomb. This policy seeks to support the provision of infrastructure (where it needs planning permission) for specific flood alleviation measures which are proposed within the Plan area. Any development which will reduce the risk of flooding (flash flooding, in particular) will also be supported.
- 3.15 There are some brownfield sites within the inset boundary for Acomb that could come forward for housing in the future. Some of these sites lie within Flood zone 2 and potentially partially within Flood zone 3. It is important that any development proposed on these sites does not exacerbate flooding elsewhere, and that it is 'future proofed' to ensure that future occupants are not at risk of flooding.

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*Figure 7: Old Road to Hexham, below St John Lee – January 2016*

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#### **OBJECTIVE 3 - TRANSPORT, TRAFFIC, WALKING, CYCLING AND HORSE-RIDING**

Objective: We will seek to reduce the negative impact that road traffic has on the Village of Acomb. We will seek to enhance and develop the local network of paths and bridleways.

#### **Policy 4: Walking, Cycling and Horse-riding**

**Proposals for speed reduction measures and safety measures for pedestrians, cyclists and other users of the road network will be supported.**

**The development and improvement of safe cycling, riding and walking routes identified on the Policies Map, will be supported.**

**Provision of new links to connect existing footpaths and bridleways will be supported.**



*Figure 8: Woodland Walk (Pit Heaps to Watersmeet)*

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#### Policy Explanation:

- 3.16 The issue of traffic speed is a significant one for Acomb, where the main road (A6079) goes through the Village. There are already a number of measures in place to reduce traffic speeds, and A4A continues to work with the Parish Council, the community and the County Council to improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists and other users of the road network. Any further measures which could further improve safety will be supported.
- 3.17 Acomb is served by a network of footpaths and bridleways, enabling non-road users to access Hexham, Wall and other surrounding areas, safely. A large number of residents, in response to consultation, said they would value the improvement of these off-road routes.
- 3.18 There are a number of 'gaps', where linking of footpaths and bridleways would have a positive impact on the local community and make it easier for residents to walk/cycle to Hexham, and neighbouring villages, as well as to access the countryside more easily. In particular, access from the A6079, via the Pit Heaps, to the Woodland Walks and Watersmeet (and SSSI) should be preserved. Existing Footpaths/Rights of Ways are shown on the Policies Map (Appendix B)

#### **Policy 5: Howford Quarry/Howford Lane**

**Any proposal to intensify the use of Howford Quarry such that a material change of use will occur which requires planning permission, must demonstrate that:**

- a) **The proposals could be carried out without significantly increasing traffic movements along Howford Lane or;**
- b) **If a proposal would significantly increase the amount of traffic movements along Howford Lane, provision must be made for the safe access of pedestrians along Howford Lane as part of the scheme, to be secured through a S106 planning obligation prior to the development taking place to ensure financial contributions sufficient to secure the provision of additional infrastructure associated with highway improvements to Howford Lane to allow safe cycling and walking along this route, or direct provision of that infrastructure.**

**These improvements will be sought using planning obligations where it can be demonstrated that they are necessary, reasonable and directly related to the development for which permission is being granted and where their provision will not threaten the viability of the development.**

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#### Policy Explanation:

- 3.19 Howford Quarry (otherwise known as Howford Recycling Ltd) is located at the end of Howford Lane. Once a quarry, it is now a recycling business which sells quarry products and recycled waste, recycles inert waste, has a plant hire business, and a local delivery service. The site is allocated in the Tynedale Local Plan as an 'employment site within the Green Belt' under Policy NE13.8 (referred to as Howford Haulage Site, Acomb).
- 3.20 The current local plan policy NE13.8 in the Tynedale Local Plan identifies the site and has a set of criteria against which any new development on this site will be determined. There are no highways or transport criteria in this policy, and therefore the Neighbourhood Plan Policy 5 seeks to introduce an additional criterion which is considered essential to ensure the safety of users of Howford Lane.
- 3.21 It may be that re-use, partial re-use or redevelopment of the Howford Quarry site, for employment or similar purposes, will be proposed, albeit that this would be in the context of Green Belt restrictions. If so it will be important that the transport impacts are fully considered, which the policy seeks to achieve through the introduction of specific criteria relating to transport.
- 3.22 The current level of traffic along Howford Lane already has a significant impact on walkers and cyclists along Howford Lane. Even a small increase in vehicular movements will have a significant impact on safety.

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***Figure 9: Howford Lane leading to Howford Quarry and Recycling facility - used by cyclists and walkers***

- 3.23 Howford Lane is used regularly by walkers, people with push-chairs and cyclists to access Watersmeet and the Riverside walk for recreational purposes. The route has become unsafe over the years. It is a single lane road, approximately half a mile long, with 3 passing places and several blind corners. It is regularly used by heavy vehicles. Any increase in vehicle usage as a result of an extension to the quarry site could also increase safety risk and this policy seeks to ensure that any material change in the use of that site resulting in an increase in the number of vehicles accessing the site, is accompanied by an improvement to highway infrastructure to allow the route to continue to be used by pedestrians, riders and cyclists safely.



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#### OBJECTIVE 4 - HOUSING

*Objective: We will support small-scale housing development within the settlement of Acomb, with a particular emphasis on providing housing that meets identified needs*

#### **Policy 6: New Housing**

**Proposals for new small-scale housing developments and conversions in Acomb will be supported where they:**

- a) Provide housing to meet local needs as identified in the Acomb Housing Needs Survey;**
- b) Are well related to existing development and are of high quality design that reflects local character;**
- c) Take opportunities to improve the visual amenity of the area and reflect local and vernacular design and materials;**
- d) Do not impact negatively on the amenity of neighbouring properties;**
- e) Take opportunities to reduce flood risk by incorporating SuDS into the design of the development;**
- f) Incorporate landscaping and boundary treatments that reflect the local area**

**On brownfield sites, subject to the provision of safe vehicular access and, where relevant, compliance with Policy 3, new housing development will be supported where it makes a positive contribution to the character of the Village and takes the opportunity to re-inforce local distinctiveness offered by the particular characteristics of that site.**

**Developments of over 5 units will be expected to be supported with a Design Brief which demonstrates how the proposal incorporates the above details.**

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**Figure 10: Morrison Terrace, Acomb**

#### Policy Explanation:

- 3.24 Overall, there was not a strong desire to see more housing in Acomb. Most respondents to surveys felt that any new housing should be for small schemes within the Village. There are limited opportunities in Acomb for this type of development.
- 3.25 The Housing Needs Survey (2017) carried out for Acomb Parish identified a potential shortfall in housing for young families, and market 'affordable' housing (meaning lower cost housing, Starter Homes, or intermediate housing) for lower income families. The survey advocated a policy intervention to seek to increase provision of specifically this type of housing to allow younger families and first-time buyers to stay in Acomb. Therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to support, where appropriate, the provision of smaller, lower cost housing, which will go towards meeting the needs of younger families.
- 3.26 The survey conducted for the Neighbourhood Plan revealed a strong desire for more bungalows, and smaller housing units, such as 2/3 bed houses. Therefore, the local need is for smaller units, lower cost housing and 'Starter Homes' which

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will help younger people get onto the housing ladder.

- 3.27 Local Green Spaces and community facilities have been identified in Policies 1 and 2. Any scheme that involves the loss of any of these identified Local Green Spaces or Community Facilities will not be supported unless they comply with criteria in those policies.
- 3.28 How development is integrated into the Village is highly important to residents. Therefore, proposals must ensure they are of high quality design, and that they fit in with properties in the area in terms of their height, scale, massing, materials and design. They must also demonstrate that they do not impact negatively on the amenity of surrounding properties by way of being overbearing, overlooking or overshadowing.
- 3.29 Flooding has already been identified as a significant issue in Acomb, and this policy seeks to re-inforce the importance of incorporating SuDS into any scheme to ameliorate run-off and drainage impacts elsewhere.
- 3.30 There are brownfield sites within the settlement boundary where new housing development could take place. These could be a combination of conversion schemes within the settlement, or re-development of brownfield sites (for example the bus depot) near the entrance to the Village.
- 3.31 Any development on the bus depot site, should seek to re-inforce local character. For example, by ensuring that it pays particular attention to the role of that site as a 'gateway' into the Village.
- 3.32 Any development of 5 units or more should be supported by a Design Brief or Master Plan for the site. Any developer should consult closely with the Parish Council on this Design Brief, and undertake local consultation as advocated in paragraph 189 of the NPPF.

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#### **OBJECTIVE 5 - LOCAL ECONOMY**

*Objective: To support existing local businesses to meet their needs and provide a positive environment for new businesses to flourish*

#### **Policy 7: Local Economy**

To create and retain a sustainable local economy in the Plan area, small-scale business proposals will be supported where they enable the creation of new business or the opportunity to expand existing business, subject to respecting local character, residential amenity and highway safety.

Proposals for additional business units within the existing business and employment areas identified on the Policies Map will be supported. These business and employment areas are protected for employment use (B1, B2, B8). Small-scale A1 and A3 uses related to existing businesses will also be supported.

Proposals for home working in the Plan area, where they do not affect the amenity of neighbouring properties by way of additional traffic, noise or other amenity impacts, will be supported.



*Figure 11: Acomb Industrial Estate (Howford Lane)*

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#### Policy Explanation:

- 3.33 There is a higher than average number of small businesses in Acomb, due to the protection of the employment sites that were allocated in the Tynedale Local Plan.
- 3.34 The Plan seeks to maintain these allocations and keep this area available for business and employment uses. These businesses not only contribute to the local economy but also, in some cases, provide services (for example, the Tandoori, and Ridley's Fish and Game).
- 3.35 The policy proposes to restrict the use of the employment site to B1 (Business), B2 (General Industrial) and B8 (Storage) uses. However, some of the businesses may require some small-scale A1 use (Retail) or even A3 use (Café) if it is related to their business. It is considered that to enable these local businesses to thrive, and to provide a service to the local community, these businesses should have the flexibility to expand their businesses by providing such a service should they wish to. For example, the Fish and Game shop sells from the site, as do a number of other businesses on the industrial estate. This policy will allow the flexibility for this to continue, and to apply to other businesses should they wish to diversify.
- 3.36 To maintain and enhance these facilities, support will be given to development proposals within the employment designated areas and also to home-working proposals where Planning Consent is required, provided these do not change the character of the area in which they are sited.

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#### **OBJECTIVE 6 - DESIGN, CHARACTER AND HERITAGE ASSETS**

*Objective: Preserve and where possible, enhance the character of our Conservation Area and wider Parish by requiring any new development to be high quality and reflect the principles in the Acomb Conservation Area Character Appraisal*

#### **Policy 8: Acomb Conservation Area**

Any proposal within the Acomb Conservation Area, or within the setting of the Conservation Area must demonstrate how it will preserve or enhance the character of the Acomb Conservation Area, as defined in the Acomb Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

Proposals including extensions, alterations to existing buildings and structures, conversions and in-fill development must have particular regard to:

- a) The need to make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness by reflecting the vernacular scale, massing, layout, means of enclosure, detailed design and materials characteristic of the Acomb Conservation Area through:
  - i) use of local materials for Acomb consisting of natural sandstone and natural slate roofing materials;
  - ii) the maintenance of 'plain' rooflines, avoiding the addition of dormer windows which would detract from the special character of Acomb conservation area;
  - iii) the incorporation of timber sliding sash windows;
  - iv) the use of locally distinctive detailing of masonry, doorways, rooflines, chimneys and chimney-pots, windows and rainwater goods;
  - v) the provision of appropriate boundary treatment to consist of sandstone walls and/or hedgerows;
  - vi) the retention of existing boundary walls
- b) Give special attention to the impact of development on the appreciation of The Green (The Pant) and its surrounding buildings;

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#### Policy 8: Acomb Conservation Area (continued)

- c) Re-inforce the significance and setting of ‘key buildings’ in the Conservation Area: Acomb House, Acomb High House, Chare Head, Town Head, Fold Cottage and their associated buildings
- d) Give special attention to the rural nature and low density of the conservation area and its setting, including views into and out of the Conservation Area; and
- e) Ensure future development does not harm the setting of listed buildings in the Conservation Area and in particular does not impact on the group value of listed buildings.

Development of poor design that fails to make a positive contribution or fails to preserve the character and quality of the Conservation Area will be refused.



*Figure 12: Traditional buildings in Acomb Conservation Area*

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#### Policy Explanation:

- 3.37 The Acomb Conservation Area boundary is shown on the Policies Map. A detailed Acomb Conservation Area Character Appraisal (ACACA) identifies some of the key and most significant elements of the Conservation Area.
- 3.38 The NPPF requires that in determining planning applications, local authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.
- 3.39 This policy seeks to ensure that the significant features that are identified in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal for Acomb are incorporated into decision-making in development proposals in the Acomb conservation area in order to avoid harm to this heritage asset.
- 3.40 The Statement of special significance contained within the ACACA summarises some of the key aspects of the Conservation Area. It outlines key features of significance which should inform how proposals have regard to this policy:
- The rural topography of Acomb, including the slopes, punctuated by a range of compact and intimate groups of houses and old farms lodged in hollows, long and staggered lines of buildings disappearing around bends in the road, indented building lines, changes in height of rooflines, all introduce variety and suggest low density development across much of the Parish.
  - The Main Street, which frames distant views of surrounding countryside to the west.
  - The Village is fringed by countryside which dominates some views and can be seen as discrete and intriguing glimpses through gaps between buildings. These views reinforce Acomb's rural context and enhance its visual character.
  - Gardens and traditional stone boundary walls add to the Village landscape.
  - A traditional skyline of dual pitched roofs topped by chimney stacks and pots.
  - The historic core of the Village (with a range of listed buildings and eighteenth and nineteenth century buildings) with the Green (Pant) at the top of the slope forming a natural focal point;
  - Predominant building material of local light buff/cream coloured sandstone, welsh slate, and timber painted windows. Occasional contrast of red bricks and flat applications of render.
  - Key buildings are identified in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal which provide historic anchor points, visual focus, aesthetic quality and influential examples of local building type. Specifically, the country houses of Acomb House, Acomb High House, as well as Chare Head, Town Head and Fold cottage, with their associated buildings, are of significance.
- 3.41 High quality design which contributes to local character does not necessarily mean that it has to be 'traditional', or replicate design in the immediate area. Modern design proposals, particularly those incorporating sustainable design principles, can still contribute to local character.



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3.42 Listed buildings in the Conservation Area (all Grade II) are:

- Acomb House and Stable Block including gate piers and garden walls to east
- Acomb High House
- Fold Cottage (group listing including Hydrant, Cart shed (and attached wall to east), and Barn, all associated with Fold Cottage)
- Green (Pant) with adjacent hydrant
- Barn 40m north of Chare Head Farmhouse
- Tynevale House
- Middle Farmhouse
- North View, Main Street
- The Barracks, Main Street

3.43 There are a number of other listed buildings in the Plan area. In Acomb listed buildings outside the Conservation Area are the Methodist Church and Garden House and cottage.

3.44 St. John Lee (which is a separate hamlet in the Plan area, washed over by Green Belt) has listed buildings (including listed tomb stones), as does the Riding and associated buildings. Acomb Mill is also listed.

3.45 The Hermitage, in the south of the Plan area is Grade II\* listed, and various buildings and structures associated with the Hermitage are also listed.

#### **Policy 9: Non-designated Heritage Assets**

**The Neighbourhood Plan list of non-designated Heritage Assets are defined in Appendix A. Development affecting any non-designated heritage asset or its setting, whether locally listed, or identified in the Acomb Neighbourhood Plan List in Appendix A, should be sensitively designed having regard to the significance of the heritage asset including its archaeological, historic and architectural interest and its setting.**

#### Policy Explanation:

3.46 Acomb Parish has a rich heritage, based largely but not exclusively, on agriculture and mining (coal, lead and the rare mineral witherite). The public consultation carried out in April 2017 demonstrated how much local residents wanted to preserve and enhance the features of particular historic interest in their community. The Parish has 49 Grade II listed buildings, of which only 14 lie in the conservation area, although obviously all structures within the conservation area do have additional protection. This suggests that there is quite a lot of

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heritage interest outside the conservation area and beyond Grade II listed buildings.



***Figure 13: The White House - A non-designated heritage asset***

- 3.47 The NPPF states that a heritage asset is: “a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in considering planning decisions, because of its heritage interest”. Interest can be historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic, while significance can be because of rarity, representativeness, aesthetic appeal, integrity or association.
- 3.48 A full list of these non-designated heritage assets is included in Appendix A of this Plan, along with a summary of what the significance of the interest of each of these buildings or structures is.

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#### **POLICY 10: DESIGN IN NEW DEVELOPMENT**

**All new development in the Plan area, including extensions and conversions, should incorporate high quality design and demonstrate how the proposal:**

- a) Has been informed by local character, context, and site geography; and**
- b) Reflects local character in terms of scale, density, height, massing, layout, materials, hard and soft landscaping, means of enclosure and access; and**
- c) Incorporates features that reflect surrounding character and materials, including windows, doors, chimneys, and other details which have an impact on the appearance of the proposed development; and**
- d) Incorporates high quality landscaping and take opportunities to incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems into the scheme; and**
- e) Takes measures to limit impact of light pollution from artificial light on the nearby Dark Sky Park; and**
- f) Ensures that the development would not have an unacceptable impact on amenity of nearby residents in terms of loss of light, overshadowing or other amenity impacts.**

#### Policy Explanation:

- 3.49 Design was considered by residents to be important in the whole Parish, not just in the Conservation Area. This policy seeks to ensure that any new development seeks to deliver high quality design, and particularly seeks to support proposals that reflect and respect local vernacular, materials and detailing. Acomb has a historic problem with flooding, and the policy seeks to ensure that all new developments incorporate design measures to reduce the impacts of flooding where possible, through the provision of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems.
- 3.50 Acomb is a short distance from the Dark Sky Park, and the policy seeks to support that designation by limiting impacts of light pollution in new development.
- 3.51 Amenity of neighbouring properties is always an important consideration in any development proposal. Schemes should minimise, wherever possible, impacts on surrounding properties, and not cause an unacceptable impact on amenity.

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#### 4.0 CHAPTER 4: MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 4.1 Local authorities are required to produce an annual monitoring report (AMR) to ensure that their development plan policies are being implemented as intended. Neighbourhood plans also need to be monitored and reviewed as part of the overall process and to ensure that policies are being implemented as intended.
- 4.2 The Neighbourhood Plan area is relatively small, so AMRs will not be required. Nevertheless, the process can be used as good practice and the main mechanism by which policies are monitored and assessed.
- 4.3 Policies in the Plan will be monitored annually by the Parish Council to determine their performance and relevance and to review whether or not objectives are being met. The results of the monitoring process will determine where policy review and change are needed.
- 4.4 Key tasks are:
- Review progress on a regular basis (annually)
  - Assess the extent to which policies are being implemented
  - Determine why policies are not being implemented and set out steps to be taken to ensure policies are implemented as intended or whether any need to be amended or replaced
  - Identify whether policies need adjusting or replacing because they are not working as intended
  - Identify whether policies need changing to reflect changes in national and local planning policy
- 4.5 A trigger for review may be when the Northumberland Local Plan is produced. At this point, it may be necessary to review policies in the Neighbourhood Plan for compatibility with any new proposals in the Local Plan and identify whether additional policies may be needed.

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## 5.0 CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Acomb's Community Led 5 Year Plan – 2015 to 2020 (published August 2016), contains the findings from the Parish Questionnaire, distributed and collected (56% response) from all Parish households in November 2014. Many of the findings of this questionnaire formed the basis from which the Neighbourhood Plan Vision and Objectives were developed. In addition, numerous public engagement events added weight to supporting and verifying what residents valued and wanted for Acomb. The Community Led Plan is very different in scope from the Neighbourhood Plan, covering a range of social, environmental and economic issues over a shorter time frame.

Three themed areas emerged from the 2014 Parish Questionnaire findings which can be viewed within the Community Led Plan:

- **Protect and Sustain**
- **Improve and Renew**
- **Support and Co-operate**

Each section highlights the significant areas with action plans, many of which have been achieved or are being progressed. These are reviewed annually in partnership with Acomb Parish Council.

It is important to understand the difference between community actions identified in the Community Led Plan and those Policies of the Neighbourhood Plan, which is a Statutory Document relating solely to land-use and is part of the Local Planning Policy framework. However, it is equally important to recognise that they both have a significant impact on Acomb's future.

All households have received a hard copy of Acomb's Community Led Plan.

It can also be viewed on A4A's website [www.action4acomb.co.uk](http://www.action4acomb.co.uk) along with the full data findings.

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#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Steering Group:

Mr Norman Robson, Acomb Parish Council, Chair of Steering Group  
Mr Charles Enderby, Chair of Acomb Parish Council, Steering Group Member  
Mrs Lorna Farr, Acomb Parish Council, Steering Group Member, A4A  
Mrs Rachel Gagliano, Acomb Parish Council, Steering Group Member, A4A  
Mr Bill Grigg, Clerk to Acomb Parish Council  
Ms Matilda Bevan, Local Resident, Steering Group Member  
Mrs Jane Wrigley, Stakeholder, Vice-Chair of Steering Group

would like to express its thanks to the following for their contribution to the Acomb Neighbourhood Plan:

Action4Acomb (Current and Past Committee Members)  
Acomb Local History Society, particularly Peter Kirsopp and John Wilkinson  
Acomb Parish Council  
Acomb WI  
Mr Chris Anderson, Northumberland CC Adviser  
Mr David English, Northumberland CC Adviser  
Mr Neil McKie, Robson Print  
Mr Peter Rodger, Web Manager and IT Consultant  
Mrs Jenny Ludman, Ludman Planning, Planning Consultant  
Present and past members of the Steering Group

and

The many volunteers from the Community of Acomb Parish who assisted in the development and production of this Plan

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#### APPENDIX A: LIST OF NON-DESIGNATED (Non-Listed) HERITAGE ASSETS

##### **Non-designated Heritage Assets (Not exclusive):**

Based on the NPPF and using the criteria developed by Bassetlaw DC, in order for a building/structure to be considered a non-designated heritage asset, it must have at least one element of interest and one element of significance. Elements of Interest include Historic, Archaeological, Architectural or Artistic. Elements of Significance include Rarity, Representativeness, Aesthetic Appeal, Integrity or Association.

**Agriculture:** The following are typical Northumbrian stone-built farmhouses, with the exception of Broom Park, which is made of Howford brick from the nearby brickworks:

Halfway House Farm

Acomb Buildings Farm

Acomb Fell – built round a courtyard

Broom Park

New Rift Farm

Salmonswell Farm

Old Bridge End Farm

The Back'ards (Backyards); the original village street, running parallel to Main Street (south side) The remaining public right of way is well used, and adds greatly to the rural setting of the Conservation Area.

Cattle troughs at New Rift Farm

##### **Industry:**

Fallowfield Lead Mines, Barite Mines and Witherite Mines (of which there are only 2 world-wide), between Fallowfield Dene Caravan Site and Fallowfield Dene Cottage. Not currently accessible, and site in a hazardous condition, but thought to date from Roman times (Acomb Local History Society), with the lead being used at Chesters Roman fort, then by the monks at Hexham Abbey for roofing. The first evidence is in a plan dated 1583, now in the British Museum.

Old colliery buildings on Howford Lane (Engine house for Morrisons pit)

Brance's Well was one of a number of drinking troughs provided on the old packhorse route from the Green (the Pant)) to the Dukesfield lead smelter. This is close to the listed bridge over the Birkey Burn, 220 metres south of Acomb House.

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#### **Commerce:**

Miners Arms PH (1750, in conservation area). Contemporary with the listed property Tynevale House 1854 on the opposite side of Main Street. The two properties are thought to have been built by the same architect for 2 brothers.

Queens Arms PH (in conservation area)

The Sun PH (in conservation area)

Skew railway archway at Watersmeet, built for the Border Counties Railway for the section from Hexham to Wall, which opened in 1858



*Figure 14: Skew Railway Arch at Watersmeet*

#### **Domestic:**

Chare Head, its adjoining outbuilding, Town Head and the adjacent former smithy (all in conservation area, all recommended in the 2009 Conservation Area Character Appraisal for consideration of Grade II listing)



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The White House (in conservation area): unusually for Acomb, this 18<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse is white-washed and occupies a commanding position on the north side of the Green. It is double fronted, with reverse stepped gable coping. Horse tether in front porch

#### **Colliery Terraces:**

1. Morrison Terrace: built with Howford brick for miners employed by the Morrisons
2. Tynedale Terrace: constructed for the miners at Acomb pit
3. Alnmouth Terrace – built to house workers at Garden House pit, (to include Tynedale House, formerly the Colliery Manager's house)

Village pumps at the Pant (the Green, in conservation area). Two of the three pumps are listed and thought to be 19<sup>th</sup>c, but the third is not.

#### **Education:**

Acomb First School (Victorian building): this, together with School House (accommodation for the teacher) was built in 1869, on land taken from the common to replace an earlier school on the north side of the Green (the Pant). The new school was enlarged in 1884 to include 3 classrooms.

#### **Health and welfare:**

Victorian Reading Room at Crosthwaite, Main Street – An article in the Newcastle Weekly Chronicle of 13<sup>th</sup> December 1873 describes “a newsroom and a library in the Village, which belongs to the church people and the Methodists”

#### **Other:**

The Acomb Man (Romano-British figure, currently sited at the Green (the Pant), thought to be 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> century, found at Howford in 1970)

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**APPENDIX B: POLICIES MAPS (Detailed copies of this Appendix may be obtained from Neighbourhood Planning and Infrastructure, Northumberland County Council. A “Zoomable” .PDF version of the file is also submitted with this Plan)**

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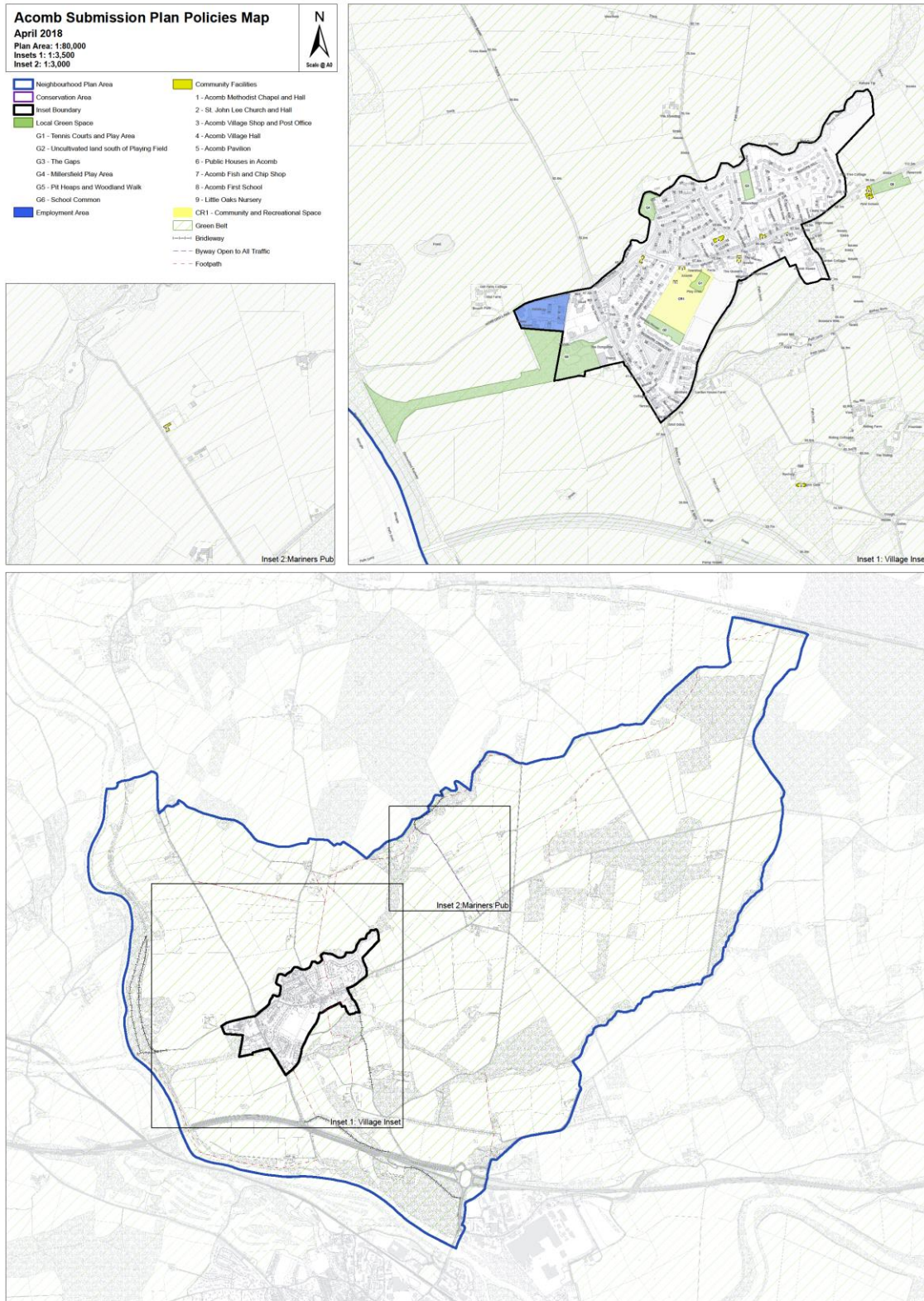


Figure 15: Policies Map

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**APPENDIX C: Ecological Information from Northumberland County Council**

**ACOMB**  
**NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN:**

**ECOLOGICAL INFORMATION**

## **ACOMB NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

### **SUBMISSION DRAFT PLAN – MARCH 2018**

#### **Designated Sites and Priority Habitats in the Plan Area (Acomb Parish)**

##### **1. Internationally Designated Sites**

1.1 The nearest European sites to the Neighbourhood Plan boundary are:

- 1.6km west from Tyne and Allen River Gravels SAC
- 5.8km south west North Pennine Moors SAC
- 5.8km south west North Pennines Moor SPA
- 10.6km west from Border Mires Kielder-Butterburn SAC
- 10.7km west from Roman Wall Loughs

1.2 The Tyne and Allen River Gravels SAC lies 1.6km west from the site boundary. The Tyne and Allen River Gravels SAC is complex, in that maintenance of the Calaminarian grassland plant communities that form the interest features of these sites is dependent on the ongoing deposition of heavy metals such as lead and zinc, which are washed out of historic mine workings upstream of these sites. Therefore, policies and projects within the neighbourhood plan are unlikely to affect this site.

1.3 The North Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation and North Pennine Moors Special Protection Area lies 5.8km south west of the Neighbourhood Plan area at its nearest point. These sites are designated for a breeding bird assemblage and upland habitats including species rich grasslands. This is just within the 6km zone of influence for upland sites. There are no policies or projects within the Neighbourhood Plan which will affect the interest features of those sites by increasing disturbance to those areas.

1.4 The other sites are well beyond the 6 to 10km zone of influence for activities that could cause recreational disturbance, and there are no other adverse effects arising from development of this nature that could cause a significant effect over these distances.

1.5 A Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan concludes no likely significant effect on internationally designated sites.

##### **2. Nationally Designated Sites**

2.1 Two Sites of Special Scientific Interest fall within the boundaries of the Parish and Neighbourhood Plan area.

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- 2.2 **Fallowfield Mine SSSI.** Geological SSSI Fallowfield Mine is one of the two world type localities of the very rare double carbonate mineral alstonite. While the other type locality (Brownley Hill Mine, near Alston) no longer yields the mineral, specimens can still be found from dumps at Fallowfield, even though these are now largely overgrown and planted with trees.
- 2.3 **Tyne Watersmeet SSSI** is located at the confluence of the rivers North and South Tyne, is an area of diverse habitats of particular interest for its invertebrate fauna, being regarded as one of the best sites in north east England for ground beetles. The varied flora also includes some uncommon plants. The woodlands include types dominated by native species; oak *Quercus* sp., birch *Betula* sp. and wych elm *Ulmus glabra*, and others with introduced species including beech *Fagus sylvatica*, sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, horse-chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum*, grey poplar *Populus canescens* and riverside willow *Salix* spp. and alder *Alnus glutinosus* communities. The ground-flora includes the locally rare yellow star-of Bethlehem *Gagea lutea* and clustered bellflower *Campanula glomerata* as well as many characteristic woodland species including dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis*, wood melick *Melica uniflora*, wood millet *Milium effusum* and great wood-rush *Luzula sylvatica* which are locally dominant.

A periodically flooded riverside rock outcrop supports an unusual ground flora assemblage beneath a variety of willow shrubs which includes dyer's greenweed *Genista tinctoria*, globeflower *Trollius europaeus* and wild basil *Clinopodium vulgare*. An abandoned river terrace supports a short turf of plants, typical of river deposits contaminated by heavy metals, with spring sandwort *Minuartia verna*, thrift *Armeria maritima* and meadow oat-grass *Avenula pratensis*.

The most significant invertebrate records are for the variety of specialised beetles and uncommon species of flies and moths. Of particular note is the community of beetles adapted to life on the alluvium and unstable sand river banks, these include several ground beetles; *Bembidion testaceum*, *B. monticola*, *Dromius notatus*, *.melanocephalus* and a dung beetle, *Aegialia sabuleti*. Another insect-rich habitat is the grey poplar woodland where two weevils, *Dorytomus tremula*, a nationally rare species and *D. tortrix* are found along with caterpillars of the sprawler moth *Brachiongelia sphinx*. Two hoverflies *Cheilosia antiqua* and *C. impressa*, both unusual in the north are found in herb-rich grassland. Other rare species include *Tropiphorus obtusus* a large weevil which feeds on dog's mercury and two ground beetles, *Pterostichus cristatus* which is characteristic of mixed woodland with its main centre of distribution in North

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East England, and *Lebia chlorocephala*, usually a coastal species in the north, the larvae of which are parasitic on *Chrysolina polita* a leaf beetle.

### 3. Priority Habitats

UK BAP priority species and habitats were those that were identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP). The 'UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework', published in July 2012, has succeeded the UK BAP. The UK BAP lists of priority species and habitats have been used to help draw up statutory lists of priority species and habitats in England, as required under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

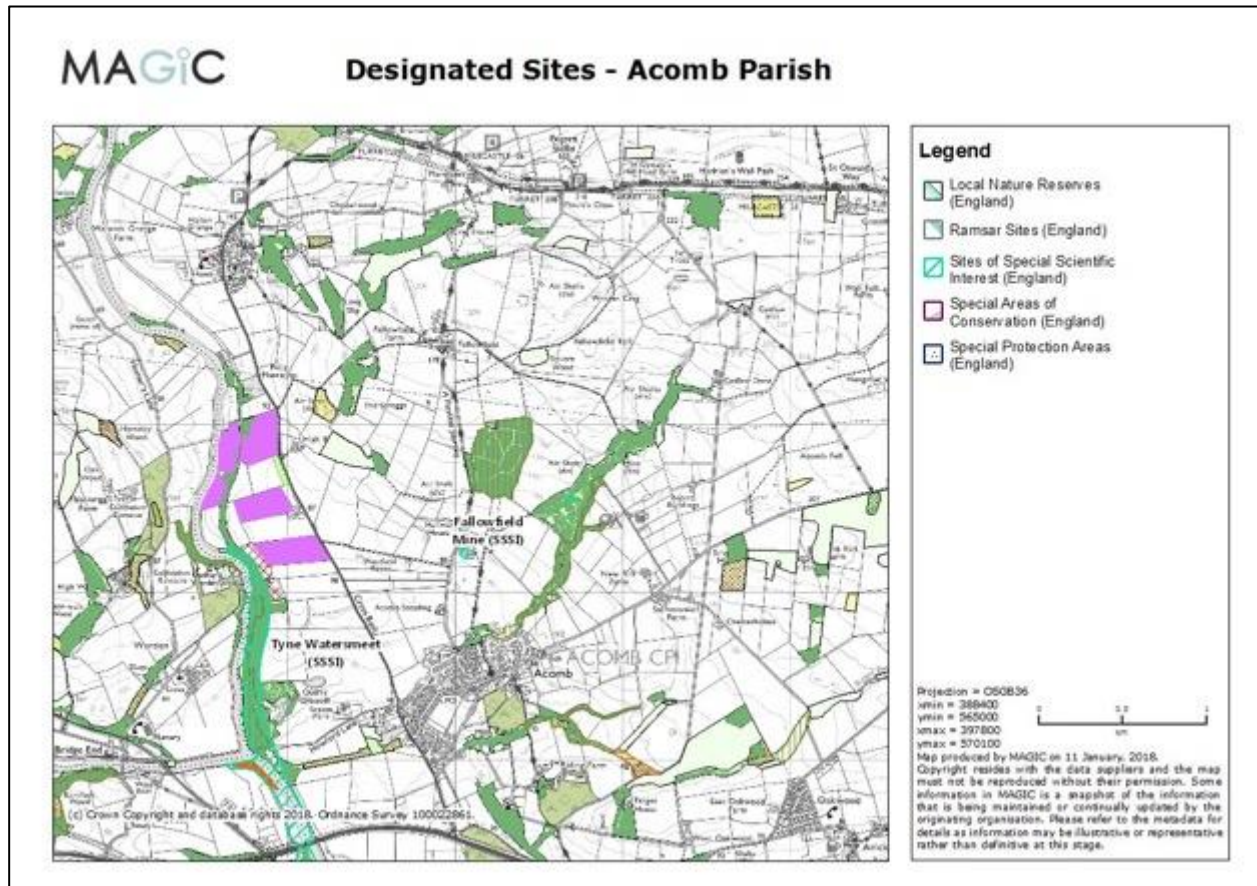
Ancient Woodland is still present within the plan area at East Wood, Broom Park Wood Acomb Dene and along the Birkey Burn.

Woodland and Parkland BAP Priority Habitat is present to the south of Acomb House and to the south of Riding Farm.

*Designated Sites and priority habitats are shown below. Areas of ancient woodland are shown as green with brown diagonal lines. Parkland is light green.*

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### Glossary of Terms

**Action4Acomb:** a local constituted Community Group established in 2013 with the prime purpose to develop and implement a Community Led 5 Year Plan, 2015-2020.

**Amenity:** A positive element or elements that contribute to the positive character of an area, such as lack of noise and disturbance, openness, landscape, townscape, opportunities for recreation etc.

**Asset of Community Value:** A local authority maintained list of buildings and land in its area that is of community value as set out in Section 87 of the Localism Act 2011.

**Biodiversity:** The whole variety of life encompassing all genetics, species and ecosystem variations, including plants and animals.

**Community Facilities:** Local services and facilities that benefit the community, such as local meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings and places of worship. A list of community facilities is identified.

**Community Led Plan:** A working document with a clear action plan for the community of Acomb to work together with its Partners (Parish Council, County Council, Environment Agency, Voluntary Organisations and others) to achieve real change to benefit Acomb residents.

**Core Strategy:** A Development Plan Document setting out the spatial vision, objectives and key strategic policies for an area. When adopted, the Core Strategy for the Plan Area will be the future Northumberland County Council Local Plan Document.

**Development:** Defined under the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act as 'the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operation in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any building or other land.'

**Development Plan:** The complete set of statutory land use policies and proposals for an area, used in making planning decisions. It includes adopted council development plan documents such as Local Plans, Core Strategies and neighbourhood plans.

**Evidence base:** The information and data gathered by local authorities and used to inform policy development. Evidence base data is also gathered to prepare a neighbourhood plan and is submitted to the Examiner along with the other Examination Documents.

**Green Belt:** A land designation with the fundamental aim of preventing urban sprawl by keeping the land permanently open. The purposes of the Green Belt as specified in paragraph 80 of the NPPF are: to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and assist in urban regeneration, be encouraging the

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recycling of derelict and other urban land. The whole Plan area is in the Green Belt, apart from those areas 'inset' within the Green Belt [see definition of 'inset']

**Infrastructure:** The physical entities (for example roads, railways, sewers, pipes, telecommunications lines) that are necessary for communities to function and move around.

**Inset:** A term used to describe a town or village that is surrounded by the Green Belt but is not itself covered (or 'washed over') by the Green Belt designation. This means that Green Belt restrictions do not apply within the settlement concerned in the area defined by the inset boundary.

**Local Green Space:** A designation that provides special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities. They can be identified through Local Plans or by communities in Neighbourhood Plans.

**Local Plan:** The documents and maps that make up the plan for the future development of a local area.

**Material consideration:** A matter that should be taken into account in making a planning decision.

**National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):** A Government document that sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

**National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG):** The Government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012 and the National Planning Practice Guidance in March 2014. Together, the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance set out what the Government expects of local authorities.

**Neighbourhood Plan:** A plan by a Parish or Town Council - the 'qualifying body' - for a particular neighbourhood area. Once it has been accepted by the local community through a Referendum, the neighbourhood plan will form part of the Development Plan.

**Northumberland County Council:** The unitary authority for Northumberland as of 1st April 2009.

**Previously Developed Land (PDL) or Brownfield Land:** Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.

**Setting:** The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or

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negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

**SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems):** A sequence of water management practices and facilities designed to drain surface water in a manner that will provide a more sustainable approach than more conventional practices, such as routing run-off through a pipe to a watercourse.

**Sustainable development:** Defined by the World Commission of on Environment and Development in 1987 as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. Also defined in the NPPF states in paragraph 7 that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

**Sustainable transport modes:** Any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, low and ultra-low emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.