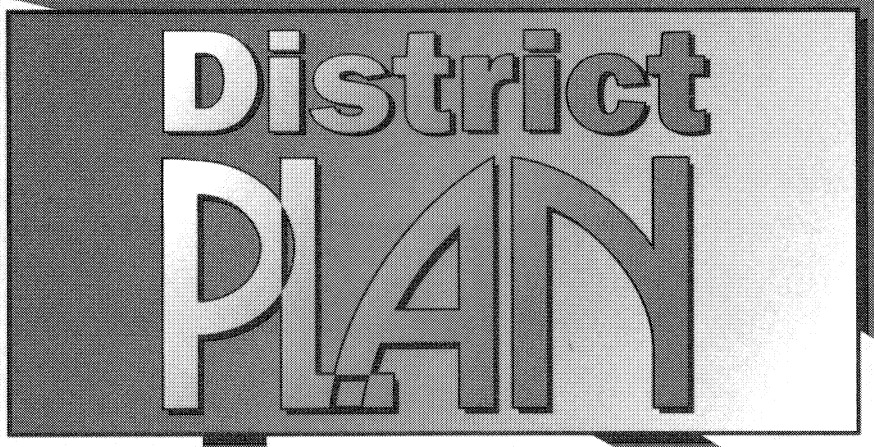
BLYTH VALLEY DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN



Adopted May 1999

BLYTH VALLEY
NORTHUMBERLAND

BLYTH VALLEY DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

Adopted
May 1999

Written Statement and Proposals Map

Prepared by:
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Printed on recycled paper

BLYTH VALLEY
NORTHUMBERLAND

Borough Planning and Development Officer:
G.M. Garnham, B.A. B.Phil., M.R.T.P.I.

Foreword

By Councillor Jim Clough

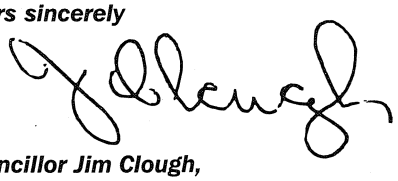
As Chairman of the Council's Planning and Development Services Committee at the time of adoption of the District Plan, I am very pleased to be introducing this adopted version of the Plan.

The Plan has been through three major consultation stages and a public inquiry during which the views of Blyth Valley residents, local organisations, businesses and interest groups have been heard and taken on board. As a result, I am confident that this final version of the Plan can take Blyth Valley forward into the new century. This is because it gives great weight to our precious local countryside and coast but also takes full account of the need to keep local employment, tackle community issues and provide services to the public.

The adoption of this Plan means that decisions on development can be taken with certainty and should make my continuing work chairing the Council's Development Control Panel, easier than it would otherwise be.

I hope that the contents of the Plan prove useful as well as interesting to all those reading it.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Jim Clough,

Chairman, Planning and Development Services Committee,
Blyth Valley Borough Council (to May 1999)

Acknowledgements

The Council wishes to express its thanks to all those who have assisted in the preparation of this Local Plan between 1993 and 1999. As well as those internal to the Council, this has also involved the Government Office for the North East, various departments of Northumberland County Council and all those who took part in, and contributed as a result of the consultation process.

The Plan has been steered through all its stages by the Planning and Development Services Committee. The Chairman during the initial and final stages was Councillor J. Clough, while Councillor G. Knox chaired at the time of the "deposit" stage of the Plan.

The Borough Planning and Development Officer throughout has been Graham Garnham.

The following employees of the Council have been most involved in the preparation of the Plan:

- *Phil Castiaux, Assistant Borough Planning Officer, (Policy and Projects);*
- *Janice Rose, Principal Assistant, (Policy and Projects);*
- *John Dowsett, Principal Assistant, (Development Control);*
- *Jonathan Nicholson, Senior Assistant, (Local Plans);*
- *Mick Sharpe, Senior Assistant, (Landscape);*
- *Mike Davis, (Graphic Designer);*
- *James Mellon, (Assistant Graphic Designer);*
- *John Ramsey, (Printer);*
- *Barbara Adams (Administrative Officer) and her team*
- *Rachel Palmer who has left the Council's employment had a key role at the Inquiry stage of the Plan;*
- *Andrew Parker of the Borough Secretary's Department - as Programme Officer;*
- *Jackie Park and Ian Conway from the Housing Department;*
- *The following planning staff who have also since left the Council were also involved: Susan Keith, Paul Davies, Tracy Jones.*

Jean Harrison, the Borough Planning and Development Officer's Secretary who assisted Graham Garnham with his work on the Plan, sadly died in October 1998 and this version of the District Local Plan will serve as a reminder of her loyal service.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION - A Vision for Blyth Valley, 2006 ***page i***
ABOUT THE LOCAL PLAN ***page iii***

GENERAL CHAPTERS

1	***ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT***		*page*
1.1	*Introduction*		***1***
1.2	*Nature Conservation*		***1 to 6***
	1.2.1	*Designated Areas*	*1*
	1.2.2	*More General Protection of Wildlife*	*4*
1.3	*Landscape*		***6 to 12***
	1.3.1	*Areas of High Landscape Value*	*7*
	1.3.2	*Tree and Shrub Cover*	*8*
1.4	*Agriculture*		***12 to 14***
	1.4.1	*Agricultural Land*	*12*
	1.4.2	*Planning Control and Agriculture*	*12*
	1.4.3	*Farm Diversification*	*14*
1.5	*Ground and Water*		***14 to 23***
	1.5.1	*The Water Environment*	*14*
	1.5.2	*Ground Disturbance*	*16*
	1.5.3	*Derelict Land*	*18*
	1.5.4	*Contaminated Land*	*20*
	1.5.5	*Archaeology*	*20*
1.6	*The Built Environment*		***24 to 34***
	1.6.1	*Conservation*	*24*
	1.6.2	*Considerations of Visual Appearance and Character*	*31*
1.7	*Local Environmental Enhancements*		***34 to 38***
	1.7.1	*Individual Environmental Enhancements*	*35*
	1.7.2	*Shop Fronts etc*	*36*
	1.7.3	*Percent for Art*	*38*
1.8	*Pollution Control*		***39 to 43***
	1.8.1	*The Role of the Local Planning Authority*	*39*
	1.8.2	*Consideration of Planning Applications Where there are Potential Sources of Pollution*	*39*
	1.8.3	*Beneficial Development in Terms of Overall Pollution*	*40*
	1.8.4	*Other Development in Relation to Sources of Pollution Generally*	*40*
	1.8.5	*Development in Areas Subject to Aircraft Noise*	*40*
	1.8.6	*The Storage of Hazardous Substances*	*42*
1.9	*Telecommunications*		***44 to 46***
	1.9.1	*Major Telecommunications Development*	*44*
	1.9.2	*Minor Telecommunications Development*	*44*
	1.9.3	*Satellite Receiver Dishes*	*45*
1.10	*Energy Generation and Conservation*		***46 to 49***
	1.10.1	*Renewable Energy*	*46*
	1.10.2	*Energy Conservation*	*48*
1.11	*Environmental Impact Assessment*		***49***

BLYTH VALLEY DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

WRITTEN STATEMENT, May 1999

Table of Contents

			page
2	***GENERAL DEVELOPMENT***		
2.1	*Introduction*		***51***
2.2	*Settlement Policy*		***51 to 58***
	2.2.1	*New Settlements?*	51
	2.2.2	*Existing Settlements*	52
2.3	*Settlement Limits*		***59***
2.4	*Green Belt*		***60 to 61***
2.5	*Restrictions on Development in the Green Belt and Other Areas Beyond Settlement Limits*		***61 to 68***
	2.5.1	*Criteria for Development Proposals in the Green Belt*	61
	2.5.2	*Criteria for Development Proposals in Open Countryside Areas Beyond the Green Belt*	64
	2.5.3	*General Criteria for Development Proposals in Countryside Areas*	66
2.6	*Planning Permission*		***68 to 73***
	2.6.1	*Pre Application Discussions*	68
	2.6.2	*Planning Applications*	68
	2.6.3	*Planning Conditions*	68
	2.6.4	*Enforcement*	68
	2.6.5	*Planning Obligations*	69
	2.6.6	*Commuted Payments (Development Contributions)*	72
2.7	*Material Considerations in Planning Decisions*		***74 to 77***
	2.7.1	*Considerations Specific to Applications*	74
	2.7.2	*General Policy Considerations*	74
	2.7.3	*Central Government Planning Guidance*	74
	2.7.4	*The Development Plan*	74
	2.7.5	*Supplementary Planning Guidance*	74
	2.7.6	*A General Development Control Policy*	75
	INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTERS 3 to 7 ON DEVELOPMENT		***79***
3	***HOUSING***		
3.1	*Introduction*		***79 to 81***
	3.1.1	*Ensuring a Supply of Housing to meet Needs and Demands*	79
3.2	*The Supply of Land for Housing*		***82 to 86***
	3.2.1	*The Overall Supply of Land for Housing*	82
	3.2.2	*A Five Year Supply of Land for Housing*	82
	3.2.3	*How the Housing Requirement will be met*	82
3.3	*Settlement Specific Housing Policies and Land Allocations*		***86 to 94***
	3.3.1	*Housing Land in Cramlington*	86
	3.3.2	*Housing Land in Blyth*	90
	3.3.3	*Housing Land in The Rest of the District*	93
3.4	*Particular Housing Needs and Demands*		***95 to 107***
	3.4.1	*Affordable Housing*	95
	3.4.2	*Other Special Housing Needs*	103
	3.4.3	*Low Density (Executive) Housing*	104
	3.4.4	*Accommodation for Gypsies*	106
3.5	*Housing in Combination with Other Uses*		***108 to 109***

BLYTH VALLEY DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

WRITTEN STATEMENT, May 1999

Table of Contents

3	***HOUSING continued***		page
3.6	*The Environment of Housing Areas*		***110 to 119***
	3.6.1	*Facilities, Safeguards in relation to New Housing Development*	110
	3.6.2	*Design and Layout Principles for New Housing Areas*	111
	3.6.3	*Controls to be Applied in Existing Housing Areas*	114
	3.6.4	*Renewal / Improvements*	119
3.7	*Housing in the Countryside*		***120 to 123***
	3.7.1	*General Restrictions on Housing Development in the Countryside*	120
	3.7.2	*Rebuilding*	123

4	***COMMUNITY FACILITIES***		page
4.1	*Introduction*		***125 to 126***
	4.1.1	*Provision and Finance for Community Facilities*	125
4.2	*Accessibility - Equality of Opportunity*		***126***
4.3	*Outdoor Playing Space*		***127 to 137***
	4.3.1	*Outdoor Playing Space Standards / Targets*	127
	4.3.2	*Outdoor Playing Space for Sport*	127
	4.3.3	*Playing Space for Children*	132
	4.3.4	*Proposals which Displace Playing Space*	136
4.4	*Open Space as a Facility*		***138 to 140***
4.5	*Allotments*		***140 to 141***
4.6	*Indoor Sports Provision*		***141 to 143***
4.7	*Educational Facilities*		***144 to 147***
	4.7.1	*Distribution of Educational Establishments*	144
	4.7.2	*Additions to Educational Establishments*	144
	4.7.3	*Nursery Schools*	146
	4.7.4	*Changes of Land / Buildings from Educational Use*	146
	4.7.5	*Temporary Classrooms*	147
4.8	*Shops and Related Services*		***148 to 159***
	4.8.1	*Convenience Retailing*	148
	4.8.2	*Comparison Retailing and the Hierarchy of Retail Centres*	149
	4.8.3	*Approach to Proposals for Shopping Development*	149
4.9	*Community Health Facilities*		***160 to 161***
4.10	*Cultural Facilities*		***160 to 163***
	4.10.1	*Local Community, Cultural and Religious Buildings*	161
	4.10.2	*Wider Area Needs*	162
4.11	*Emergency Services*		***164 to 165***
4.12	*Child care away from the Home*		***164 to 165***
4.13	*Food and Drink Establishments*		***166 to 167***
	4.13.1	*Hot Food Takeaways, Cafes and Restaurants*	166
	4.13.2	*Public Houses*	166
	4.13.3	*A Policy for Class A3 Uses*	166
4.14	*Other Community Facilities*		168

BLYTH VALLEY DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

WRITTEN STATEMENT, May 1999

Table of Contents

			page
5	***LEISURE AND VISITOR ACTIVITIES***		
5.1	*Introduction*		***169***
5.2	*The Potential for Visitors*		***169 to 170***
5.3	*The Accommodation of Visitors*		***170 to 171***
	5.3.1	*Purpose-built Hotel Accommodation*	*170*
	5.3.2	*Other Opportunities for Providing Hotel Accommodation*	*170*
	5.3.3	*Caravans*	*171*
	5.3.4	*Camping*	*171*
5.4	*Generating Visitor Interest*		***172 to 173***
	5.4.1	*The Creation of Visitor Attractors*	*173*
	5.4.2	*The Present Main Attractors*	*173*
5.5	*Informal Countryside Leisure Pursuits*		***174 to 175***
	5.5.1	*Particular Focuses of Countryside Activity*	*174*
	5.5.2	*Making Use of the Countryside "Network"*	*174*
5.6	*Formal Recreation in the Countryside*		***176 to 177***
	5.6.1	*Golf and Other Extensive Sports Activities*	*176*
	5.6.2	*Positive Proposals for Countryside Sports Activities*	*176*

			page
6	***WORK ACTIVITY***		
6.1	*Introduction*		***179***
	6.1.1	*Work Activity covered elsewhere in the Local Plan*	*179*
	6.1.2	*Separate Areas for Work Activity?*	*179*
6.2	*Land for Work Activity*		***180 to 190***
	6.2.1	*Land for General, Local Employment and Business Park Use*	*180*
	6.2.2	*Land for Users requiring Sites in Non-Estate Locations*	*186*
	6.2.3	*Port Related Activities*	*188*
6.3	*Premises in the Work Activity Areas*		***190 to 191***
6.4	*Offices*		***191 to 193***
	6.4.1	*Professional and Financial Services*	*191*
	6.4.2	*Business Offices*	*192*
6.5	*Mixed Uses*		***192 to 195***
	6.5.1	*Business from the Home*	*193*
	6.5.2	*Small Workshops / Offices in Residential Areas*	*194*
	6.5.3	*Areas for Mixed Uses*	*194*
	6.5.4	*Blyth Town Centre Secondary Commercial Area*	*194*
6.6	*Specific Proposals for Work Activity Land Areas*		***194 to 200***
	6.6.1	*The Blyth Industrial Estates*	*194*
	6.6.2	*Land at the Former Bates Colliery*	*195*
	6.6.3	*Bebside*	*196*
	6.6.4	*Areas Close to the Port of Blyth*	*196*
	6.6.5	*New Delaval*	*196*
	6.6.6	*The North-West Sector of Cramlington*	*196*
	6.6.7	*The South-West Sector of Cramlington - Off Fisher Lane*	*198*
	6.6.8	*South Cramlington*	*198*
	6.6.9	*East Cramlington*	*199*
	6.6.10	*Avenue Road, Seaton Delaval*	*200*
	6.6.11	*Double Row*	*200*
	6.6.12	*Seghill*	*200*

BLYTH VALLEY DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

WRITTEN STATEMENT, May 1999

Table of Contents

			page
7	***MOVEMENT***		
7.1	*Introduction*		***201***
7.2	*Non-Powered Movement*		***201 to 206***
	7.2.1	*Footpaths*	201
	7.2.2	*Cycle Routes*	202
	7.2.3	*Inter Area Connections*	202
	7.2.4	*Traffic Calming*	205
	7.2.5	*Retention of Existing Access*	205
	7.2.6	*Network Strategy*	205
	7.2.7	*Static Features for Pedestrians and Cyclists*	206
7.3	*Movement by Railway Train*		***207 to 208***
	7.3.1	*East Coast Main Line*	207
	7.3.2	*Ashington to Newcastle Line*	208
	7.3.3	*Additional Railways*	208
	7.3.4	*Freight Movement by Rail*	208
7.4	*Movement by Bus*		***208 to 211***
	7.4.1	*Existing Bus Routes*	209
	7.4.2	*Routeing*	209
	7.4.3	*New Housing Areas*	209
	7.4.4	*Development near Nodes in the Network*	209
	7.4.5	*Prioritisation of Buses*	209
	7.4.6	*Bus Stations etc.*	210
	7.4.7	*Bus Garaging*	210
	7.4.8	*Bus Stop / Layby Facilities*	210
7.5	*Movement by Other Motor Vehicles*		***212 to 225***
	7.5.1	*Road Network within Built-up Areas*	212
	7.5.2	*The Road Hierarchy*	213
	7.5.3	*The Control of Traffic Movement within the Built-up Areas*	214
	7.5.4	*Controlling Heavy Goods Vehicle Traffic*	218
	7.5.5	*Car Parking*	219
	7.5.6	*New Road Construction within Built-up Areas*	220
	7.5.7	*Road Traffic Outside Settlement Limits*	222
7.6	*Movement by Water*		***226***
7.7	*Pipelines*		***226***

AREA SPECIFIC CHAPTERS *N.B. Chapters numbered individually*

INTRODUCTION ***227 to 228***

AREA SPECIFIC CHAPTERS - TOWN CENTRES

			page
8	***CRAMLINGTON TOWN CENTRE***		
8.1	*Introduction*		***229***
8.2	*The Proposals*		***229 to 235***
	8.2.1	*Shopping , Commerce and Other Central Land Uses*	230
	8.2.2	*Movement*	232
	8.2.3	*Environmental Improvements*	235

AREA SPECIFIC CHAPTERS - TOWN CENTRES, CONTINUED

			page
9	***BLYTH TOWN CENTRE***		
9.1	*Introduction*		***237 to 239***
	9.1.1	*Evolution and Recent Planning of the Town Centre*	*237*
	9.1.2	*The Position Today*	*238*
	9.1.3	*The Way Forward*	*238*
9.2	*A Policy Framework for Shopping, Commerce and Housing*		***239 to 243***
	9.2.1	*The Central Shopping Area*	*239*
	9.2.2	*The Secondary Commercial Area*	*242*
	9.2.3	*Living Over the Shop*	*242*
9.3	*The Proposals*		***244 to 247***
	9.3.1	*Development Site Adjacent to Inner Relief Road*	*244*
	9.3.2	*Area for Possible Expansion of Town Centre Uses*	*244*
	9.3.3	*Traffic Circulation and Management*	*245*
	9.3.4	*Car Parking Provision*	*246*
	9.3.5	*Public Transport*	*246*

AREA SPECIFIC CHAPTERS - COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AREAS

			page
10	***NORTH-EAST CRAMLINGTON***		
10.1	*Introduction*		***249***
10.2	*The Proposals*		***250 to 256***
	10.2.1	*Housing*	*250*
	10.2.2	*Community Facilities Provision*	*252*
	10.2.3	*Footpath-Cycletrack Network*	*253*
	10.2.4	*Public Open Space: Contribution towards Playing Space, Parkland and Nature Conservation*	*254*
	10.2.5	*Landscape Structure*	*256*

			page
11	***SOUTH-WEST CRAMLINGTON***		
11.1	*Introduction*		***257***
	11.1.1	*History*	*257*
11.2	*Guiding Principles*		***258***
	11.2.1	*Existing Landscape Character*	*258*
	11.2.2	*Sector-wide Landscape Structure*	*258*
11.3	*The Proposals*		***259 to 270***
	11.3.1	*Residential Development*	*259*
	11.3.2	*Work Activity Development*	*264*
	11.3.3	*Provision of Central Community Facilities*	*264*
	11.3.4	*Landscaping*	*265*
	11.3.5	*Public Open Space / Playing Space*	*266*
	11.3.6	*The Road Network*	*266*
	11.3.7	*Public Transport*	*269*
	11.3.8	*The Footpath-Cycleway System*	*269*
11.4	*Funding Arrangements*		***270***

AREA SPECIFIC CHAPTERS - COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AREAS, CONTINUED

			page
12	***WEST BLYTH***		
12.1	*Introduction*		**271**
12.2	*The Proposals*		**272 to 279**
12.2.1	*Housing - Chase Farm Area*		*272*
12.2.2	*Opportunity Development Site*		*273*
12.2.3	*Movement*		*273*
12.2.4	*Landscape Structure*		*274*
12.2.5	*Distributor Road Environment*		*274*
12.2.6	*Central Playing Space for Sport*		*276*
12.2.7	*Children's Equipped Playing Space*		*276*
12.2.8	*Areas which may be Surplus to Educational Requirements*		*276*
12.2.9	*Specialised Sports Facilities*		*277*
12.2.10	*The Southern Development Area*		*278*

			page
13	***SOUTH BEACH***		
13.1	*Introduction*		**281**
13.1.1	*The "Grid Diagram", 1969*		*281*
13.1.2	*The South Beach Master Plan, 1990*		*281*
13.2	*The Proposals*		**281 to 289**
13.2.1	*Variations Proposed from the 1990 Master Plan*		*281*
13.2.2	*Housing*		*282*
13.2.3	*Movement*		*284*
13.2.4	*Site for District Centre, First School and Other Community Facilities*		*286*
13.2.5	*Central Parkland / Playing Space, Other Planted / Landscaped Areas*		*288*
13.2.6	*Children's Equipped Playing Space*		*289*
13.2.7	*Other Relevant Policies*		*289*

			page
14	***SOUTH-WEST NEWSHAM***		
14.1	*Introduction*		**291**
14.2	*The Proposals*		**291 to 293**
14.2.1	*The Need for a Comprehensive Approach*		*291*
14.2.2	*Opportunity Development Site - Roadside Uses*		*292*

			page
15	***SEATON DELAVAL***		
15.1	*Introduction*		**295**
15.2	*Problems and Opportunities*		**295 to 297**
15.2.1	*Central Area: Constraints at Avenue Head*		*295*
15.2.2	*Wheatridge Park: Opportunities for Solutions*		*296*
15.3	*The Proposals*		**297 to 303**
15.3.1	*The Wheatridge Park Development Area*		*297*
15.3.2	*Other Housing Opportunities*		*302*
15.3.3	*Avenue Head Local Service Area*		*302*
15.3.4	*Avenue Head Environmental / Parking Improvements*		*302*

BLYTH VALLEY DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

WRITTEN STATEMENT, May 1999

Table of Contents

AREA SPECIFIC CHAPTERS - LOCAL ACTION AREAS

16	***BLYTH QUAYSIDE***		*page*
16.1	*Introduction*		***305***
16.2	*The Proposals*		***305 to 308***
	16.2.1	*Work Activity Area*	*305*
	16.2.2	*Area for Mixed Uses*	*306*
	16.2.3	*The Dun Cow Quay*	*308*
17	***CROFTON MILL***		*page*
17.1	*Introduction*		***309***
	17.1.1	*Problems and Opportunities*	*309*
17.2	*The Proposals*		***310 to 313***
	17.2.1	*Housing Sites*	*310*
	17.2.2	*The Central Development Site: Housing and Mixed Uses*	*310*
	17.2.3	*Rosemary Terrace Area*	*312*
	17.2.4	*First School*	*312*
	17.2.5	*Crofton Moor*	*312*
18	***BLYTH LINKS AND SURROUNDING AREA***		*page*
18.1	*Introduction*		***315***
18.2	*Problems and Opportunities*		***315***
	18.2.1	*The Links Itself*	*315*
	18.2.2	*The Area to the Rear of the Links*	*315*
	18.2.3	*The Area of the Existing Caravan Site*	*315*
	18.2.4	*Other Sites*	*315*
	18.2.5	*The Opportunities Presented*	*315*
18.3	*The Proposals*		***315 to 320***
	18.3.1	*A Hotel for the Links*	*316*
	18.3.2	*The Environmental Improvement of the Links*	*316*
	18.3.3	*Areas to the Rear of the Sea Front*	*318*
	18.3.4	*Operational Port Land*	*318*
	18.3.5	*Opportunity Development Site*	*320*
	18.3.6	*Pedestrian/Cycle Link*	*320*
19	***MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION***		*page*
19.1	*Introduction*		***321***
19.2	*Monitoring*		***321***
19.3	*Implementation - Processes*		***321***
19.3	*Implementation - Financial Resources*		***321***

APPENDICES (See Beginning of Appendices for Full List). ***327***

GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED ***389***

INDEX ***399***

INTRODUCTION

A VISION FOR BLYTH VALLEY, 2006

This Local Plan is intended to steer Blyth Valley into the 21st Century. With the world's resources under increasing pressure and with environmental issues becoming ever more prominent, it is incumbent upon everyone - local authorities included, to address these vital matters.

AGENDA 21 AS A STARTING POINT

Agenda 21 is a Plan of action agreed by all nations present at the "Earth Summit" in Rio, 1992. Its aim is to provide a framework for working towards ***sustainable development*** - that is, meeting people's needs and improving quality of life without damaging the natural environment. Agenda 21 involves action at all levels of government and sectors of society. Indeed, it can be estimated that over two thirds of the statements contained in Agenda 21 could not be delivered without the co-operation and commitment of local government. As such, Chapter 28 of the Agenda 21 document calls on local authorities to develop their own strategies for achieving sustainability - i.e. ***Local*** Agenda 21's - which should outline a plan of action and follow-up activities. In Blyth Valley, the Local Plan, with its emphasis on land use, is a vital part of this plan of action. Many of the principles of Agenda 21 are encompassed in this Local Plan.

Agenda 21 also requires local authorities, in particular planning departments, to move beyond their normal statutory duties and embrace all areas of society. An important requirement for the development of Local Agenda 21's is that the whole ***community*** should be involved. Local authorities therefore need to:

- act as ***facilitators*** as opposed to controllers, providing opportunities for increasing people's own control over their local environment. Accordingly, much of what the Local Plan aims to do is to facilitate a gradual improvement of the environment through policies and proposals which prevent environmentally damaging development from occurring, while allowing environmentally creative opportunities to be realised.
- encourage ***partnership*** approaches, which are a key dimension in the success of any Local Agenda 21. Again, the Local Plan will rely for its implementation on a degree of agreement, co-operation and partnership, between the Council, developers and the community.

GLOBAL ISSUES, LOCAL ACTION: THE "FOUR E's"

A Plan which has a life of well over a decade must recognise today's problems and opportunities, as well as anticipating those of tomorrow. This is a difficult task. However, the Borough Council sets out its stall in this Plan and it hopes that others involved in the future of the Borough are sympathetic to its goals. As stated in relation to Agenda 21, to a large extent the future face of the Borough will be dependent on a partnership approach to future activity.

The nature in which Blyth Valley changes, or remains the same, is the responsibility of us all.

This Local Plan is based on "***Four E's***":

- ***Environment***: it is vital that all planning decisions are made with a view to protecting and, where possible, enhancing the natural environment and those aspects of the created environment that are important to preserve;
- ***Energy conservation***: it is important to make planning decisions that are not wasteful of energy e.g. through their location unnecessarily increasing car travel or through their design;
- ***Equalising accessibility***: it is necessary to take full account of the geography of the community in planning decisions and make facilities, work places etc. as accessible as possible to the people that use them;
- ***Economic development***: it continues to be of great importance that planning decisions assist the local economy, both by seeking to retain existing businesses and work activity and by allowing scope for new opportunities to be realised.

The days when prosperity and personal happiness could be seen partly in terms of development and growth are passing. This Plan seeks to recognise that wider global issues cannot be divorced from local activity.

The value and needs of the "Four E's" are to be found throughout the Plan. Basically the whole ethos of the Plan appreciates and highlights the demands of environmental issues. Environmental considerations form the basis of the Plan.

THEMES, COMMUNITIES AND LOCALITIES

The Plan has **seven themed Chapters:**

- **Environmental Protection and Enhancement;**
- **General Development;**
- **Housing;**
- **Community Facilities;**
- **Leisure and Visitor Activities;**
- **Work Activity; and**
- **Movement.**

The Plan also examines individual areas of the Borough in some detail:

- **The town centres at Cramlington and Blyth;**
- **Communities which are still growing or developing or which are for the future, at North-East and South-West Cramlington, West Blyth, South Beach and South-West Newsham;**
- **Other localities where action is needed on the ground, at Blyth Quayside, Crofton Mill and Blyth Links.**

Finally the Plan discusses the methods and agencies by which it can be implemented.

The **Environmental Protection and Enhancement** Chapter starts off by looking at nature conservation. It suggests that existing wildlife and natural history on designated sites should be protected while non-statutory sites should be safeguarded too. The quality of the landscape is seen as an important factor which will be taken into account in planning decisions. "Areas of High Landscape Value" are designated and protection is given to significant trees and woodlands. The enhancement of these features is also proposed. A section entitled "Ground and Water" examines the topics of the water environment, mineral extraction, waste management, derelict land, archaeology, contaminated land. There is then a section on the built environment and, later in the chapter, subjects such as pollution control and energy generation / conservation are covered. The overall approach to these matters is one of the wise use of resources (where this is necessary) alongside the preservation of environmental assets and their enhancement where appropriate.

The Chapter on **General Development** examines settlement policy. It takes the previous chapter as a template against which development proposals should be assessed. It is proposed that Cramlington and Blyth, as defined by their settlement limits, will accommodate the majority of housing, employment and other development in the Borough during the Plan period. The village of Seaton Delaval will accommodate some new development and will continue to act as a local service centre for the Seaton Valley area. The Borough's other principal villages will take development only on land where there is already a commitment, or on infill sites. Settlement Limits are defined in the Plan to control development in areas of open countryside. A Green Belt is also designated to maintain the character of the Borough's villages and to retain areas of open countryside. General development principles are then examined. In particular, the approach of securing environmental and community facility improvements through agreement with developers is set out at this point in the document.

The **Housing** Chapter takes full account of the previous two chapters which outlined the environmental backdrop and emphasised the positive need for some development in the correct circumstances. The Plan acknowledges a need for sufficient land to be available for new housing and goes on to suggest the locations within the main settlements where this would be appropriate. A specific aspect of housing which is covered in some detail to that of "affordable housing" and there are some strong policies to try and make sure that homes affordable to all income groups are available in Blyth Valley. Another aspect examined is the environment of housing areas - e.g. design and layout, facilities, and energy conservation principles.

The fourth Chapter is **Community Facilities**. This part of the Plan emphasises the increasing role for planning in providing for complete communities through the provision of various community facilities e.g. outdoor playing space, indoor sport, education, cultural facilities etc. The Plan aims to maintain, or ensure, the proper provision of these necessary facilities. In terms of shopping provision it is proposed to maintain and enhance Blyth and Cramlington as main service centres. In addition, neighbourhood facilities within the suburban parts of the two towns, and at Seaton Delaval, will be maintained. Protection will also be sought for the local shopping provision in the Seaton Valley villages.

The Chapter entitled "**Leisure and Visitor Activities**" looks at both the residents of the Borough and visitors to the district in terms of their leisure pursuits. The Plan hopes to attract more visitors to Blyth Valley through the provision of accommodation, information and attractions. However these features must be accompanied by necessary environmental safeguards. Informal recreational activities will be promoted in certain areas and public access to the countryside will be encouraged in appropriate locations.

The next Chapter deals with land devoted to employment or "**Work Activity**". Positive policies in the Plan cover the retention and enhancement of existing land and premises in work activity use as well as the identification of sufficient land for new workplaces. The needs of the Port are recognised consistent with other aims and proposals. Certain kinds of offices will be encouraged in Blyth and Cramlington, and on an appropriate scale in Seaton Delaval. Recognition will also be given to the contribution made by the existence of work activity uses within areas of mixed use or predominately residential areas while seeking to protect fully the amenity of all residential property in the Plan area.

The final general Chapter in the Plan is on **Movement**. A central theme throughout the Plan is the location of land uses to minimise the need for people and goods to move further than necessary. This is in order to optimise the use of existing infrastructure and to control the pollution caused by motor vehicles. Hence a sensible balance must be struck between different modes of transport. To this end a comprehensive network of routes for

pedestrians and the extension of cycle routes (specifically within Cramlington and Blyth) is proposed. The Plan also seeks to increase the proportion of movement of people and goods which takes place on railways rather than roads. Encouragement is given to the use of buses, minibuses and other multiple passenger carriers. The Plan does recognise the need for motor vehicles to gain access to built-up areas, but aims to minimise potential conflict with other road users.

The following twelve Chapters are **area specific**. The Plan does not take a settlement by settlement approach. This is because there is a wide variation in the level of positive proposals from settlement to settlement and area to area. In some parts of the Plan area, there is a predominance of protection measures and few, if any, proposals for development. In other areas, it is anticipated that there will be concentration of development activity during the Plan period. The Area Specific chapters which conclude the main body of the Plan are therefore selective. The main strategic proposals relating to **Blyth, Cramlington, Seaton Delaval** and the **smaller settlements** are set out at the beginning of Chapter 2, "General Development". In the individual smaller settlements, **Seghill, Holywell, New Hartley, Old Hartley / Seaton Sluice, East Cramlington** and **East Hartford**, there are no major development proposals. The Introduction to the Area Specific Proposals, (before Chapter 8), gives an indication of where in the Plan document the main references to these villages can be found.

The specific areas that are looked at in separate chapters are those which provide a focus for existing activity or new development, or where existing problems are counterbalanced by opportunities for improvement. They are Cramlington and Blyth town centres, the "Community Development Areas" of north-east and South West Cramlington, West Blyth, South Beach and South West Newsham and the "Local Areas for Action" at Blyth Quayside, Crofton Mill and Blyth Links.

The final contents of the Plan look at its monitoring and implementation, provide a glossary of terms, and include many background appendices.

A Local Plan is a complex and necessarily comprehensive document. The inter-relationships between topics and geographical areas do not allow a simple structure to be adopted. This Local Plan however takes a clear stance in its position on environmental issues. This is a constant theme permeating all Chapters and is the foundation on which the planning of the Borough into the 21st century will be based.

ABOUT THE LOCAL PLAN

1 WHY THE LOCAL PLAN?

This Written Statement and Proposals Map, drawn up, as required under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, replace all existing Local Plans within Blyth Valley, including the Blyth Town Centre Local Plan, adopted in 1984, the Blyth Valley East Local Plan, adopted in 1991, the "old style" development plan covering Cramlington, produced in the 1960's, (known as the Northumberland County Development Plan, C.D.A. No.3), and a number of non-statutory "informal" Local Plans.

2 FUNCTION OF A STATUTORY LOCAL PLAN

A Local Plan has four main functions:

a to develop the policies and general proposals of the Structure Plan, (see paragraph 5 below), and to relate them to precise areas of land defined on the Proposals Map;

b to provide a detailed basis for development control, (see also Sections 2.6 and 2.7 of Chapter 2 below);

c to provide a detailed basis for co-ordinating and directing development and other use of land - both public and private; and

d to bring local planning issues before the public.

3 PLAN AREA AND PERIOD

Plans produced under the 1990 Act have to cover entire districts. The area covered by the Plan is therefore the whole of the Borough of Blyth Valley including the settlements of Blyth, Cramlington, Seaton Delaval, Holywell, Seghill, New Hartley, Seaton Sluice, East Hartford and East Cramlington. The Local Plan sets out Policies and Proposals relating to land use, up to the year 2006.

4 PLANNING CONTEXT: COUNTY STRUCTURE PLAN

The content of this document is based on the overall settlement strategy for Blyth Valley as laid down by Northumberland County Council in the Northumberland County Structure Plan, 1996. The Policies in this Plan reflect the Structure Plan. There are references to the

Structure Plan at intervals, as relevant, throughout this Written Statement. Further information on the Settlement Strategy is set out in Chapter 2.

5 THE LOCAL PLAN PROCESS

Preparation work on the Local Plan commenced in the early 1990's and, in Autumn 1994, a consultation draft of the Local Plan was made available. Wide public consultations took place during 1995. In Spring 1996 a revised version of the Local Plan was "placed on deposit".

Representations on this were invited and received, following which negotiations took place with objectors to try to resolve objections - if necessary through changes to the Plan document. As a result of this process, a book of "Pre-Inquiry Changes" was published in early 1997.

Meanwhile, those objections which had not been resolved had to be considered at a Public Local Inquiry under the chairmanship of an independent Inspector from the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions. Objectors could appear in person or have their objections dealt with as `written representations'. The Inspector also considered those objections where there had already been agreement between the Council and the objector. In addition to the representations received, he therefore examined in detail, the full content of the Local Plan itself and all the changes contained in the Pre-Inquiry Changes document or tabled between their publication and the end of the Inquiry.

The Inquiry itself opened on 30th April 1997 and closed on 18th September 1997. The Inspector's report was published in February 1998. In his report, the Inspector set out his consideration of objections in the order that they refer to the Blyth Valley District Local Plan, Deposit Version, Spring 1996. The Inspector's report contains 187 separate recommendations on the Local Plan. Some advocate new changes to take into account objections. Many simply endorse changes informally agreed before or during the Inquiry. Others recommend no change.

During 1998, the Council gave consideration to the Inspector's report and in September 1998 published a document of "Proposed Modifications", containing more than 600 modifications to the Local Plan. These were the subject of a six week consultation period between mid-September and late October 1998.

Representations on these along with further changes of circumstance etc. resulted in the publication of "Additional Proposed Modifications" in February 1999. Although further representations were received on these, the Council decided not to make any further amendments but to proceed to adopt the Plan.

6 IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

The Policies and Proposals in this Local Plan will be implemented through development control and positive proposals. This is expanded upon in Chapter 19.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL APPRAISAL

There is now a requirement that Local Planning Authorities carry out an Environmental Appraisal of the Policies and Proposals in their Local Plan. This has been done and a summary of the results is incorporated into this document at Appendix I. The full Appraisal can be obtained from the Planning and Development Department.

8 FURTHER QUESTIONS AND INFORMATION

Any questions on the Local Plan can be answered by writing to The Borough Planning and Development Officer at the address given on the title page of this Written Statement, or by ringing (01670) 542382.

1. Environmental Protection and Enhancement

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter looks at the existing environment against which background all planning decisions must be made. It sets the context for the whole of the rest of the Local Plan; it proposes ways in which the environmental heritage of the Plan area can best be protected for the future; and, equally importantly, it puts forward proposals for enhancing that environment.

The Chapter begins with the assumption that all types of environment, whether totally "natural" or totally "artificial" or somewhere between these two extremes, has the potential to be worthy of protection and/or the potential to benefit from enhancement measures.

The chapter sets down planning policies which aim to address the full range of environmental issues, progressing through from the natural environment and **nature conservation,** (**Section 1.2**), to the visible, open **landscape**, (**Section 1.3**) and **agriculture**, (**Section 1.4**), to aspects which are less visible - **ground and water** related, (**Section 1.5**). In relation to these four aspects, it looks at how human activity can have a modifying effect which can be beneficial or detrimental.

It then goes on to deal with environments that are created entirely for the purpose of accommodating human life and activity - i.e. **the built environment**, (**Section 1.6**). On this front, the protection and enhancement of the most valuable parts of the built environment are covered, followed by some policies on more general methods of **local environmental enhancement**, (**Section 1.7**). Some less tangible or predictable threats to the environment are then dealt with. There is a section on **pollution control**, (**Section 1.8**), followed by one on **telecommunications**, (**Section 1.9**).

The chapter then explores the relationship between the alternative **energy generation and conservation** aims of this Plan and the protection of the environment, **(Section 1.10).**

Finally, there is a section on Environmental Impact Assessments, which are required when a significant environmental threat may be posed by a planning proposal, **(Section 1.11).**

1.2 NATURE CONSERVATION

In recent years, there has been increasing recognition of the importance of natural habitats within the Plan area. In the late 1980's Blyth Valley Borough Council prepared a Nature Conservation Plan which sought to give maximum protection to wildlife through various means at the disposal of the Local Authority.

This section seeks to translate these aims and sentiments into meaningful land use related policies.

1.2.1 Designated Areas

Policy E1 is specifically directed towards the protection and enhancement of designated areas. There are three main tiers of importance in terms of designated nature conservation sites - international, national and regional / local. All three are listed at Panel E-P1. In applying the Policy as a whole, account must be taken of the possibility that sites may be upgraded in terms of their status or that entirely new sites may be designated during the Plan period. It should also be noted that a number of the sites extend beyond the Plan area boundary, (indicated in Panel E-P1), and one site entirely within North Tyneside abuts the Plan area. Account will be taken of any effect of proposals within the Plan area on these area.

There are many agencies involved in the identification, protection, management and enhancement of nature conservation sites. The most important, and the main consultee, is the Nature Conservancy Council for England, or "English Nature".[1]

SITES OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE

The Northumberland Shore area, extending along the coastline and estuary areas and protected specifically for its bird life, has been identified as a potential Special Protection Area, (S.P.A.), under a European Directive, as well as as a potential Ramsar site under the 1971 Convention on Wetlands of International Importance. Government policy is such that all candidate S.P.A.'s and Ramsars will be treated as existing, so affording them a higher status in policy terms than sites of national importance, (which it is already designated - as an SSSI - see below).

1 *Another key agent of nature conservation is the Environment Agency. They will examine development proposals in terms of their effect on the water table, water courses, water bodies and inshore waters of the sea, which together account for a wide range of natural habitats. This process will be greatly assisted by reference to the Blyth Catchment Management Plan, produced by the Agency, as well as the Coast Management Plan into which the Agency has an input.*

Panel E-P1

NATURE CONSERVATION - DESIGNATED SITES

	Location	Grid Ref.	Interest
A	**SITES OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE**		
1	Northumberland Shore (S.S.S.I., Proposed Special Protection Area and Proposed Ramsar Site)*	NT980575 - NY010525 & NU165363 - NZ365685	Important wintering ground for shore birds and of international or national significance for six species of waders.
B	**SITES OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE**		
1	New Hartley Pond (S.S.S.I.)	NZ305765	Seasonal pond of open water and adjacent marshy land accommodating large amphibian population.
2	Holywell Pond (S.S.S.I.)	NZ319752	Subsidence pond and adjacent marshy land accommodating wintering birds.
3	Tynemouth to Seaton Sluice (S.S.S.I.)*	NZ345765	Important geological strata including exposed coal seams.
4	Arcot Hall Grassland and Ponds (S.S.S.I.)	NZ247756	Species-rich grassland, with heathland, ponds and associated damp habitats.
C	**SITES OF REGIONAL / LOCAL IMPORTANCE**		
1	Plessey Woods (S.N.C.I.)*	NZ249799	Lowland deciduous woodland (semi natural).
2	East Cramlington Pond (S.N.C.I.)	NZ292757	Open water accommodating invertebrate fauna and amphibians.
3	Blyth Estuary (S.N.C.I.)*	NZ295823	Intertidal flats accommodating winter waders and unusual estuarine plants.
4	Seaton Sluice Sand Dunes (S.N.C.I.)	NZ327780	Sand dunes with rich flora and fauna - considered one of the best sites in South Northumberland for moths and butterflies of this habitat.
5	Seaton Burn Estuary (S.N.C.I.)	NZ335765	Salt marsh, wet grassland and woodland.
6	South Newsham Reservoir (S.N.C.I.)	NZ304791	Still water life.
7	Arcot Hall (S.N.C.I.)	NZ247756	Species-rich grassland, with ponds and associated damp habitats.
8	Holywell Dene (S.N.C.I.)*	NZ3274 - NZ3376	Semi-natural ancient woodland, situated on the banks of Seaton Burn.
9	Lanercost Local Nature Reserve	NZ278764	Species-rich grassland including species more typical of upland areas.
10	OUTSIDE PLAN AREA: Annitsford Pond (S.N.C.I.)	NZ267742	Ponded area adjoining Plan area boundary, in adjacent Local Authority of North Tyneside.

**The areas thus marked continue beyond the Plan area boundary.*

E1 (i) gives a high level of protection to the potential S.P.A. / Ramsar site with development that could adversely affect the habitat offered by the coastline for certain bird species only being granted planning permission if there are strong health and safety or nature conservation related reasons to do so. Development likely to have a significant affect on the potential S.P.A. / Ramsar area would usually require an Environmental Assessment.[2] [3]

Permitted development rights are withdrawn, where the normally permitted development would be likely affect the S.P.A. / Ramsar site. In such cases English Nature will be consulted and there may be a need for a planning application to be submitted and determined.

SITES OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE

As the main national nature conservation agency, English Nature themselves designate those sites which are of national importance - Sites of Special Scientific Interest, (SSSI's).[4] These may be important for habitat, species, geographical or geomorphological interest. There are several SSSI's in Blyth Valley.

2 *See Section 1.11, below*

3 *See also Policy W4 which deals with the Port area, as well as Chapters 16 and 18, covering the Quayside and Links areas respectively, which impinge on the S.P.A.*

4 *Nationally important sites may also be declared as National Nature Reserves, (see Glossary) although at present there is none in the District.*

Policy **E1** — *NATURE CONSERVATION: DESIGNATED AREAS*

Designated sites of conservation importance will be protected from adverse impact from development. Proposals for development within, adjacent to or otherwise affecting existing wildlife and natural history on designated sites, as described in Panel E-P1 and, (with the exception of those parts of the designations beyond the Plan area boundary), shown on the Proposals Map, will be determined as follows, while also adhering within these sites to the provisions of Policy E2 below:

i Where affecting a Special Protection Area or Ramsar site, whether designated or proposed, they will be subject to rigorous examination. Development which is likely to have a significant adverse effect on the habitat, species or other aspect being safeguarded by the designation, (either individually or in combination with other Plans or projects) will not be permitted unless the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that either:

a it is necessary for reasons of human health, public safety; or

b it is directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site or has other beneficial consequences of primary importance for nature conservation;

and that alternative solutions are not available.

Where proposed development likely to affect such a site would normally be permitted development, it will require planning permission, unless it is decided, after consultation with English Nature, that the development would not affect the nature conservation integrity of the site;

ii Where affecting any Site of Special Scientific Interest, they will be subject to special scrutiny. If judged to be likely to have a significant adverse effect, directly or indirectly, on the S.S.S.I., proposals for development will not be permitted unless the reasons for them are regarded as outweighing both the value of the site itself and the national policy to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of such sites and there are no alternative means of meeting the development. If, applying the above, permission can be granted, the use of conditions or Planning Obligations, (the latter applying Policy G11), will be considered, in order to safeguard and, where possible, enhance the site's value in terms of the reasons that it was initially designated an S.S.S.I.;

iii Where adversely affecting a Site of Nature Conservation Importance or Local Nature Reserve, development will not be permitted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that there are reasons for the proposal, including where appropriate the implementation of other policies and proposals in this Local Plan, which significantly outweigh the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the site. Where the adverse effect of a development proposal on a Site of Nature Conservation Importance or Local Nature Reserve could be counteracted by introducing measures for the improved management of the site, permission may be granted subject to other Policies, provided that it is tied to a Planning Obligation for the necessary management of the site, applying Policy G11. Proposals affecting Sites on the Register of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland, while being subject to Policy E5, will also be examined in relation to this part of this Policy.

E1 (ii) sets out the main tests, when examining a proposal affecting an SSSI. These will be the importance of the site in its own right as well as its contribution towards national policy to protect particular types of habitat, (in Blyth Valley, including ponded areas, accommodating amphibians and wintering birds, protected geological strata, and species rich grassland).

SITES OF REGIONAL / LOCAL IMPORTANCE

At the regional / local level of importance, the designations are less formal. Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (S.N.C.I.'s), are identified and surveyed by the community based Northumberland Wildlife Trust. Within the Plan area, these cover a wide

Policy **E1** — *NATURE CONSERVATION: DESIGNATED AREAS*

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a it is necessary for reasons of human health, public safety; or

b it is directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site or has other beneficial consequences of primary importance for nature conservation;

and that alternative solutions are not available.

Where proposed development likely to affect such a site would normally be permitted development, it will require planning permission, unless it is decided, after consultation with English Nature, that the development would not affect the nature conservation integrity of the site;

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iii Where adversely affecting a Site of Nature Conservation Importance or Local Nature Reserve, development will not be permitted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that there are reasons for the proposal, including where appropriate the implementation of other policies and proposals in this Local Plan, which significantly outweigh the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the site. Where the adverse effect of a development proposal on a Site of Nature Conservation Importance or Local Nature Reserve could be counteracted by introducing measures for the improved management of the site, permission may be granted subject to other Policies, provided that it is tied to a Planning Obligation for the necessary management of the site, applying Policy G11. Proposals affecting Sites on the Register of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland, while being subject to Policy E5, will also be examined in relation to this part of this Policy.

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SITES OF REGIONAL / LOCAL IMPORTANCE

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Policy **E 2** *NATURE CONSERVATION: GENERAL PROTECTION OF WILDLIFE*

Natural habitats and wildlife throughout the Plan area will be protected and enhanced as follows:

i A planning application may be subject to:

- **the imposition of appropriate planning conditions and/or-**
- **the pursuit of planning obligations or management agreements in accordance with Policy G11, if the development proposed would have an unacceptable adverse effect on wildlife and/or if there are wildlife related measures which are necessary to allow the development to proceed. Where any such potential damage to wildlife cannot be mitigated by a condition or planning obligation, this may form a reason for refusing the application.**

The above decisions will take into account the importance for wildlife of the following, individually or in combination:

a existing features forming wildlife habitats, including hedgerows, stone walls, linear tree belts / shelter belts, plantations and small woodlands, larger semi-natural or ancient woodlands, river corridors, water bodies and, within the built-up areas, open spaces, green corridors and avenues;

b additions or extensions to, and reinstatements of hedgerows, stone walls, ponds, urban green spaces, and the tree and shrub cover - in the latter case using native species wherever possible;

c features of nature conservation value that contribute towards the linking together of wildlife habitats, including the existing and potential wildlife corridors the routes of which are indicated on the Proposals Map;

d the protection of individual species, especially badgers, seals and other species protected by Schedules 1, 5 and 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended, including instances where such species are likely to be disturbed by a proposal in a location where natural features or habitats have not previously been protected or even identified - most notably where bats are discovered in buildings that are the subject of development proposals.

ii Where possible, positive measures, not necessarily associated with an application for development, will be used to achieve (i)(a to d) above, including:

a within the North-East Cramlington Community Development Area, (at Northburn Playing Fields and Central Park), in accordance with Proposal NE6;

b within the Southern Development Area at West Blyth, in accordance with Proposal WB12;

iii The interests of nature conservation will be taken into account in all relevant planning decisions;

iv In exceptional cases, where the displacement of a natural feature, (not falling under a designation referred to in Policy E1), cannot be avoided for other planning reasons, it will be sought, through Planning Agreement, to replace it locally by the creation of a similar feature or habitat;

v Where appropriate, Local Nature Reserves, further to that in E1 (iii), will be designated;

vi The protection of some of the open spaces specifically protected from development under Policy C7, (all of which are shown on the Proposals Map), is justified on nature conservation grounds, with Appendix XXII indicating which are protected for this reason. Where, exceptionally, a small element of building may be acceptable for community related reasons set out in Policy C7, such building will only be permitted if it retains the nature conservation value of the open space.

9 *Although it should be noted that the funding of some of these may be tied to adjoining development, rather than being carried out as an entirely separate initiative. See also Policy G11 on Planning Obligations.*

PLANNING DECISIONS - LESS OBVIOUS EFFECTS

E2 (iii) is intended to direct planning decisions to consider nature conservation implications. Even if no natural feature is obviously affected, there may be marginal or indirect effects.

REPLACEMENT OF WILDLIFE HABITATS

E2 (iv) deals with situations where an undesignated feature such as a pond has to be removed in order to achieve some other planning aim, and it is possible to recreate it or create a similar or enhanced feature in the near vicinity while retaining the local wildlife population.[10]

ADDITIONAL LOCAL NATURE RESERVES

E2 (v) encourages the further designation of Local Nature Reserves as and when suitable habitats are developed (or discovered) on Council owned land or on land where the Council has other legal interests. This is particularly appropriate if the particular type of habitat concerned is not represented or otherwise preserved or accessible within the area and where management can be kept within the control of the Local Authority itself.[11]

OPEN SPACES PROTECTED FOR NATURE CONSERVATION REASONS

E2 (vi) refers to the protection of specific open spaces under a policy in the Community Facilities Chapter and makes clear that some are protected for their nature conservation value, (although there are normally other reasons, either visual or strategic, for protecting them).[12] Where, for exceptional community related reasons, a small element of built development may be thought acceptable,[13] it will only be permitted if the nature conservation value of the open space is retained.

1.3 **LANDSCAPE**

The term "landscape" is used to refer to the surrounding environment as viewed from particular points on the ground. For the purposes of this Local Plan a "landscape" will be taken to comprise mainly open or wooded land. The term will not be applied within a totally built-up area[14] but a landscape may incorporate elements of the built environment - e.g. where a rural area abuts the edge of a town.

In contrast with the nature conservation considerations already dealt with, landscape considerations are first and foremost "visual". To a degree, a more traditional human-based approach has to be taken, when considering a landscape proposal or the landscape implications of a proposal.[15]

Appendix III of this Written Statement gives some background information on the landscapes in Blyth Valley. The Plan area contains six landscape types which are considered to be of value: incised wooded valleys, estuarine, farmed estate landscape, open coastline, cliffed coast and wooded wetland / grassland. There are also landscapes such as those formed as a result of pit heap reclamation which, while important to people in their locality, (and a considerable improvement on the preceding dereliction), do not have the intrinsic importance of the landscapes represented by (a) to (f) in Appendix III. The appendix describes the qualities of each.

Policy E3 enables planning applications which affect landscapes to be considered against the intrinsic qualities of the landscape type or types affected. The Policy will particularly be applied where a development does not conflict with other Policies in the plan (e.g. Green Belt / countryside policies).

The greatest impact on a landscape is likely where there is a proposal for buildings, structures etc. in an exposed setting. **E3 (i)** states that an unacceptably adverse effect can be a reason for refusing an application. Conversely, the degree of concealment - e.g. as a result of tree cover or topography can serve to make a development more acceptable in landscape terms. Nevertheless, **E3 (ii)** clarifies that certain structures can, in some cases, also be damaging in parts of a landscape with an element of enclosure or seclusion, even if only visible from the immediate surroundings. **E3 (iii)** cross refers to Policy E18 which deals with open tracts within the built-up areas.[16] A landscape assessment of the entire Plan area has been undertaken. The results have been used to draw up a Landscape Strategy.[17] The positive effects of any added landscaping will be acknowledged in any planning decisions.

10 *This has been successfully carried out at Seghill waste disposal site.*

11 *It should be noted that the County Council also has the power to declare Local Nature Reserves and should be encouraged to do so in a complementary way to the Council's own endeavours.*

12 *The overall protection of open spaces within the urban parts of the Plan area is dealt with in Policy C7. Appendix XXII lists all protected open areas along with the reasons for giving them protection from development.*

13 *See Policy C7.*

14 *Here, terms such as "streetscape" or "area character" are employed - see also Section 3.6 below.*

15 *For example the contribution which the landscape - existing or proposed - can make towards human activities and aspirations, as well as towards the creation or preservation of natural habitats.*

16 *Impact of development on the countryside generally is covered in Policy G10 and, where a large scale development, G12 (iii). Policy E17 deals more generally with the visual impact of development).*

17 *The most relevant extract from the Landscape Strategy, giving guidance to developers, is contained in Appendix IV. This is guidance which should assist in interpreting how certain criteria in Policies E3 as well as E4 to E6 could be met on the ground in varying circumstances. Many of the measures within the Landscape Strategy as a whole are related to the management of landscape features such as woodlands and meadows. Such action is not usually tied to planning or land use decisions.*

Policy ***E3*** — *LANDSCAPE: GENERAL APPROACH*

The quality of the landscape will be taken into account in planning decisions by assessing proposals according to their effects on the intrinsic qualities of the landscape type or types which they affect, those qualities being described in Appendix III (a) to (f). In addition:

i Where there is a proposal for built development or temporary buildings or structures outside or on the edge of a settlement account will be taken of the impact on the landscape as viewed from dwellings, transport routes, footpaths, bridleways or cycleways and, where an Area of High Landscape Value as defined in Policy E4 below is affected, permission may be refused if the effect is considered to be unacceptably adverse;

ii Where the surrounding landscape gives an element of concealment to a development proposal, permission may be granted for types of development that would otherwise be unacceptable if viewed across open land, so long as there is no conflict with other Policies in the Plan and there would be no unacceptably adverse impact on the intrinsic value of the landscape as defined in (a) to (f) of Appendix III;

iii Where the proposal is within the built-up area but affects an open space, Policy E18 will be applied.

Account will also be taken of any positive landscape related measures proposed as part of any development.

1.3.1 **Areas of High Landscape Value**

Rural Northumberland, within a few miles of the boundary of the Plan area, contains some of the most valued landscapes in the country. This is recognised in the designation of two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty - on the North Northumberland Coast and in the North Pennines. There is also a National Park across the west of the County.

However, this still leaves large tracts of the rural County, containing undoubtedly fine (and in some areas unique) landscapes, without any form of national designation to protect them. For this reason, the Northumberland County Structure Plan has proposed that extensive Areas of High Landscape Value should be defined in Local Plans, covering areas such as Druridge Bay and the North Tyne Valley.

At the same time the Structure Plan recognises the strategic importance of possibly much less expansive landscapes in the more built-up parts of the County. There are no large expanses of very high quality landscape within Blyth Valley but there are smaller features with a strategic landscape importance. Areas of High Landscape Value (A.H.L.V.'s) are therefore defined in this Local Plan.

THE DESIGNATION OF A.H.L.V.'s

Policy E4 designates A.H.L.V.'s for Blyth Valley and sets out the additional protection which these areas will receive, (over and above the presumption against most forms of development outside built-up areas - see Policies G8 and G9).

The A.H.L.V's within Blyth Valley are:

1 **The River Blyth Valley A.H.L.V.**, which covers the wooded, incised valley, some of the more open land in its visual envelope and the estuarine area;

2 **The Holywell and Coast A.H.L.V.**, which covers the valley of the Seaton Burn downstream of Seghill, including an important hinterland of rolling, open countryside; the **Seaton Delaval Estate** between Holywell Dene and the Avenue; and the **coastline** from Old Hartley northwards towards Blyth;

3 **The Arcot A.H.L.V.**, which covers a small area around Arcot Hall and Damdykes Farm in the South-West Sector of Cramlington.

The boundaries of the A.H.L.V.'s have been defined largely to follow natural or artificial linear features which delineate the landscapes concerned. The detailed definitions of the A.H.L.V.'s are set out at Appendix III.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE A.H.L.V. LANDSCAPES

The Incised, Wooded Valleys - A.H.L.V. (1)(part) & (2)(part)

The strategic importance of the two incised, wooded valleys (or denes) of the river Blyth and the Seaton Burn has been recognised in previous versions of the County

Policy ***E4*** *AREAS OF HIGH LANDSCAPE VALUE*

Areas of High Landscape Value are designated, as shown on the Proposals Map, covering parts of the valleys of the River Blyth and the Seaton Burn, their associated hinterlands of open countryside, the Seaton Delaval Estate, the coast and the Arcot area of Cramlington, within which development, including that not otherwise precluded by Environmental Protection Policies, (most notably E1,2 and 10), shall only be granted permission in accordance with Policy E3, in addition to which, additional weight will be given to:

i The scale of the proposal relative to the landscape;

ii The visibility of any proposed buildings or structures, (including extensions to existing buildings), and/or associated works (including car parking), with particular regard to their impact on views and vistas;

iii The design of the proposal, (including any landscaping scheme) relative to the surrounding landscape and buildings and structures within it.

Structure Plan. Their protection has been seen as particularly important in the context of South-East Northumberland where they have remained relatively unscathed in the midst of modifications imposed on the landscape by a century and a half of industrial use.

In spite of the removal of much dereliction from surrounding areas, the two valleys remain unique in landscape terms. Their incised form reflects their unique geomorphological history and both contain substantial areas of semi-natural woodland. It is important that these areas are protected within their context of surrounding, largely open countryside.

Thus, as well as the Seaton Delaval Estate, other areas abutting Holywell Dene are included, further upstream. The area of undulating countryside to the south of Holywell Village is fairly low lying and is particularly visible from the Conservation Areas at Holywell Village and, (in North Tyneside), Earsdon. Land to the south of the Blyth incised valley is included for similar, contextual reasons.

Blyth Estuary - A.H.L.V. (1)(part)

The estuarine area of the River Blyth presents a contrasting but equally significant landscape. The tidal mudflats, viewed from Kitty Brewster Bridge are a uniform, but totally natural expanse sitting calmly within the jagged, varied and sometimes derelict urban / industrial backdrop.

Seaton Delaval Estate - A.H.L.V. (2)(part)

The Seaton Delaval Estate is also of significant local landscape value with its informal estate parkland with woodland areas, (including Holywell Dene along one fringe), architectural features and vistas. It is designated in part as part of an A.H.L.V. in spite of the further layer of protection afforded by its status as a Conservation Area, (see Policy E10 below).

The Open Coastline - A.H.L.V. (2)(part)

It is also considered that vistas to Seaton Delaval Hall from the coastline north of Seaton Sluice, are important and that the open coastline is itself a distinctive local landscape worthy of protection.

The Cliffed Coast - A.H.L.V. (2)(part)

Further South, close to the boundary with North Tyneside, the cliffed area presents a different coastal landscape and is an integral part of the shorescape area centred on St. Mary's Island.

The Arcot Area - A.H.L.V. (3)

The area including Arcot Hall and the S.S.S.I. presents a landscape that incorporates areas of water, mature trees and grasslands, unique in this part of South-East Northumberland.

Within and around the above areas, the criteria in Policy E3 will be applied particularly vigorously with additional account being taken of, (see **E4 (i to iii)**):

- scale;
- the visual effects of ALL features of the developments, not the more intrusive structures; and
- overall design.[18]

1.3.2 **Tree and Shrub Cover**

The Landscape Strategy deals, not just with Areas of High Landscape Value, but sets out a strategy for the

Policy ***E5*** — *THE PROTECTION OF THE TREE AND SHRUB COVER*

Significant trees and areas of trees and shrubs will be protected by the following means:

i Not normally granting planning permission for any development which would displace trees from areas of mature trees including areas of semi-natural woodland, as indicated on the Proposals Map, some parts of which are covered by Tree Preservation Orders, including the following major woodland assets:

- **the wooded parts of the Seaton Delaval Estate including the Avenue;**
- **the wooded parts of Holywell Dene from the A190 at Seghill to Seaton Sluice Bridge;**
- **the wooded parts of the valley of the River Blyth from Stannington Vale to Furnace Bridge;**
- **woodlands around Arcot Hall in the South West Sector of Cramlington;**
- **the woodland at Seghill Hall;**

ii Retaining, through planning decisions, areas of plantation woodland, some parts of which are covered by Tree Preservation Orders, as indicated on the Proposals Map;

iii Where Tree Preservation Orders apply, only approving tree work where it is:

- **a necessary to the survival of the tree; or**
- **b necessary for health and safety reasons; or**
- **c in very exceptional circumstances, it will assist in the achievement of another Policy or Proposal in this Plan;**

iv Within Conservation Areas, only approving tree work where it is:

- **a necessary in terms of (iii) (a) to (c) above; or**
- **b the work is considered insignificant or would contribute positively towards the visual character of the area; or**

v Designating further Tree Preservation Orders where it becomes necessary to afford additional protection to individual trees or woodland areas;

vi In relation to individual applications for the development of sites with existing tree and shrub cover:

- **a seeking to enter into Planning Agreements, under Policy G11, with the Developer that specified trees or areas of trees and shrubs within the application site should be retained and managed, possibly under Local Authority control, with a requirement for commuted payments covering management and maintenance;**
- **b where applicable, having regard to landscape guidance for new development at Appendix IV;**
- **c recognising, where appropriate, the potential benefits of recreational use for woodland areas.**

whole Plan area. This includes enhancement - i.e. increasing the landscape interest of the Plan area. This is dealt with in Policy E6 below.

THE PROTECTION OF THE TREE AND SHRUB COVER

Policy E5 aims to ensure that existing woodland and individually important trees are retained. This is the important first step, vital to the success of any enhancement programme. Although the main aim is to

18 *It is worth noting that, from time to time, there will be a need for structures related to essential infrastructure services to be located in AHLV's. For instance, very visible powerlines already pass through parts of them and may need to be added to. Since this is permitted development, the Local Plan can not prevent them. However, they can be the subject of negotiation, when changes to them are proposed. It will also be the role of the Planning Authority to monitor any cumulative effect, over time that such changes may have on landscape quality within AHLV's.*

implement this policy through planning measures, it should be acknowledged that various agencies are involved including land owners of which the Council itself is one. The organisation statutorily responsible for ensuring the protection of trees, woods and forests is the Forestry Authority.[19]

The Main, Older Wooded Areas

E5 (i) gives full protection to the main wooded parts of the Plan area. These are fairly extensive areas in spite of a substantial part of the Plan area being built-up and many of the open parts having a history of colliery tipping or other forms of industrial dereliction. As well as the woodland of the two incised rivers valleys and the Seaton Delaval Estate, (mentioned in connection with the A.H.L.V. designations in Policy E4), there are wooded areas around Seghill Hall and in the south-west sector of Cramlington. Much is mature; much is at least semi-natural, (i.e. not all deliberately planted).

The Newer Woodlands

E5 (ii) acknowledges the benefits of planting resulting from two or more decades of reclamation schemes (covering former colliery heaps and other derelict sites), plus other planned planting of trees and shrubs, (most notably along the South-East Northumberland Spine Road and within Cramlington). The maturing of these woodlands provides a resource of value as a wildlife habitat. In human terms, their initial role of screening or covering former landscape scars is being replaced as the woodlands become an attraction in their own right. This is being recognised and, as well as being incorporated into the landscape / forest structure for south-east Northumberland, (see Policy E6 below), their use for recreational purposes will be encouraged during the Plan period.[20] As the basis for this, these areas are defined on the Proposals Map and afforded protection.

Tree Preservation Orders

E5 (iii to iv) deal with the subject of Tree Preservation Orders, (T.P.O.'s). Once designated, T.P.O. trees are well protected through the statutes. However exceptions can be made by approving tree work. Parts iii and iv of the policy establish the necessary guidance for such approval. It should be noted that, even where Tree Preservation Orders cover extensive woodland areas, they do not themselves, offer a mechanism to ensure positive management.

Protection of Trees and Shrubs in Relation to Planning Applications

E5 (vi) identifies ways in which to protect trees, including non-T.P.O. areas, from the effects of development and ways in which development can lead to enhancement and proper management of woodlands. When planning applications are submitted, the land area often includes trees which are not protected by T.P.O.'s or otherwise, the loss of which would nevertheless be detrimental in terms of the overall scheme. Where necessary, Planning Agreements will be entered into,[21] in order to ensure their retention and maintenance, possibly involving commuted payments.

The proper management and maintenance of existing woodland is as vital as retaining tree cover.[22] In planning terms, there is little control over the management of woodlands across the Plan area. However woodland management agreements can be tied to the granting of permission for some associated development. The Landscape Strategy includes guidance for new developments including where existing landscapes are affected. It will be adhered to in all decisions. The relevant part is reproduced at Appendix IV. Even where woodland retention, maintenance and management cannot be tied to planning permission, good practice can be encouraged. The Blyth Valley Landscape Strategy is intended for the full range of those with an influence on woodlands.

Sometimes a development proposal will involve the use of an existing woodland for recreational purposes. The policy allows for this use, where there is a positive benefit for the management and enjoyment of the woodland without causing damage to it.

THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE TREE AND SHRUB COVER

Policy E6 reflects the positive aspects of the Blyth Valley Landscape Strategy.

Priority Areas for New Planting

E6 (i) contains a list of the priorities for additional planting. Although incremental, due to various obstacles,[23] it is the intention that, together, over a period of time, the combined effect of individual schemes under these four headings, will be to provide a new, strong landscape framework to complement the existing within the Plan area. The four priorities are:

a **Main transport corridors** have long been recognised as an important area for enhancement work. They can be regarded as the "face" of Blyth Valley in that they provide the viewpoint from where the area is first seen by

19 *The Forestry Authority gives advice to woodland owners and pays grant for the management of existing woodland. Protection of existing woodland is ensured for schemes covered by the Forestry Authority's Woodland Grant Scheme.*

20 *This will be achieved through the Network Strategy - see Policy L3 (ii). See also Policy M8 (ii) on car Parking in rural areas.*

21 *In accordance with Policy G11.*

22 *This can involve the removal of dead trees and selective thinning of mature woods or planned thinning in recently planted woodland after a certain number of years.*

23 *Funding is not the major obstacle. The Forestry Authority provides a major source of funding for woodland creation in Britain.*

Policy ***E 6*** — *THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE TREE AND SHRUB COVER*

Tree and shrub cover within the Plan area will be enhanced and extended, incorporating native species wherever appropriate, by the following means:

i Positive schemes for planting trees and shrubs either in association with development or through separate initiatives, with the strategic aim of contributing towards a new landscape structure for South-East Northumberland by giving preference to:

a planting along the main transport corridors in the Plan area;

b planting which would help to screen eyesores on open landscapes;

c planting at or close to the edge of the built-up area which would contribute to "b" above or which would help define the edge of the settlement and/or assist in achieving a better transition between the built up and open areas;

d planting within the built-up area where this would contribute significantly towards the improvement of the local environment, including the screening of land uses which are considered visually incompatible with their surroundings;

e planting which would assist the creation or enhancement of areas of wildlife, recreational or educational interest or potential.

the above to include the following proposals, which are shown on the Proposals Map where site specific:

PROPOSAL / LOCATION	IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROPOSAL
Work Activity areas: landscaping improvements	WP1 to WP9
Cramlington Town Centre	CC7
Blyth Town Centre: car parking areas	BP4
Cramlington North-East Sector: within existing open areas	NE7
Blyth Links	BL2

ii Requiring the inclusion of trees and shrubs as appropriate in the detailed landscape plans submitted in association with, and preferably at the same time as, detailed planning applications for new development, having particular regard to the overall aims of Part (i) of this Policy and the landscape guidance for new development at Appendix IV. Where necessary, it will be required that a Planning Agreement be signed in accordance with Policy G11, to secure the proper implementation of landscaping schemes and/or commuted payments to cover maintenance and management.

iii The implementation of planned belts of landscaping to form a landscape structure in advance of and/or in association with large new developments, the most important elements of which are shown on the Proposals Map, including:

LOCATION	IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROPOSAL
West Hartford Proposed Work Activity Area	WP4
South Cramlington Work Activity Area	WP5
Cramlington North-East Sector	NE7
Cramlington South-West Sector	SW6 (a)
Chase Farm, West Blyth	WB4
South Beach	SB5
South-West Newsham	SN1

The above measures will seek to contribute towards the achievement of Policy E2 (iii) wherever possible.

visitors and those passing through. Trees and shrubs along railways and road can help soften harsh open views which, in the Plan area, typically include rows of electricity pylons.

b It is possible that, given time, screens of planting close to **pylons or other** structures that may be regarded as **"eyesores"**, would help.

c Planting at the **edge of the built up areas** can provide screening as well but, equally, it can assist in defining, softening or screening the edge of a settlement or providing a better transition between urban and rural areas.[24]

d **Within the built-up area** planting can be of benefit along transport corridors, in screening unsightly uses, providing buffers between housing and industry, creating wildlife habitats or by simply making use of vacant land.

e As mentioned already, planting can help **create wildlife habitats** or to enhance them by filling gaps in hedge or tree cover. Some types of **outdoor recreation** also merit areas of planting.

The last part of E6 (i) cross refers to particular landscape improvement proposals which are not necessarily associated with adjoining development, and which fit in with the above strategy.

Unless they are associated with a particular development scheme, public finance is needed for planting schemes. This would make for very slow progress towards a new landscape structure.[25]

Enhancement of Tree and Shrub Cover in Relation to Planning Applications

The last part of the previous policy has the aim of preserving existing trees and shrubs on planning application sites. **E6 (ii)** conversely, states that it will be the norm to require additional landscaping in association with any planning application of significance. As a rule, it will be sought that landscape schemes are submitted and approved simultaneously with the main detailed application. This would be true for most housing developments of more than one or two dwellings as well as applications for industry, retailing etc.. Where necessary, planning obligations rather than conditions will be utilised to ensure a properly phased implementation[26] and commuted payments may be agreed for maintenance purposes.[27] The section of the Landscape Strategy on new development is reproduced at Appendix IV.

Following on from this, **E6 (iii)** states that, in the major development areas, it will normally be sought that a landscape structure is implemented in association with the overall development and preferably in advance.

Maximising Nature Conservation Benefits of Planting

In implementing all parts of Policy E6, regard will be had to the intentions of Policy E2 - i.e. the creation of appropriate new wildlife habitats wherever possible.

1.4 AGRICULTURE

The next level at which environmental protection policies need to be pitched is the land itself - i.e agriculture.

In terms of the previous two sections - on the natural environment and the landscape:

- areas in full scale agricultural production and the most valuable natural habitats are unlikely to coincide;
- on the other hand, agriculture lends much to the overall character of landscapes within Blyth Valley, (although the most valuable landscapes include significant areas which are not in agricultural production).
- agricultural production will affect, and be affected by aspects of the land such as the fertility of the soil, the water table, and the level of pollution within them.

Any environmental protection policies relating to agriculture and horticulture should be based around these three aspects but must also bear in mind that agriculture is a fundamental and necessary element of the local economy and is currently is in the process of diversifying within that economy.

1.4.1 Agricultural Land

There is clearly a relationship between the economics of agriculture and the land use / landscape pattern that is presented on the ground. The continuation of the existing landscape depends, to an extent, on the status quo being maintained in agriculture. However, a major change in Government policy means that this is not the case. Farmers are no longer being encouraged to maximise output due to overproduction of foodstuffs. Instead, a "set-aside" policy has been introduced, where farmers temporarily remove some of their arable land

24 *This could help to minimise possible conflict between residential and agricultural uses, (see also Section 1.4 below, and Policy G10 in the next chapter).*

25 *However, at present, there is the initiative known as "L.E.A.F." (Landscape Enhancement and Forestry), which receives European Funding and is coordinated by Northumberland County Council. It is hoped that this will speed the movement towards providing substantial woodlands in Blyth Valley and the whole of South-East Northumberland. Priority will be given to areas with a sparse landscape at present, (applying the same criteria that were used to assess the Areas of High Landscape Value). In addition, the Forestry Authority is on record as stating that it encourages and looks favourably upon applications for planting grant and Community Woodland supplement within the south-east part of Northumberland.*

26 *See Policy G11.*

27 *Blyth Valley Borough Council has its own standards for planting, watering etc..*

Policy ***E7*** — *AGRICULTURAL LAND*

The use of the best and most versatile agricultural land for any form of development not associated with agriculture or forestry will not be permitted unless there is a strong need for development, which overrides the need to protect such land, having regard to other Policies in this Local Plan. Where development is permitted on agricultural land:

i **It will be ensured that the land developed is kept to the minimum area and the lowest agricultural grade, reasonably required under the circumstances;**

ii **Account will be taken of the need to retain farms as viable units, wherever possible avoiding:**

a **proportionally large reductions in farm areas;**

b **severance and sub-division of farm units;**

iii **Where necessary it will be ensured that development is phased so as to minimise potential conflict with local agricultural activities.**

Policy ***E8*** — *FARM DIVERSIFICATION*

Proposals for the introduction of non-agricultural enterprises to existing farming businesses will be permitted subject to considerations in Policy G10 and other relevant policies in this Local Plan. Where retail floorspace is involved, Policy C17 (iv) will be applied.

from production. There are also quota systems in place on the livestock side of farming.

This creates opportunities for farmers to contribute towards the aims and achievement of this Plan in the areas of nature conservation and landscape. although it is not possible to control this via planning decisions.

The current surplus of indigenous agricultural produce may not be long term and national policy is that the "best and most versatile" agricultural land should be retained. This is defined as Grades 1, 2 and 3a of the 5 grade Agricultural Land Classification.[28]

Policy E7 seeks to protect this better quality agricultural land.

It is inevitable that development on agricultural land will be necessary at times. **E7 (i)** ensures that, in negotiation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, development is kept to the smallest possible scale and to to lowest grade of land possible.

E7 (ii) concentrates on the farm units and aims to avoid these becoming uneconomical through a reduction in size or the unit being physically split by new development.

E7 (iii) recognises that a careful phasing of development can reduce the kind of disruption described above.

1.4.2 **Planning Control and Agriculture**

It is a fact that the controls which planning can exert over agriculture are limited. The use of land for agricultural purposes does not normally require planning permission. Many developments within agricultural units[29] enjoy permitted development rights under the General Development Order.[30] This includes the construction of

28 *The Agricultural Land Classification is defined by MAFF (the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food) and ranges from Grade 1 (excellent quality) to Grade 5 (very poor quality). There is no representation of Grades 1 and 2 within Blyth Valley. The best and most versatile land within the Plan area is therefore limited to Grade 3a.*

29 *An agricultural unit would normally be a single farm or horticultural unit of at least 0.5 Ha..*

30 *See also Chapter 2 Section 2.6. Slightly greater controls are exerted in relation to units up to 5 Ha. than those over that size.*

buildings for agricultural purposes, or alteration / extension / conversion of an existing agricultural building.

Applications for planning permission are, however, required in limited circumstances.

- Agricultural dwellings: A policy on these is set out in the Housing Chapter;[31]
- Certain types of intensive livestock production units, within 400 metres of dwellings;
- Buildings over a certain size or which serve more than the needs of the farm on which they are situated;

Often, planning control over agricultural areas is indirect. The main instance is where there is a proposal to diversify into non-agricultural uses, (see sub-section 1.4.3 below). In addition there is the matter of any overspill effects of agricultural use on neighbouring non-agricultural uses, which is dealt with in Policy G10.

There is also a case for co-operation and persuasion as a way of limiting any adverse effects of agriculture on the countryside. For instance, part of the philosophy of the Landscape Strategy, referred to extensively in Section 1.3 above, is co-operation with the agricultural sector to enhance the landscape, natural habitats and access for the general public, farmers being encouraged to produce farm conservation plans, which identify the main features, (hedgerows, ponds, footpaths etc.), that would benefit from preservation / management / enhancement measures.

1.4.3 **Farm Diversification**

Farm incomes have been under some pressure for the last decade. National policy is that farmers should be free to introduce suitable non-agricultural enterprises onto their farms in order to maintain and increase their income. The fact that the Plan area has a large urban population close at hand presents many opportunities for this to happen, although, for the same reason, care will need to be taken to avoid too intensive a use of farm property for essentially urban activities.[32]

Most applications for diversification can be determined on the basis of other policies in this Plan - particularly those on buildings in the countryside in the next chapter and individual use policies, such as that on food and drink establishments.[33] Nevertheless, a separate policy to give encouragement to farm diversification enterprises has been included as **Policy E8**. Particular care will need to be taken over proposals to diversify into retail use, and this is handled separately in a later chapter.[34]

1.5 **GROUND AND WATER**

The natural environment and the landscape reflect the form of the land and also its composition - aspects such as the geology, the soil, and the water table.

The particular land form, landscape, vegetation and drainage pattern in any given locality has typically evolved over a long time span. Cultivation will have influenced its content and appearance but essentially, the equilibrium of the land and the landscape today dates back to the last ice age.

If this balance becomes upset, for any reason, there can be adverse implications for the natural environment.

The balance is upset by:

- Gradual changes in the environment which cannot be controlled - at least not at local level - or are not fully understood.
- Disturbances to the ground and water table resulting from human activity: current or future activity requires control, past activity has left problems which require resolution.

As well as determining today's natural environment, the earth beneath the landscape contains an important record of the history of human activity within that landscape. It is also vital that this is treated with care and, if necessary, preserved.

This section sets out how planning decisions will be used in order to minimise any adverse effects of human or other outside influences on the form of the land and the water profile, while recognising that the requirements of day-to-day human activity do require the ground to be disturbed for one reason or another.

The section is divided into five, as follows:

- The Water Environment - sub-divided into:
  - Management of the Water Environment
  - Sea Levels
- Ground Disturbance - sub-divided into:
  - Mineral Extraction
  - Waste Disposal
- Derelict Land
- Contaminated Land
- Archaeology

1.5.1 **The Water Environment**

The form of the natural environment in the Plan area, as everywhere, is largely determined by the pattern of its waterways. In Blyth Valley the coastal location is, in turn, the prime determinant of this pattern.

31 *See Policies H24 and H25.*

32 *One example of farm diversification that is well established is the "keeping" of horses. By this is meant, keeping for non-agricultural purposes. The horses are fed by means other than simply surviving on grazing the field in which they were kept.*

33 *See Chapter 4, .Section 4.13.*

34 *See Chapter 4, Section 4.8.*

Policy ***E9*** — *WATER BODIES: DRAINAGE AND FLOOD RISK*

The water environment will be taken into account in Planning decisions as follows:

i The location of any application for planning permission for new built development will be examined in relation to the river system, the sea and other water bodies in order to:

a ensure suitable drainage arrangements, in accordance with Policy G12;

b assess the liability for flooding with permission being refused or conditioned where necessary.

ii Within the area defined by the sea and the +5 metre OD contour, as marked on the Proposals Map:

a proposals which involve significant new built development, significant additions to existing development or any land recontouring will be assessed against the potential for flood damage and if necessary suitable amendments or additional safeguards secured, normally through negotiation or the addition of planning conditions. Applicants may be required to carry out detailed investigations to evaluate the extent of risk, where this is not known.

b where development of any scale includes or involves the addition of any room, the floor level of which is below ground level, then it will be referred to the body with responsibility for flood control and, if necessary as a result, approved only in the light of appropriate modifications or safeguards.

Policy E9 has the aim of making sure that the water environment is taken into account when assessing planning applications.

MANAGEMENT OF THE WATER ENVIRONMENT

It is now recognised that proper planning of the hydrological system is vital. The body responsible for overseeing the management of the catchment system, including streams, rivers and coastal waters of the sea, is the Environment Agency. The Environment Agency is the prime consultee in relation to proposals likely to have an impact on the natural water system.

E9 (i) deals with two major areas of concern relating to water. First, it is necessary to make sure that there are suitable means to drain a site. This is covered in the general development control policy in the next chapter.[35] Secondly, there is a need to assess the risk of flooding of any chosen site.

In order to aid the process of assessing such effects and to assist in planning for the future conservation, use and enjoyment of the water environment, the Environment Agency is in the process of producing Catchment Area Plans covering the whole country. Blyth Valley will be the subject of two such plans. The River Blyth Catchment Area Plan covers all the river catchments in the Borough - not only that of the River Blyth and its tributaries, but also those of the smaller water courses that flow directly into the sea - i.e. the Seaton Burn and Brierdene Burn.[36] The other catchment area plan falling within Blyth Valley covers the whole of the coast of NE England. and overlaps with the various river catchment area plans.[37] A further management plan, for the estuary of the River Blyth, has been produced to examine all economic and environmental interests in the estuary with an emphasis on minimising potential conflict and sustainability.[38]

One aspect of water and drainage system not dealt with in this policy is the development of the structures necessary to ensure the supply of water, the disposal of sewage and the treatment of both. Applications for such development will be assessed against the general development control policy in the next chapter,[39] and other relevant policies. Where they are likely themselves to be a source of some pollution, such as a new sewage treatment works, then they will be assessed against the relevant pollution control policy.[40]

35 *See Sub-section 2.7.6.*

36 *The Environment Agency defines the purpose of the River Blyth Catchment Area Plan as follows: to "define a strategy for realising the environmental potential of the River Blyth Catchment within the prevailing economic and political constraints".*

37 *This, in turn, will form a reference point for the more general Northumberland Coast Management Plan, which is being co-ordinated by Northumberland County Council, involving the district Councils and a number of agencies, which deals with all aspects of the coast, including such matters as tourism and recreation and is referred to again in Chapter 5.*

38 *The Plan is jointly funded by the various Councils, the Environment Agency, English Nature and the Blyth Harbour Commission.*

39 *See in particular parts ii and iii of Policy G12.*

40 *See Sub-section 1.8.3, later in this Chapter.*

SEA LEVEL CHANGES

An increasingly important consideration in planning decisions in coastal areas is the level above mean high water mark of areas which are the subject of proposals for development.

It is now generally accepted that the possibility that fundamental alterations in patterns of climate are occurring, should be treated seriously.[41] [42]

The degree of the possible risk is difficult to predict.[43] It is very likely that the consequences of any rise in sea level within the Plan period, will be limited to localised erosion,[44] where the instigation of additional management measures,[45] will be sufficient to contain any effects.

However, the land use plan needs to take account of the outside chance of more severe effects and to recognise that, even if they do not materialise during the Plan period, the life expectancy of most built development is at least 50 if not 100 years.

In relation to the above perceived risks, the Environment Agency has carried out surveys of coastal stretches and the tidal reaches of rivers. They have noted that the coast of the Plan area is largely unprotected by specially constructed defences. They have taken the very cautious view that all areas of land below 5 metres above sea level[46] are potentially "at risk".

Within Blyth Valley, substantial areas of land fall within this category, including a significant part of the built-up area of Blyth. It must be stressed that it is not considered that there is any short or medium term risk to these occupied areas.[47] The approach will be to allow development as it is proposed while applying other policies within this Written Statement, as normal.[48] The only difference is set down in **E9 (ii)**.

The area below the +5 metre contour line does include some significant proposals made elsewhere in this Local Plan.[49] It will be ensured that the designs of any large scale structures proposed in these key areas take full account of the outside risk that they may be susceptible to flood damage within their lifetime. If necessary, modifications to the designs will be sought to minimise the potential for major damage in the event of a flood.[50]

Within a tight-knit built-up area such as inner Blyth, there may be many proposals for smaller scale development, including infill development or extensions to existing buildings.[51] Any proposals involving rooms with their floor level below the level of the surrounding ground will be referred to the National Rivers Authority for an assessment as to whether there is a risk of flooding. If so, modifications may be sought.

1.5.2 **Ground Disturbance**

There are two types of proposal which involve major disturbance to the ground and which, for this reason, can have far reaching effects of concern in relation to this Plan's environmental objectives. In simple terms, they involve the removal of material from the ground - usually the **extraction of minerals** and the deposit of material in, on or under the ground - usually the **disposal of waste materials** of one sort or another.

Both of these types of activity have to be planned and carefully managed and, due to their scale and specialist nature, this job is entrusted to the strategic Council. Northumberland County Council therefore is both the Mineral Planning Authority and the Waste Management Authority. As these terms imply, the role is a wider one than the simple determination of applications for mineral extraction or waste disposal. The Authority has to take a wide ranging, long term and, above all, environmental view, looking at factors such as:

- the availability of mineral resources;
- different ways of handling, managing and reducing waste; and
- issues such as the movement of both these sets of bulky materials around the County.

MINERAL EXTRACTION

Mineral extraction has had significant effects on the environment of the Plan area, with some parts suffering considerable degradation due to the extraction of coal and the tipping of waste associated with this. The decline in deep coal mining has been accompanied by an increase in opencast activity. To date, this has mostly been concentrated in parts of south-east Northumberland, further north than Blyth Valley, but interest in extracting coal by opencast methods within the Plan area has recently increased.

41 *These include "global warming" resulting from the "greenhouse effect".*

42 *A significant recent example of coastal flooding which caused concern happened at Towyn, in North Wales, in the winter of 1990.*

43 *One estimate is that, on average, the sea level could rise by up to 6cm per decade but the risk will depend not just on global warming but on any more "regional" patterns of climatic change such any increase in the frequency of strong easterly winds and consequent surge tides.*

44 *This already manifests itself in several places.*

45 *These management measures are the subject of the Northumberland Coast Management Plan.*

46 *This is taken as the +5m OD contour as marked on the 1:10,000 scale Ordnance Survey sheets - which form the base maps for the Proposals Map of this Local Plan, (reduced to 1:12,500.*

47 *Most are towards the upper end of the 0 to 5 metre contour band.*

48 *This will include the normal application of policies on infill, development within or outside settlement limits, Conservation Areas etc., as well as the implementation of specific proposals in areas such as Blyth Town Centre and the Quayside.*

49 *These include the proposals at the former Bates Colliery, Blyth Town Centre, the Quayside and the Links.*

50 *For example, it would be sensible if areas where there may be large concentrations of people were above ground level*

51 *As well as specific smaller scale proposals within this Local Plan.*

Policy ***E 10*** *WASTE MINIMISATION, REUSE AND RECOVERY.*

Proposals which allow for the meeting of the following aims in relation to waste, (which are in priority order):

- **its minimisation at source;**
- **its reuse;**
- **its recovery, (including material recycling, energy recovery and composting);**

will, subject to other policies, be granted permission as long as any environmental disbenefits arising from them are not considered to outweigh the benefits in terms of the above aims on waste.

Government policy seeks to strike a balance between the national interest in exploiting mineral resources and the protection of the environment. Northumberland County Council as "Mineral Planning Authority" is responsible for applying this policy at the local level.

The overall strategy of the Mineral Planning Authority is expressed in the Northumberland Replacement Structure Plan which seeks, wherever possible, to safeguard proven mineral resources and details criteria against which proposals for mineral workings will be assessed. This policy framework is reproduced in Appendix V. More detailed criteria are contained in the Northumberland Minerals Local Plan, which defines much of South-East Northumberland as a constraint area within which proposals for opencast working would generally be unacceptable.[52]

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Operations associated with the or processing of waste often have a net negative effect on the environment. The challenge is to achieve the removal of domestic and commercial waste in the safest, most efficient and environmentally acceptable manner, while recycling as much as possible.

Waste Regulation

The role of the County Council in this has already been referred to. As well as being the Planning Authority responsible for determining planning applications for development associated with waste, the County Council regulates waste through the granting of licences for landfill and waste handling sites and arranges for the disposal of waste collected by the district councils.

The Northumberland Waste Management Plan[53] considers the types and quantities of waste arising in the County, the availability of disposal facilities, the need for further provision and the preferred methods of disposal and treatment of waste.

The land use implications of this strategy are addressed in the Northumberland Waste Local Plan which aims to strike the correct balance between the need to manage waste and the need to protect the environment and quality of life.

However, until such time as this Waste Local Plan is adopted,[54] the Northumberland Replacement Structure Plan will continue to define the strict criteria against which such operations will be measured. This policy framework is reproduced in Appendix V.

As the refuse collection authority, Blyth Valley Borough Council will take an active part in the investigation of alternative methods of dealing with the waste produced by households and businesses. In doing so it will have in mind the hierarchy set out above, with its emphasis on waste minimisation, reuse, recycling, environmentally sensitive treatment etc. In spite of the fact that waste disposal related applications are determined by the County, some facilities which allow for waste minimisation, recycling etc. will be the subject of, or an integral part of applications determined by this Authority.[55] The aim, as set out in **Policy E10**, will be to encourage proposals which allow for the recycling and reclamation of waste and the production of energy from it.

Waste Disposal within Blyth Valley

While it is accepted that alternative methods of handling waste will continue to evolve, it is the reality that there will continue to be a need for landfilling to take place on a significant scale. Indeed it can be the most appropriate

52 *The Minerals Local Plan has not yet been adopted.*

53 *The Waste Management Plan was published following public consultation in March 1996. It is a requirement under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 that the Authority draws up such a plan.*

54 *The Northumberland Waste Local Plan was placed on deposit in September 1998.*

55 *An example would be an application for a retail facility with the inclusion of bays for the storage of recycling skips.*

and economic means of waste disposal and, in certain instances, environmentally acceptable.[56]

A landfill site has operated on open land between the settlements of Seghill, Seaton Delaval and Holywell since the 1970s. In the absence of alternative waste disposal sites in the Plan area, the Waste Regulation Authority have extended the life of the Seghill site to at least the end of the period of this Local Plan by maximising the use of the area with planning permission and diverting electricity pylons and public footpaths. The proximity of residential properties in the Hastings Park Estate at Seaton Delaval however does restrict the tipping operation to a minimum distance of 510 metres from the houses.

It must be accepted that the concentration of activity at the Seghill site represents the only feasible way of achieving the waste disposal needs of Blyth Valley within the Borough throughout the Plan period.

CRITERIA FOR DETAILED COMMENTS

As Blyth Valley is not the Planning Authority for either mineral extraction or waste management activities, its role will be restricted to commenting on, rather than determining applications. Representations to Northumberland County Council on specific proposals will be concerned with their effect on those aspects of the surrounding environment which Blyth Valley as a Planning Authority has a responsibility for planning or protecting. These include many of the matters which are the subject of the general development control policy in the next chapter.[57] In particular, the following points will be of importance:

1 **Close Liaison with Local Residents**: Experience in relation to the Seghill Waste Disposal Site has shown that close liaison with local residents helps to allay fears and gather knowledge as to the safeguards that residents would wish to see. Noise, smells, dust and other forms of pollution during working of sites and access to and from the sites are likely to cause the greatest concern.

2 **Local Environmental Factors**: Account has to be taken of such factors as distance, wind direction, the water table and the highway network. Their exact nature cannot be specified by this Authority as they will rely on the expertise of the Waste Regulation or Mineral Planning Authorities as appropriate.

3 **The Appropriate Diversion of Displaced Footpaths and Bridleways**: There is a Policy in this Local Plan which aims to make the most of the existing footpath network.[58] Where a proposal affects a public right of way its formal diversion over the shortest route possible will normally be called for in comments made to the relevant Authority.

4 **Introduction of New / Replacement of Displaced Nature Conservation Features.** The planting of trees and shrubs can be of great benefit from a screening point of view. However, it is vital that the complete eco-system of the area is taken into account. One way in which adverse effects on this can be offset is by seeking the introduction of habitats suitable for wildlife around the site. It will be especially important to secure the introduction of new habitats being displaced by the proposed activity.

5 **The Replacement of Lost Landscape Features.** Although screening measures will form part of the safeguarding in (2) above, this will not necessarily guarantee that all lost landscape features will be substituted by suitable replacements. In commenting to the relevant Authority, it would, of course, be sought to ensure that landscape features of particular importance or visual interest were not lost or, failing that, to ensure their replacement nearby. If particularly mature landscape features were to be displaced, it would be appropriate for there to be an over-compensation in terms of the number of replacement shrubs or trees planted.[59]

6 **The Application of (4) and (5) above to restored areas.** The measures above can be extended onto restored areas after working, especially where they are not required for return to agricultural use in their entirety.

1.5.3 Derelict Land

As well as having to deal with current proposals for ground disturbance and tipping,the effects of past activities have to be handled. One effect of past activities is to cause dereliction.

As indicated above, mining and heavy industrial activities have had great effects on the quality and character of the landscape. Reclamation and restoration works undertaken in recent decades have done much to remove former scars with the financial support of central government. In spite of this, parts of Blyth Valley remain derelict and await treatment. It is also anticipated that further land will become derelict in the future.

Derelict Land Surveys are undertaken on a regular six year cycle to evaluate the extent and range of sites justifying treatment. The 1993 survey of Blyth Valley identified 37 sites totalling 237 acres that fall into this

56 *The environmental acceptability would be matter for the determination of the Mineral Planning Authority.*

57 *See in particular parts ii and iii of Policy G12.*

58 *See Policy L3 (ii).*

59 *Forestry after use would be appropriate and desirable where, for example, former agricultural land does not need to be returned to that use.*

Policy ***E 11*** *DERELICT LAND*

Where an area of land is derelict and justifying reclamation, as defined at Appendix VI and shown on the Proposals Map, (and also identified with the reference number in the Appendix), the removal of dereliction will be pursued, through its sensitive reclamation and restoration or, where appropriate within the settlement limits, its development.

In pursuing reclamation schemes, regard will be given, as appropriate, to:

- **considerations of nature conservation and the water environment and any benefits that could be achieved;**
- **neighbouring uses;**
- **the need to preserve, and where necessary, record archaeological remains;**
- **the provision of sport and recreation and the potential for new routes for horse riding, cycling and walking;**
- **the need to regenerate the local economy.**

Particular priority will be placed on the following:

i Prominent sites within settlement limits (as defined in Policy G6) where, should development not take place at an early date, the removal of dereliction through reclamation will be a priority; they are, (not in any priority order):

	SITE NO. (APPENDIX VI)	SITE NAME	PROPOSAL REFERENCE
a	C34	Land at the former Bates Colliery	identified for development under Policy W1 and W4 and detailed in Policy WP2
b	C30	Land at Front Street, Bebside	Previously with planning permission for housing
c	C10	Former BMX track, Wheatridge, Seaton Delaval	Allocated for shopping development in Policy C17 (v) and detailed in Proposal SD1

ii Open countryside land at Gloucester Lodge where a field containing wartime structures should be returned to agriculture, (site C23 at Appendix VI).

category. A full list of those sites justifying reclamation is reproduced in Appendix VI.[60]

Policy E11 seeks the continued implementation of a comprehensive reclamation programme throughout the Plan period in relation both to known and prospective areas of dereliction or despoiling.

These reclamation schemes should have due regard to their effects on nature conservation and such factors as drainage and the water table. It may be possible for improvements to be achieved through reclamation,[61]. Regard will also be had to neighbouring uses including agricultural use, the need to preserve, and where necessary, record archaeological remains. The provision of facilities for sport and recreation could be a beneficial consequence of reclamation. Most importantly, there is an accepted cumulative beneficial effect of reclamation schemes on the local economy.

Priority will be placed on prominent sites, by which is meant sites close to where people live, within the settlement limits or sites which are within or adjacent to Areas of High Landscape Value (AHLV's).[62]

E11 (i) lists three areas of dereliction falling within the limits of settlements within the Plan area, where development is proposed to take place within the Plan period. It is considered important that these areas are not left as eyesores within the townscape indefinitely. So, if development does not come forward at an early date, efforts will be made to prioritise them within reclamation programmes.

60 *Inclusion on this list does not in itself imply that grant aid would be available from the Regional Development Agency to remove such dereliction.*

61 *e.g. the linking of a wildlife corridor - see also Policy E2 above - the creation of a ponded area or an area of woodland.*

62 *See Policy E4 above.*

E11 (ii), refers to the one priority site where development would not be an acceptable way of removing dereliction. The land at Gloucester Lodge, containing wartime structures, is at one of the most prominent locations in the Borough and lies adjacent to one of the AHLV's.

1.5.4 **Contaminated Land**

Another category of land containing environmental problems that need to be dealt with, is contaminated land. Essentially, it is land that has somehow become polluted by past activity.[63]

Part II of the Environment Act 1995 introduced a new system for the identification and improvement of contaminated land. Under the new legislation, local authorities are charged with inspecting their areas from time to time to identify contaminated land. This is defined as any land which appears to the local authority to be in such a condition that significant harm is being, or may be, caused or pollution of controlled waters is being, or is likely to be, caused.

If contaminated land is identified, the local authority must give notice to the Environment Agency, the owner, the occupier and the person who caused or knowingly permitted the substances causing the contamination to be in or under the land. The legislation also outlines the procedure for remediation and prescribes the form and content of registers. However, until further advice is forthcoming, the extent of the local authority's revised powers to tackle contamination will not be known.

1.5.5 **Archaeology**

Archaeological remains are a finite and non renewable resource and represent the only evidence of the past development of the landscape and human activity over thousands of years. They are valuable to preserve for their own sake, and as part of our national identity and for their role in education, leisure and tourism.

The subject of archaeology is included in this section because most archaeological evidence is preserved at or below the level of the land surface. As such, their exploration involves disturbance of the ground while other disturbances such as those dealt with above (but also the much smaller scale disruption of construction activity in general) can be detrimental to their preservation and protection.

Archaeological remains can be visible above ground. Stone circles, places of worship, castles and farms provide examples. Many more are buried below the present-day land surface, and are visible only as earthworks or crop marks, for example deserted mediaeval villages, old sites of manufacture, burial grounds and field systems.[64] Many buildings in older towns may lie on top of Roman, Anglo Saxon or mediaeval structures. In many cases, archaeological remains are highly fragile and vulnerable to damage and destruction. Appropriate management is therefore essential to ensure that they survive in good condition. In particular care must be taken to ensure that archaeological remains are not needlessly or thoughtlessly destroyed, and that any necessary development makes provision for the positive conservation of remains.

Sites of archaeological significance are recorded on Northumberland County Council's "Sites and Monuments Record".[65] They include:

1 **Scheduled Ancient Monuments.**[66] There are at present no Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the Plan area. However within the period of the Plan, sites may be Scheduled under the terms of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, 1979.

2 **Nationally Important Archaeological Sites.** Again, none is known within the Plan area at present.

3 **Other sites recorded on the Northumberland County Council Sites and Monuments Record and their settings.** The vast majority of regionally and locally important archaeological sites are unscheduled, and this applies to all sites within Blyth Valley at present.

Before a formal planning application to develop a site is made, it is important that early consideration is given to the question of whether archaeological remains exist on the site concerned and, if so, the implications for the development proposal. Early consultation should be made with the County Archaeological Officer in respect of the Sites and Monuments Record as well as the Local Planning Authority.

Policy E12 sets out the approach that will be taken where there is likely to be interaction between a development proposal and archaeology. It also touches upon the ways in which positive action can be taken to

63 *Pollution in relation to existing activity is covered in Section 1.8 below.*

64 *Although they may only be visible at certain times of the year and from the air.*

65 *The Sites and Monuments Record, held by Northumberland County Council, provides information about all locations where archaeological remains are known or thought likely to exist, and is continually being updated. It consists of a map record and an archive which contains detailed records for specific sites, such as aerial photographs, survey and excavation reports, references and other written and graphic records. The Record is located at County Hall, Morpeth and a summary of the document is also available in the Council Offices in Seaton Delaval. National Planning Guidance on Archaeology and Planning (Planning Policy Guidance Note 16) can give further guidance to developers concerning sites of archaeological significance. Advice can also be obtained from English Heritage.*

66 *Currently, nationally, some 13000 nationally important cases enjoy special protection as Scheduled Ancient Monuments under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. Such sites require Consent from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport for any development proposals. Scheduling archaeological remains ensures that the case for preservation is fully considered given any proposals for development or other work which might damage the monument.*

make the most of the archaeological heritage which exists.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENTS

E12 (i) explains the first stage in the process. Where archaeological remains are or may be located at the site of development proposals or the development proposals affect the setting of archaeological remains, then an archaeological assessment may be required. Such an assessment does not normally involve fieldwork but is essentially a desk based evaluation of existing information, using records of previous discoveries,[67] in order to determine the approximate quality, importance and extent of the archaeological remains.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATIONS

Where early discussions between the Local Planning Authority and the developer indicate that important archaeological remains or the setting of important archaeological remains may exist on a proposed development site (often as a result of an archaeological assessment being carried out) then **E12 (ii)** will apply and the Local Planning Authority will request that an archaeological field evaluation is carried out before any decision on the planning application is taken.[68] Evaluations of this kind help to define the character and extent of the archaeological remains that exist in the area of a proposed development, and thus indicate the weight which ought to be attached to their preservation. They also provide information useful for identifying potential options for minimising or avoiding damage.



The Seaton Burn passes close to Site of Former Bottle Works, Seaton Sluice.

67 *These would include any historic maps held by the County archive and local museums, libraries and record offices, or of geophysical survey results*

68 *This evaluation is normally a rapid and inexpensive operation involving ground survey, field walking and small scale trial trenching, but it should be carried out by a professionally qualified archaeological organisation or archaeologist.*

SITES OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE AND SCHEDULING

E12 (iii) recognises that there is a chance that some sites may be of greater than local or regional importance. Where such nationally important archaeological remains, (whether scheduled or not), and their settings, are affected by proposed development, there is a presumption in favour of their physical preservation. Development which would be detrimental to the sites would not be permitted.

REGIONALLY OR LOCALLY SIGNIFICANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

E12 (iv) sets out the approach to be taken on regionally or locally significant archaeological sites. On these sites, the presumption against development is less strong than on nationally important sites. Appendix XXVII indicates the range of such sites currently known within the Plan area.

Where permission can be considered in these terms, then **E12 (v)** will apply. Under this, permission may only be possible where developers have demonstrated that their proposals have be modified to take full account of the archaeological remains.[69] If physical preservation in situ is not feasible, an archaeological excavation for the purposes of preservation by record may be an acceptable alternative. However development may result in the total destruction of the archaeological evidence. Therefore, the preservation in situ of important archaeological remains is nearly always preferred. Where cases involving archaeological remains of lesser importance are involved at the local level the Local Planning Authority will weigh the relative importance of archaeology against other factors including the need for the proposed development.

Where the Local Planning Authority decides that development can proceed which results in the destruction of archaeological remains, it will request, before granting planning permission that the developer has made appropriate and satisfactory provision for the excavation, recording and publication of the details of the remains. Such excavation and recording should be carried out before development commences, working to an archaeological brief prepared by the Local Planning Authority and taking advice from archaeological consultants and the County Archaeologist. This could normally be achieved through planning conditions. Alternatively, Planning Agreements, discussed between the developer, the archaeologist the County Archaeologist and the Local Planning Authority, may need to be sought.

REMOVAL OF PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

E12 (vi) makes clear that the removal of Permitted Development Rights, (as set out in Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995), via the use of an Article 4 Direction of that Schedule, will be considered if archaeological remains could otherwise be threatened by development. This would then require that planning permission be obtained before development could proceed.

POSITIVE MEASURES FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS

There is, of course, a positive value of archaeological remains within a community. This includes their contribution to public enjoyment and understanding of the locality. Public access to the site would need to be limited to those cases where there would be no detrimental effect. Measures will be taken, where practicable, to ensure the longer term preservation of sites in good condition. Where resources permit, the local planning authority will encourage and (where practicable) assist owners to maintain sites in a good condition and to adopt sympathetic land management regimes.

DISCOVERIES DURING DEVELOPMENT

The final part of the policy, **E12 (vii)**, emphasises the unpredictability of archaeological discoveries. The Local Planning Authority may set up a watching brief whilst the developer is on site, imposed by the use of a planning condition. This is in case of unexpected archaeological discoveries. In spite of the best pre- application research there may be occasions when the presence of archaeological remains only becomes apparent once development has started. In these circumstances it is advised that development work is stopped pending the local planning authority and County Archaeologist being consulted.[70]

69 *This could involve the use of alternative foundation methods which avoid disturbing the remains altogether or by the raising ground levels under a proposed new structure, repositioning or redesigning the proposal or by the careful siting of landscaped or open areas. There are techniques available for sealing archaeological remains underneath buildings or landscaping, thus securing their preservation for the future even though they remain inaccessible for the time being.*

70 *Where fresh archaeological discoveries are deemed by the Secretary of State, on English Heritage advice to be of national importance, in accordance with published criteria, the Secretary of State has power to schedule the remains. In that event developers would need to seek separate Scheduled Monument Consent before they continued work.*

Policy ***E 12*** *ARCHAEOLOGY*

Archaeological heritage within the Plan area will be preserved, protected and enhanced by the following means:

i **Where any part of the site of a planning application falls within a known or potential site of archaeological significance as defined on the County Sites and Monuments Record or an area of archaeological potential, or affects the setting of a site of archaeological significance, the application will be determined only once an archaeological assessment (to determine the archaeological impact of the proposal) has been carried out and the results submitted to the Local Planning Authority;**

ii **Following (i) above, in appropriate cases, the applicant may be requested to arrange for an archaeological evaluation to be carried out and submit the results to the Local Planning Authority prior to determination of the planning application;**

iii **Development which would be detrimental to Nationally Important Sites, whether scheduled or not, or their settings will not be permitted;**

iv **Where a site of less importance than (iii) above - i.e. a regionally or locally important site of archaeological significance - or its setting is likely to be affected by a proposal, planning permission for development will be granted only if it is considered, (based on prior knowledge or following an archaeological assessment or evaluation), that there would not be detrimental damage to the site, after taking into account any mitigation measures required under (v)(a) below and the need for the proposed development;**

v **Where, in principle, permission can be granted, applying (iv) above, it will normally be subject to:**

- a **appropriate mitigation measures, details of which should form part of the detailed planning application;**
- b **development not taking place until a programme of archaeological work has been devised and implemented in accordance with an agreed archaeological brief, prepared by or on behalf of the Local Planning Authority requiring the developer to make provision for the excavation, recording and publication of the details of the remains. Where it is not possible to ensure the proper implementation of such a programme through conditioning, the signing of an appropriate Planning Agreement, under Policy G11, will be required prior to the issue of planning permission;**

vi **Where the Local Planning Authority is aware that a known archaeological site is threatened as a result of development carried out under the permitted development rights, it may consider the need to withdraw those rights under Article 4 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995;**

vii **The encouragement of developers to inform the Local Planning Authority of the unexpected discovery during development of archaeological remains.**

1.6 THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

This chapter sets policies relating to various aspects the environment ranging from the truly natural to an environment much modified by human activity, (past and present). In previous sections, human activity has been treated strictly in the context of the natural environment - i.e. either:

- as a potential threat to it; or
- as something embodied within / blending into it; or
- as a special effort dedicated to preserving and enhancing it.

However a land use plan has to encompass the full geographical dimension of human activity - human activities form the focus of all the remaining chapters. It is therefore important, within this chapter on the environment, to treat as important environments in their own right, the areas in which most human activity takes place -i.e.. the built-up areas.

Just as the components of the natural / open environment are the geology, the soil, the water environment, habitats, vegetation, cultivation and landscapes, so the built environment has component parts such as its architecture, design, streetscape, historical aspects, visual character etc. As with the natural environment, the built environment is extensive, ranging from localities where preservation of most existing buildings and structures would be sought, to places where the existing environmental quality is relatively poor and major enhancement should be pursued.

The emphasis throughout policies on the built environment, (from the preservation of the old or to the creation of the new), is good design. Decisions on planning applications relating to buildings (existing or new) will emphasise the positive aspects of architecture. Some buildings may also have a value for wildlife, including protected species.

1.6.1 Conservation

This first sub-section covers specific buildings or defined areas where a special effort to preserve them is needed and is justified for reasons of their history and/or their architecture and/or a high quality environment.

LISTED BUILDINGS

Buildings and structures of special architectural or historic interest are listed by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport under Section 1 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. They are graded according to relative importance historically and/or architecturally, taking account of factors such as their uniqueness and level of preservation. Nationally (and locally) the bulk are listed as Grade II, with a smaller percentage Grade II*. The best preserved / most unique / historic etc., have the status Grade I Listed Buildings. Within Blyth Valley, the only two examples of Grade I buildings, are within the Seaton Delaval Estate. These are Seaton Delaval Hall itself and the Mediaeval Church of Our Lady. Appendix VII to this Written Statement is a full list of statutorily Listed Buildings. In practice, listing means that proposals for demolition, alteration or extension which might affect the character of the building require the approval of the Local Planning Authority, under Section 8 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990.

Listed Buildings are selected by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport rather than the Local Planning Authority. **Policy E13** sets out the way in which local authority planning controls and measures will be applied to existing Listed Buildings and structures and their settings.

The Maintenance of Listed Buildings

E13 (i) makes clear that the Local Planning Authority will continue to adopt the role of overseeing the condition of Listed Buildings within the Plan area and encouraging owners to maintain them in a good state of repair. Where possible it will seek to secure grant aid for the purposes of maintenance and enhancement of Listed Buildings.

Listed Building Consent

Where physical alterations are proposed to buildings, in normal circumstances the control of the Local Planning Authority is limited by legislation which gives permitted development rights (deemed consent) - e.g. for extensions up to a certain size. However, in the case of Listed Buildings, the level of control that can be exercised by the Local Planning Authority is extended in two ways. Firstly, all permitted development rights are removed. Secondly, "Listed Building Consent" is required for any work affecting the structure or appearance of the building or any associated structures, even if this would not normally be subject to planning permission, (deemed or otherwise). **E13 (ii) and (iii)** cover criteria against which decisions on Listed Building Consent will be made, although the latter part also provides a template for planning applications.

One area where the need for Listed Building Consent increases control is demolition of buildings or removal of structures.[71] There should be a presumption against Listed Building Consent for demolition of any part of a Listed Building, exceptions being made only where the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the building or structure concerned is wholly beyond repair. The applicant will be required to demonstrate that every possible effort has been made to retain it. In very exceptional circumstances, and only in relation to a lower graded Listed Building or structure - i.e. a Grade II

71 *The Housing Chapter sets out how demolition of dwellinghouses now comes under planning control, (see Section 3.6), but it is still possible to demolish many types of buildings or parts of buildings without the need to apply for planning permission.*

Policy ***E 13*** — *LISTED BUILDINGS*

Buildings and structures Listed under Section 1 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and their settings will be preserved by the following means:

i Positive measures will be taken to encourage owners to maintain them in a good state of repair;

ii Listed Building Consent for the demolition or removal of all or an element of significance (in terms of the reason for its Listing) of a Listed Building or Structure will not be granted unless:

a it can be proven that the Listed Building or Structure concerned is wholly beyond repair;

b the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that every possible effort has been made to retain it in its present use or to find a suitable alternative use;

c only in very exceptional circumstances, (and definitely not for Grade I or Grade II* Buildings and Structures), the planning benefits of the replacement or alternative use are considered to be so great as to justify the granting of Consent;

iii External or internal alteration, change of use or addition will not be permitted where it is the opinion of the Local Planning Authority that there would be an adverse effect on the special architectural or historic character of the building or structure concerned or its setting.

Policy ***E 14*** — *THE LOCAL LIST*

A supplementary list of buildings and structures of local importance will be maintained, (list as at adoption date), given at Appendix VIII to this Written Statement and subject to amendment and addition during the Plan period), for which the aim will be to retain them in their original form through positive measures to encourage owners to maintain and enhance them, especially in relation to any planning applications that may be made relating to them.

building for which, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, an argument could be put that retention was not absolutely essential - it may be that demolition or removal would be acceptable in order to allow the implementation of some other overriding planning proposal or for some other overriding planning reason.

It is not only the external alteration, but also internal changes that can change the architectural character of a building. In the case of a Listed Building, the former may require an application for planning permission but all such changes, external or internal, will need an application for Listed Building Consent. In considering such applications, the Local Planning Authority will take into consideration whether the proposed changes would adversely affect the character of the Listed Building.[72] [73]

The other main consideration, particularly in deciding whether to grant Listed Building Consent, (and, in some cases, planing permission), for external alterations to a Listed Building, is the setting of the building. Special regard needs to be given to development which affects this setting of a Listed Building as its contribution to the local scene may be very important.

Additions to the List

The List is likely to be reviewed during the course of the Plan period, which will almost certainly entail additions to it. The considerations set out in the policy will be applied equally to any newly Listed Buildings. The Local Planning Authority will consider encouraging the listing of additional buildings and structures in the Local Plan area

72 *It should be noted that the Department of Culture, Media and Sport List is not a statutory document.*

73 *It may be that alterations proposed will restore missing or decayed features. Such matters will be taken into account.*

where it appears that such action would be expedient in preserving a building which, in its opinion, is of more than local importance.

The Local List

The Local Planning Authority also considers that there are other individual buildings or groups of buildings of local importance. As a result, a "local list" of such properties has been drawn up. At present, this only covers the Blyth area. However, it is being extended to include buildings and structures of local interest throughout the Plan area. The local list at the time of publication is contained at Appendix VIII. It has no statutory significance. Consideration of whether a particular building or structure is of local interest will take account of factors such as:

- whether it is the only example of a particular style within Blyth Valley;
- whether it contains particular local architectural forms or features;
- whether it has some connection with local history;
- whether it contributes to some particular setting, e.g. adjacent to nationally Listed Buildings and/or within a Conservation Area.

Policy E14 states that, as with nationally Listed Buildings, owners will be encouraged to maintain and enhance their buildings, if locally listed. Applications relating to them may provide scope for seeking such improvements.

CONSERVATION AREAS

Sections 69 and 70 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990, place a duty on Local Planning Authorities to designate and review Conservation Areas in view of their special architectural or historic interest. Within Conservation Areas, the consent of the Local Planning Authority is required for tree felling, topping and lopping or the demolition of buildings.

There are currently six Conservation Areas within Blyth Valley.

In Cramlington, there is one Conservation area, covering the traditional village street and square of **Cramlington Village**, which has the added role of forming the historical core of the new town.

Three areas in the town of Blyth have this designation. The **Bondicar Terrace** Conservation Area is characterised by individual merchants' houses, many now in other uses. The **Blyth Central** Conservation Area, covering the area close to Bridge Street, east of the Market Place, includes some fine examples of Victorian civic architecture. The **Heritage** Conservation Area has within it the important eighteenth century terrace (including a Listed bath house) - i.e.. Bath Terrace - and, to the rear, the "High Light" inland lighthouse.

Elsewhere, the **Seaton Delaval Estate** Conservation Area was designated in 1990. Central to the designation is Seaton Delaval Hall, designed by Sir John Vanburgh in the 1720's and, as stated earlier, a Grade I Listed Building. The Conservation Area is made up of that part of the Estate which gives the Hall and other Listed Buildings (such as the Church of our Lady and the Mausoleum) their setting. The exceptional landscape, including many protected woodland areas, is also an important ingredient of the Conservation Area in its own right. The walled and other formal gardens and avenues[74] around the Hall itself and the obelisk, are included in **The Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest**.[75] By including the whole of this designated area within the Conservation Area, the gardens are given protection which would not be afforded to them under the historic gardens designation alone and which takes account of the wider context of the gardens.

Seaton Sluice Harbour has close historical connections with the Seaton Delaval Estate. Surrounded by various Listed Buildings and structures, it has been the subject of environmental improvements. This Conservation Area therefore incorporates the Harbour and its unique geographical setting including Rocky Island and cliff top areas to the south.

The **Holywell Village** Conservation Area has a history dating back to Norman times.

Two policies cover the subject of Conservation Areas. One deals with control of development in relation to them. The second looks at the scope for enhancement and additional Conservation Area designations.

Policy E15 sets out a series of controls and has the primary aim of ensuring the protection of Conservation Areas from the adverse effects of proposals.

New Development in Conservation Areas

It is not the policy to put a blanket restriction on new development within Conservation Areas. Sometimes additions can enhance them. However **E15 (i)** makes clear that planning permission will be refused if it is considered to have a detrimental effect on the Conservation Area.

Various factors need to be taken into account when weighing up the net effect of a particular development proposal on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.[76] Special character and appearance encompasses many physical elements which make a positive contribution to the built environment, for example: topography; boundaries; thoroughfares;

74 *Including the length of the Avenue itself.*

75 *Produced by English Heritage in 1992.*

76 *See also part iv of the Policy.*



View of Cramlington Village Conservation Area

building materials; hierarchy of buildings and spaces; scale/massing and trees/green features.

The first consideration is the appearance of the proposal with particular regard to views of it from within or outside of the Conservation Area.[77]

Architecture will clearly be the key consideration. A new building may, for instance, be appropriate on a gap site, to give continuity within the Conservation Area, but will only be acceptable if the architecture, (form, features, exact positioning etc.), suitably matches, complements or adds positively to that of existing buildings and structures.

Another, often equally important consideration in relation to development proposals in Conservation Areas, is the activity that may be generated by a planning proposal. This refers particularly to the level of movement that may be generated to and from premises, parking requirements etc. This will be assessed in relation to any adverse impact on the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area, taking account of those aspects which led to its designation in the first place.

Exceptionally, other planning considerations, (non-Conservation related), may be instrumental in justifying a particular development proposal, such as a much needed community facility, within a Conservation Area. Even so, the aim will be to minimise any negative effects on the overall quality of the Conservation Area and maximise the positive aspects of its design.

It must also be recognised that, within the Seaton Delaval Estate Conservation Area, there are large tracts of operational agricultural land. The need to retain economic viability of farm units is recognised in a policy earlier in this chapter, as is the need to allow for proposals for farm diversification.[78] There will be a requirement in certain circumstances for theerection of modern agricultural buildings and other structures for the essential running of farms within the area.

Conservation Area Consent

Within a Conservation Area, a planning application is only required in the same circumstances as it would be elsewhere unless the building or structure to which it relates is Listed or unless permitted development rights have been removed by the imposition of a blanket Direction under Article 4 of the General Development Order.[79]

The only circumstance in which Conservation Area Consent is required but a planning application is not, is where the proposal involves demolition that would not itself require planning permission.[80] This eventuality is dealt with in **E15 (ii)**. In looking at this type of proposal,

77 *Views from within the Conservation Area may be a consideration for a proposal outside it; or such a proposal may affect the setting of buildings within it.*

78 *See Sub-sections 1.4.2 and 1.4.3 respectively.*

79 *At the time of writing, only one Article 4 Direction is in place. It covers non-Listed Buildings in Bath Terrace, Blyth.*

the first test will be the contribution of the building in question towards the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area.[81] Where it is considered to be significant in these terms, then consent will be refused unless:

- the building concerned is wholly beyond repair irrespective of which the applicant will need to be able to demonstrate that every possible effort has been made to retain it;
- OR, as with certain lower graded Listed Buildings, in exceptional circumstances, demolition or removal would allow the implementation of some other overriding planning proposal or policy;
- AND (irrespective of which of the above reasons for demolition apply), there is a firm commitment to the redevelopment or afteruse of the site created. (Thus, a contract for an approved scheme of redevelopment should be let before consent is given for demolition or else the consent should be conditioned to ensure it. One exception will be structures which are identified as being dangerous).

Tree Preservation in Conservation Areas

E15 (iii) cross refers to the landscape section of this chapter [82] where Policy E5 (iii) sets out how the additional tree protection afforded within Conservation Areas will be applied.

The Special Features of Each Conservation Area

E15 (iv) makes clear that assessments will be made of the visual impact of proposals within a Conservation Area with assessments against Policy E17 below.[83]

The Requirement for Detailed Plans

E15 (v) emphasises the importance of avoiding blight and uncertainty within Conservation Areas. In most circumstances, in order to avoid expense and/or abortive work, applicants may submit an outline application for the use of land and obtain planning permission for that use without the need to submit detailed plans. Within Conservation Areas, it is considered that this will be insufficient in most circumstances. Apart from the possible blighting effect there is the problem that, while a particular land use may be acceptable in principle within a Conservation Area, it may subsequently be found, on detailed site investigation, that that use cannot be accommodated without adversely affecting the architectural character of the area.

The Option of Increased Controls

In spite of the above, there are many changes that can be made to the appearance of non-Listed Buildings and Structures in Conservation Areas which do not require an application of any sort to be submitted. Where it is considered that, cumulatively, such changes are adversely affecting the overall appearance of a Conservation Area, the option exists to increase controls. This is the subject of **E15 (vi)**. Powers now exist to define areas in which additional advertisement controls can be introduced.[84] Based upon any problems experienced, consideration will be given as to whether such "Areas of Special Control" would be appropriate within any of the Conservation Areas, present or future. Similarly, it may be appropriate to increase the areas within which certain permitted development rights are removed, using Article 4 Directions under the General Development Order.



View of Holywell Village Conservation Area

81 *See Policy H23 in the Housing chapter.*

81 *In defining a Conservation Area to be geographically coherent, it is not always possible to exclude individual buildings or structures the removal or replacement of which would actually assist the maintenance or enhancement of the appearance or character of the Conservation Area. One example of built development which may be acceptable for removal would be a relatively modern extension to an old building.*

82 *See Section 1.3 above*

83 *An appraisal is being made of each Conservation Area in terms of the particular characteristics and features which are of most importance in its designation as a Conservation Area. It is the intention that these assessments are published as supplementary planning guidance documents. These will assist those residing within (or with an interest in) a particular Conservation Area to gain an understanding of, for instance, which architectural features (such as windows or roof slates), the Planning Authority are most likely to wish to see retained or replaced with similar features etc..*

84 *A basic set of controls over advertisements in outdoor locations (or visible therefrom), exists under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992.*

Policy ***E 15*** — *CONSERVATION AREAS: GENERAL*

Conservation Areas will be preserved or enhanced as follows:

i Where development is proposed within or in close proximity to them planning permission will not be granted unless it is considered that:

a it is acceptable in terms of its effect on the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area, taking account of:

- **the general appearance of the proposal, as viewed from within or (if applicable) beyond the Conservation Area;**
- **the architecture and design of the proposal;**
- **any adverse impact that the activities proposed may have in terms of the reasons for the Conservation Area being designated;**

b any adverse effects of the development are outweighed by other planning considerations;

ii Where demolition is proposed that requires Conservation Area Consent and no Listed Building or Structure is affected, (in which case Policy E13 (ii) would be applied), then, (in addition to Policy H23 being applied as appropriate), it will be assessed in terms of the overall contribution that the building makes to the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area; if this is considered significant, then planning permission will be refused unless:

a it can be proven that the building concerned is wholly beyond repair and the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that every possible effort has been made to retain it;

b the benefits of the replacement or alternative use are considered to be so great, either in terms of the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area or in other planning terms, as to justify the granting of Consent;

c where the demolition is otherwise acceptable in the above terms, it can be ensured, through a planning condition or otherwise, that the contract for an approved scheme of redevelopment is let, (with the possible exception of dangerous structures);

iii Where the removal of, or other work relating to a tree is proposed, Policy E5 (iv) above will be applied;

iv In determining any application within a Conservation Area, the full impact of the proposal on the visual appearance and character will be assessed applying Policy E17; in this assessment, the characteristics and features of that Conservation Area, which are regarded as being of particular merit, will be assessed and the resulting assessment may affect the decision made;

v There will be a requirement that planning applications for development within Conservation Areas are detailed applications where considered necessary;

vi If considered beneficial within the boundaries of the Conservation Areas:

a Areas of Special Control shall be declared; and/or

b further Article 4 Directions shall be made.

Policy **E 16** — *CONSERVATION AREAS: ENHANCEMENT MEASURES*

Positive measures will be pursued to extend and enhance Conservation Areas as follows:

i Programmes will be drawn up for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas, as appropriate;

ii Within the Heritage and Central Conservation Areas, the following will be encouraged:

- **a the development of gap sites, applying criteria in Policy E15 (i);**
- **b gradual improvements in line with the Policy E20;**

iii Consideration will be given to:

- **a designating a new Conservation Area based on the wartime structures at the Links, Blyth, which will have a bearing on Proposal BL1;**
- **b an extension of the Heritage Conservation Area to cover part(s) of the Quayside area which will have a bearing on Proposals BQ4.**



Seaton Delaval Hall viewed from South Newsham Road

Enhancement Measures for Conservation Areas

Policy E16 covers the other strand of the overall policy on Conservation Areas - their repair. The need to secure the adequate maintenance and enhancement of the Listed Buildings within the Plan area has already been referred to. Lack of resources makes this a difficult task. The adequate maintenance and improvement of other buildings in Conservation Areas can therefore prove doubly difficult.

E16 (i) sets out the intention that programmes for the maintenance and enhancement of Conservation Areas should be prepared. It may not be necessary for all parts of all the Conservation Areas, but it will be a useful way of prioritising action in certain key areas - particularly sections of the Heritage and Seaton Delaval Estate Conservation Areas.

E16 (ii) concentrates on those sections of the Heritage and Central Conservation Areas which cover key street frontages close to Blyth town centre and the Quayside areas. Here, the planning process will be used to secure improvements to the environment. This is an example of a situation where exceptions can be made to the general presumption against new development in Conservation Areas. Gap sites exist, and their appropriate development could help to create better continuity and unity within the Conservation Areas. A conscious effort will also be made, through development control decisions, to apply the policy on townscape and design, with its emphasis on shop front improvements, set out later in this chapter.[85]

E16 (iii) gives two cases in which the extension of Conservation Area coverage may be appropriate, subject to further detailed investigation, although others may become obvious as the Plan period progresses. One refers to the Quayside Area[86] where the possibility of an extension to the Heritage Conservation Area will be looked at. The second recognises the strong interest that has recently been shown in preserving the Listed wartime structures in the Blyth Links area, along with their setting.[87]

85 *See Sub-section 1.7.2 below.*

86 *See Chapter 16*

87 *See Chapter 18.*

1.6.2 Considerations of Visual Appearance and Character

The above sub-section has covered those localities and individual buildings within the built environment of the Plan area which require particular protection for reasons of architecture or history. This sub-section sets out policies for other parts of the built-up areas where some degree of protection of the existing built fabric is warranted.

Clearly, the architectural protection of Conservation Areas and their associated Listed Buildings is partly based on their visual appeal. The areas have a particular townscape or character.

The Conservation Areas within the Plan area tend to contain the best examples of areas which are worthy of preservation for reasons of visual appearance or character. However there are many other localities which have a particular visual character worthy of retention or at least worthy of taking into consideration when deciding whether to grant planning permission for development. It is not appropriate to define particular areas, (other than Conservation Areas), within which special protection will be afforded to the existing buildings for visual reasons. Instead, a comprehensive set of visual criteria have been devised in order to assess the effect of proposals for new development or redevelopment on the character of existing parts of the built-up area.

PROPOSALS FOR BUILT DEVELOPMENT

Policy E17 sets down criteria to enable the visual aspects of all development proposals to be assessed against the visual character of the surrounding built environment, irrespective of their location within the built-up area.

The beginning part of the policy makes it clear that visual aspects of a development are taken to include not just the built form but also external visual impacts such as those of driveways, parking and external storage.

If it is considered that the visual impact of a proposal would be detrimental to the visual appearance or character of the surrounding area, then this in itself can be cited as a reason for refusing the application.

The policy then goes on to list the aspects of a building or scheme of development that will be looked at closely in applying visual impact controls.

a The first of these is summarised as **"scale, height and massing"**. A proposal which is out of scale with the surrounding built environment will not normally be given favourable consideration. An example would be a three or four storey building on a gap site between two storey terrace dwellings. Another instance would be a house which is considered to be too bulky in relation to the plot of land which will form its curtilage. Other structures and surrounding landscape features may be taken into account.

b The second consideration will be **building materials**. They should relate well to those of surrounding buildings. It is likely that a match will be sought in sensitive areas. However uniformity is not the aim. It is recognised that contrasting materials can sometimes bring welcome architectural variety into a locality.

c The **density of development** will be a relevant consideration not only from the point of view of providing variety of house type or avoiding overcrowded areas, but also for visual reasons. High density housing estates, for example, can create a claustrophobic feel unless the arrangement of buildings is carefully planned. Higher density can, on the other hand, provide the most satisfactory visual solution in certain cases, particularly in tight-knit older areas.

d The **layout** of a development proposal is clearly crucial to any consideration of its visual merits. A degree of visual order will normally be sought, although it is recognised that layouts can also help to soften he impact of a proposal in much the same way as a good landscaping scheme.[88] The relationship between buildings landscaping and other features will form the basis of the overall assessment of layout.

e The final category refers more to infill development than to entirely new and separate development schemes. The architectural **"rhythms and patterns"** of the surroundings will be taken into account. This idea is best explained through examples. Surrounding buildings may, for example contain a significant number of vertical elements such as tall windows, stone or brick features dividing terraced properties, downpipes etc.. In this case it will be inappropriate to introduce a building dominated by horizontal elements.[89]

The remainder of the policy consists of instances where the above will be applied with particular vigour.

E17 (i) singles out older areas, including the substantial areas of older terrace housing, dating from before the "Inter War" period, that remain in many parts of the Plan area, for particularly close scrutiny when applying the above criteria. The aim will be to retain the traditional character of these streets. Considerations of scale, materials, and established architectural rhythms (a, b and e above) will be particularly important in this endeavour.

88 *See Section 1.3 above.*

89 *For example, a building with an exposed horizontal girder structure interspersed by horizontal slit windows.*



Recently restored Sewer Gas Lamp, Seaton Delaval

E17 (ii) cross refers to a number of additional policies controlling the visual appearance and/or design of particular types of proposals or features. These are:

- **Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas**, which have their own set of controls, as set out earlier in this chapter;
- **Extensions to dwellinghouses**, on which there is a separate policy in the Housing chapter;
- **Shop fronts** which are dealt with in Section 1.7 below;
- **Satellite dishes** which are dealt with in Section 1.9 below
- **Rest homes** which have their own policy, taking in design factors, in the Housing Chapter.

Policy ***E 17*** *VISUAL APPEARANCE AND CHARACTER*

The visual appearance and character of:

- **proposed new development including additions or external alterations to existing buildings and structures and/or**
- **external activities associated with such development**

and their surroundings, will be given due consideration in the determination of all relevant planning applications and may be used as a reason for refusing such applications.

In considering the above, special regard will be had towards the following aspects of development proposals and their surroundings:

a the scale, height and massing of buildings, structures and landscape features;

b building materials;

c density of development;

d the layout of the development including the positioning of

- **buildings**
- **outdoor features including car parks and access ways**
- **proposed landscaping**

in relation to each other and the landscape;

e the established architectural rhythms and patterns of the surroundings

In addition:

i Where the site of a proposal lies within an area dominated by older buildings including areas of terraced housing dating from before 1919, the criteria above will be applied with a view to retaining the traditional character of buildings and streets;

ii Additional controls on the visual appearance and character of development shall be applied in the following situations:

a where the development

- **affects a Listed Building and/or**
- **is within a Conservation Area and/or**
- **is immediately adjacent to either or both of the above**

in which case criteria in Policies E13 and/or E15 shall be applied as appropriate;

b where the proposal involves the extension of a dwellinghouse in which case criteria in Policy H22 shall be applied.

c where the proposal is or includes:

- **a shop front, in which case Policy E20 shall be applied;**
- **a satellite dish aerial, in which case Policy E27 shall be applied;**

d where a residential care home is proposed, in which case Policy H16 shall be applied.

OPEN SPACES IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

In the chapter on Community Facilities much space is devoted to the contribution of open spaces within the urban environment to the provision of recreational facilities of various types as well as their contribution simply as open spaces to which people have access from their homes.[90]

The paragraphs and policy described below, concentrate on the contribution of open spaces towards the visual character or townscape of an area. As such, the consideration of open spaces in this context can include spaces which are not accessible to the general public, but which are visible to them.

Policy E18 covers this topic and includes specific protections and general criteria.

E18 (i) sets out five criteria against which proposals to build on an open space area will be assessed. In practice most of the main *public* open spaces are already specifically protected and these criteria will therefore only need to be applied to smaller public open space areas or to undeveloped parts of the townscape which are not fully in the public domain such as private sports grounds or school playing fields.

The five criteria largely speak for themselves. The aim is to be as objective as possible in making these judgements. As great a degree of consistency as possible will be applied. Whether or not development would result in loss of amenity for residents, or others having cause to be within or to pass through an area, will be central to the consideration of each criterion.

The criteria in E18 (i) justify the protection of some of the open spaces specifically protected under Policy C7 and indicated on the Proposals Map.[91] Appendix XXII shows that many open spaces are protected for visual reasons alone: their contribution to the townscape or to the visual character of an area, is their main asset. Some of these take the form of corridors along main routes.[92]

E18 (ii) identifies certain open spaces which are not protected in their entirety, because there are no strong reasons to do so, but where edges of the open space abut a transport route. In these cases, applying the last of the criteria in part (i) of the Policy, it will be the aim to prevent development close to the edges in question so as to retain a degree of openness for those passing along the transport route.

E18 (iii) refers to another part of the open space protection policy in the community facilities chapter, which allows for small elements of building on open spaces if exceptional circumstances, relating to community provision, apply.[93] Such exceptions will need to be fully acceptable in terms of any visual contribution of the open space makes towards the townscape.

1.7 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENTS

There are many policies and proposals within this Plan, one aim of which is an improvement in the visual environment. This section concentrates on policies which seek specific local enhancement measures across the Plan area, - particularly within the built-up areas.

In the past, General Improvement Areas, (G.I.A's) (in housing areas), and Industrial Improvement Areas, (in work activity areas), have been widely employed, to improve the fabric of the chosen areas as places to live and work respectively. An important element of these has been the achievement of enhancements to the environment in and around properties - in the form of landscaping, street works and other "cosmetic" measures.[94] G.I.A.'s, in particular, have been the foci for resources specifically directed towards environmental works. These small area designations, (which originated through national legislation during the sixties and seventies), have now been phased out.[95] In the future any resources for environmental works are most likely to be directed towards areas where action of various sorts is being concentrated, such as the Local Areas for Action covered in Chapters 16 to 19 or where there is a policy to increase the attraction of an area, (such as those areas referred to in Chapter 5 on Leisure and Visitor Activities).

90 *See Chapter 4, Policies C2 to C8 inclusive.*

91 *The protection of particular open spaces in the built up area is given under Policy C7 in the Community Facilities Chapter. Others of the spaces so protected are justified for nature conservation reasons, (Policy E2), others for strategic reasons (Policy C7). Some of them are protected for more than one of the three reasons, (see Appendix XXII).*

92 *In these cases Highway land - protected in any case for Highway reasons - may be included in the corridor of open space shown on the Proposals Map, for the purposes of completeness.*

93 *See Policy C7.*

94 *e.g. more attractive fencing, road surfaces etc.*

95 *See also Chapter 3, Sub-section 3.6.4.*

Policy ***E 18*** *VISUAL ASPECTS OF OPEN SPACES IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT*

The contribution of open space areas towards the visual appearance and character of built-up parts of the Plan area will be taken into account in planning decisions as follows:

i Where the site of a development proposal occupies any part of an open space area - that is:
- **a public parkland and/or**
- **playing space, as defined in Policies C2 to 5, whether or not in public ownership or publicly accessible and/or**
- **any adopted open spaces not covered above and/or**
- **an allotment area**

then the area of open space which would be lost will be assessed for its contribution towards the visual appearance and character of the area, (as well as being assessed against policies C6, C7, C8 and/or E2 as appropriate), and, unless an exception can be made under (iii) below, shall be regarded as an unacceptable loss if:

a it is considered to be a major feature within the overall layout of the surrounding area; and/or

b it contributes towards a focal point or vista of merit; and/or

c it contributes towards the positive visual impact of a larger open space; and/or

d it provides an open aspect for a significantly large number of residential dwellings; and/or

e it significantly enhances a route along which people pass through the area, including railways and primary, secondary local distributor or estate distributor roads, (as defined on Map M-M1 on page 215);

ii Development on or close to the open space edges indicated on the Proposals Map will only be permitted if it would retain the openness of aspect as viewed from the adjacent route.

iii Where an element of building on an open space is justifiable for community reasons, applying criteria in Policy C7, and the open space in question is protected for its visual appearance / character under (ii) above, (or assessed as contributing in this way, applying criteria in (i) above), then, it must of a small enough scale and positioned in such a way so as not to prejudice the contribution of the open space towards the visual appearance and character of the area.

1.7.1 **Individual Environmental Enhancements**

Aside from the above, there may be one-off opportunities to achieve small scale environmental enhancements:
- in association with planning applications;[96]
- separately from applications, if resources become available for this purpose;

Equally, there will also be situations where an unexpected local problem arises which creates an "eyesore". **Policy E19** aims to take on board this possibility, as well as listing specific proposals from the later chapters which are nor already covered in the landscape enhancement Policy.[97]

Two specific policies give recognition to the opportunity to achieve small scale enhancements to the environment across the Plan area:
- Design guidance directed at improving the environment of some of those parts of the streetscape where the public congregate the most - with particular reference to commercial properties including **shop fronts**;
- A policy aimed at bringing art into the environment, again with an emphasis on publicly frequented areas - the **per cent for art** policy.

96 *For example, a proposal which involves the public visiting by car and where on-street parking opportunities are plentiful but likely to be haphazard, may be asked to enter a Planning Agreement to make an improvement to provide proper parking bays.*

97 *See Chapter 1, Policy E6.*

1.7.2 **Shop Fronts etc.**

During the 1980's and early 1990's, it became apparent that the environment of shopping areas was deteriorating and would benefit from a more positive and coherent planning approach. In reaction to this, supplementary planning guidance has been produced,[98] entitled "Townscape and Design: Design Guidance on Shop Fronts". The document is a comprehensive policy prepared with the aim of improving the security and appearance of commercial properties within Blyth Valley.

Much of what it contains is advisory, as many changes to shop fronts would not require an application for planning permission under normal circumstances. Nonetheless there are plenty of situations where an application would need to be submitted. Examples include:

- Shop fronts where the shop use is new. These would normally be the subject of planning applications because changes of use and/or building operations are involved;

- Where the change is to an existing shop front, but where for example:
  - a change of use is involved, (e.g. from retail to building society, hot food takeaway etc.);
  - it is within a Conservation Area;
  - the proposal involves a protrusion forward of the building line, (e.g. to contain a roller shutter).

  In these cases, the policy can be applied via planning conditions.[99]

The guidance does not aim to create uniformity. It allows for variety within the limitations of good design.[100]

Policy E20 summarises the factors that will be taken into account where a new or altered shop front is the subject of a planning application.[101]

E20 (i) covers the pure design aspects. The full range of the advice includes recommendations on colour schemes and individual design features. This policy limits itself to the main determining design considerations - i.e. the relationship with the building and the surroundings. There are two particular eventualities that decisions will be aimed at avoiding. These are the loss of traditional features from existing shop fronts and the installation (in new or existing shop fronts), of glass to ground level.[102]

E20 (ii) reflects recommendations as to how shop owners and keepers can make their shop frontages more secure without them appearing too forbidding after hours.[103] The Supplementary Guidance note encourages shop keepers to keep their window displays visible to the public even after closing and discusses how vehicle raids can be deterred by strategically placed planting boxes and street furniture. The policy is based on the assumptions that all or most external security shutters will need to be the subject of a planning application as the external appearance of the building will be materially altered. It recognises that the widespread introduction of shutters in a shop lined street, while an important security measure, can (especially cumulatively) have a severe negative impact on the appearance of the street. The degree of this impact will be crucial in decisions. Wherever possible, it will be encouraged that internal shutters, (not needing permission), are installed in preference. Where external shutters are required, planning decisions will be geared towards avoiding solid shutters, where the display behind is not visible. This will be particularly important in the key areas of Blyth Town Centre, central Seaton Delaval and the Conservation Areas. The use of plain galvanised steel is also to be avoided due to the drab appearance that it can lend to the streetscape.

E20 (iii) takes into account that, in part, the overall appearance of a shop front will be determined by the application of the Advertisement Regulations. The guidance includes recommendations on when this type of consent will be needed and the best designs, scale etc. for the adverts themselves.

Another aspect which calls for design guidance - the subject of **E20 (iv)** - is the practical one of accessibility. The groups which will hopefully benefit include parents with young children - possibly in pushchairs - as well as shoppers who are less mobile, for whatever reason. The policy makes clear that, where doorways form part of a planning application, these criteria will be taken into account.

Under the Building Regulations, there will be a requirement that:

- doors are at least 850 mm wide or, where double doors are provided, one leaf must be a minimum of 800mm wide;
- wherever practicable, that thresholds should be flush;
- visibility panels should cover between 1050 and 1650 mm above ground level.

98 *See Chapter 2, Sub-section 2.7.5 for background to the production of Supplementary Planning Guidance Documents.*

99 *See also Chapter 2, Sub-section 2.6.3.*

100 *One problem has been the installation of shop fronts of designs which are in some way intrusive or "out of keeping" with the surroundings. One tendency has been for shop owners to try to make shops as noticeable as possible, often by increasing the size of the shop sign in proportion to the window and the rest of the frontage, possibly by using bold colours and/or non-traditional materials. Taken on its own, this is not necessarily a bad thing. A problem occurs where such a frontage is created within an area where the general appearance is more sober, especially in a Conservation Area. Even where this is not the case, the erection of a variety of shop front designs of different scales etc., can create a haphazard appearance.*

101 *In practice, the same principles, plus the remainder of the contents of the Supplementary Guidance document, will be applied whenever there is the opportunity to influence the design of a shop front.*

102 *This reflects recent concern about the increasing incidence of "ram raiding".*

103 *One aspect of the deterioration of shop fronts has been the widespread introduction of roller shutters for security reasons. Where the large proportion of shops are totally shuttered after hours, not only does window shopping become a thing of the past but shopping centres can take on a "ghost town" appearance.*

Policy ***E 19*** — *SMALL SCALE ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENTS*

Small scale environmental enhancement measures will be sought in association with planning applications where they are considered to be justified in terms of the effect of the application proposal on its surroundings. Elsewhere they will be implemented, as resources become available or opportunities arise, where they would be visually beneficial and where no alternative means are available to ensure implementation within a reasonable period.

Specific local environmental improvements will include landscape proposals set out at Policy E6 as well as those improvements at:

- **Astley Road, Seaton Delaval, in accordance with Proposal SD3;**
- **Rosemary Terrace, in accordance with Proposal CM3 (b);**
- **The area to the rear of Blyth Links in accordance with Proposal BL3;**
- **The area in the vicinity of Blyth Quayside, in accordance with Proposal BQ4;**
- **The pedestrian priority area proposed at BP3, in accordance with Policy B2;**
- **High Pit Road and Front Street, Klondyke, as referred to in Policy C17 (iii)(d).**

Policy ***E 20*** — *SHOP FRONTS*

Proposals involving the installation of a new shop front or a change to an existing shop front shall be carefully assessed in terms of their design and visual appearance. In particular:

i The design will be assessed in relation to:
- **a the design of the building in which it is located and those adjacent;**
- **b the visual appearance and character of surrounding buildings;**

and with a view to:
- **c retaining traditional features;**
- **d avoiding large expanses of glass to ground level;**

ii Proposals for security shutters will be assessed as follows:
- **a permission will only be granted if the design is considered not to have an unacceptably detrimental effect on the visual appearance or character of the area;**
- **b within Conservation Areas plus other parts of the Central Shopping Area of Blyth Town Centre defined in Policy B1 and within the Local Service Area of Seaton Delaval defined in Proposal SD2, solid external security shutters will only be permitted where the applicant demonstrates that they are essential security measures and there are no other viable alternatives;**
- **c permission will not be granted for unfinished galvanised metal shutters;**

iii The assessment of applications for advertisement consent relating to shop fronts will take account of the design and visual appearance of the shop front and its surroundings;

iv Proposals involving new or altered access will not be granted unless the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that it will meet the access requirements of people with disabilities.

Policy ***E 21*** *PERCENT FOR ART*

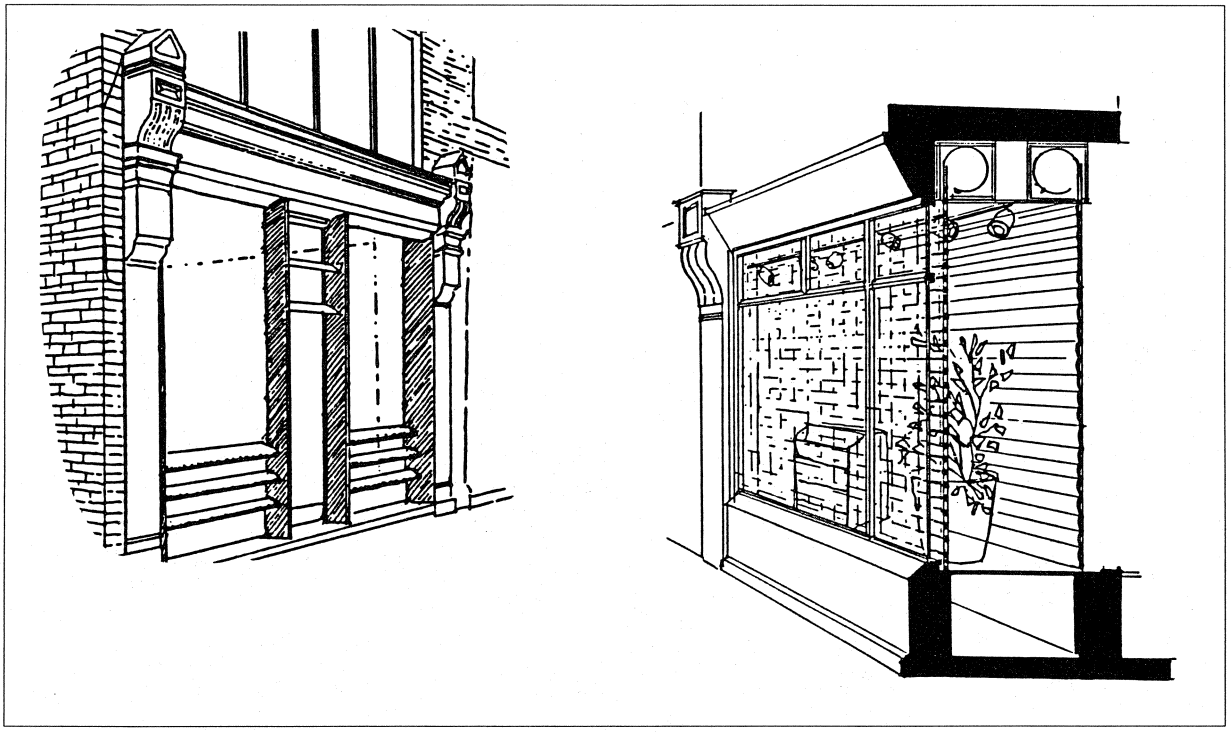
Percent for art schemes will be sought in relation to major development projects and/or those which form or relate to places where the public or large numbers of individuals congregate or are likely to congregate. Where possible, through the planning process, close cooperation will be sought in the design and siting of the per cent for art feature, and in its relationship to design aspects of the rest of the development and its surroundings.

1.7.3 **Percent for Art**

Percent for Art has been widely used in much of Europe, as a system involving artists and craftspeople in the imaginative and creative design of the environment.[104] Under the scheme, a proportion of the capital budget of a building or scheme is set aside for commissioning new works by artists and craftspeople at the earliest briefing stage. The scheme operates independently of any community development fund,[105] which would be geared towards providing facilities and features that are essential to a development.

Policy E21 acknowledges that not all percent for art work would itself feature in an application for planning permission, (e.g. works of art that are internal or incidental to a building). However, others will and in these cases, close co-operation will be sought in co-ordinating the project with other aspects of the design of the development that are subject to approval.

It is the intention within Blyth Valley that percent for art should, in particular, be applied to schemes which are major building projects, and/or those which are a particular focus for the general public or large numbers of people.[106] Preference will also be given to projects which assist in the interpretation of the County's heritage.



Illustrations from the Design Guidance on Shop Fronts

104 The idea has been adopted by both Northumberland and Blyth Valley Councils.

105 See also Chapter 2, Sub-section 2.6.6.

106 The latter could include a large work place.

1.8 POLLUTION CONTROL

Pollution is defined as the unwanted secondary effects of a development or of the use of land, namely the waste substances and surplus energy generated. It can arise from a variety of sources including particular industrial activities,[107] power generation,[108] minerals extraction[109] and agriculture.[110] It can also arise from waste storage, treatment and disposal facilities and is present in contaminated land.[111] It can also be the result of movement - in particular noise from aircraft and traffic on roads.[112] Polluting substances can enter the media of air, water or land in any combination.

This Council attaches considerable importance to controlling pollution by preventing it at source and minimising the risk to human health and the environment. In planning terms, strong pollution control contributes to the objectives of sustainability.

Pollution controls are exercised through a range of organisations and mechanisms which include licensing and authorisation procedures as well as planning controls. A considerable amount of new legislation has extended the scope and effectiveness of pollution controls.[113]

1.8.1 The Role of the Local Planning Authority

Within Local Authorities, the Environmental Health function has the main role in relation to pollution control. However, the Local Planning Authority also has an important part to play in determining the location of potentially polluting development.

It is not concerned with the detailed processes involved in the control of pollution, but, because it is concerned generally with any adverse environmental impact of a development, the pollution or waste generation implications are part of the planning consideration. It may therefore be material in deciding whether or not to grant planning permission. In particular certain industrial uses require careful control. The Local Planning Authority will consider carefully whether particular proposals for new development may be incompatible with existing industrial, commercial and residential areas.

1.8.2 Consideration of Planning Applications Where there are Potential Sources of Pollution

Policy E22 catalogues the considerations which will characterise a decision on development which is a potential source of pollution

E22 (i) makes clear that the known pollution effects of a development will be a material consideration. Health considerations are not in themselves a planning concern but if it is known that pollution from a development would have adverse effects on health, this would be a material consideration in deciding the application. Some of the environmental impacts of pollution would cause a direct conflict with planning policies. The most obvious examples relate to those on the natural environment but there are others.

E22 (ii) takes into account the potential for pollution or contamination - on or off site, short term or long term. Even if there is no clearly stated source of pollution from day one, these risk orientated assessments may influence the decision on whether or not planning permission can be granted.

E22 (iii) lists the types of nuisance caused by pollution which may lead to refusal or to the permission being conditioned in a particular way.

E22 (iv) recognises the impact that design and layout can have on pollution.[114] The road pattern off-site may also be of importance due to the pollution caused by heavy vehicles going to or from the site.

E22 (v) puts emphasis on considerations of residential amenity, when assessing a potentially polluting development.

E22 (vi) recognises that statutory environmental quality standards, imposed at a national or international level, may have disadvantageous effects in terms of the efficient operation of the site.[115]

E22 (vii) looks at the other side of the equation - that is, the limitations that allowing a pollution causing development in a particular location can place on the types of development that can then be permitted in surrounding areas.

107 *See Chapter 6, especially Sub-Section 6.2.1 - part on the Special Industrial Uses.*

108 *See Section 1.10 below.*

109 *See Section 1.5 above.*

110 *See Section 1.4 above.*

111 *See also Section 1.5 above.*

112 *See especially Section 7.5 of Movement Chapter.*

113 *The Control of Pollution Act 1974 ,the Water Act 1989 (now consolidated into the Water Resources Act 1991) and the Environmental Protection Act 1990 are the main vehicles for protecting the environment from pollution. Industrial processes with the greatest pollution potential come under Integrated Pollution Control introduced by Part I of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, and are regulated by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution (HMIP). Less polluting processes are regulated under different systems. Air quality is protected by Local Authority Air Pollution Control (LAAPC) which was also introduced by Part I of the EPA 1990. Under the 1989 Water Act, the Environment Agency was established with responsibility for policing and protecting water quality.*

114 *For instance, a certain orientation may help to direct a known source of noise pollution away from housing*

115 *This would be the case, for instance, if the positioning of plant required in order to meet such standards were to block an access point to the site.*

E22 (viii) refers to hours of operation. This will have particular relevance in relation to noise pollution or that caused by artificial floodlighting, for example.

E22 (ix) gives recognition to the potential of recovering materials and energy as ways of reducing pollution.[116]

Finally, the policy states that outline planning permission is not usually appropriate for a development where the risk of pollution is significant. Where it is known that pollution will be caused, the positioning of the proposal within the site under the control of the applicant will be a material consideration in pre-application discussions.

1.8.3 Beneficial Development in Terms of Overall Pollution

Policy E23 covers situations where the granting of planning permission for development can have the effect of a net environmental improvement in pollution terms, even though, when looked at in isolation of existing pollution sources, the development would not be beneficial.

The first instance, in **E23 (i)** is where the new development is itself a potential source of pollution. Such development may be replacing an existing development which is a worse polluter than the replacement would be, or it may be an addition to an existing polluter to assist in meeting new standards.[117]

The second instance, set out in **E23 (ii)**, is where development is not itself a pollution source, but is designed to reduce pollution or its effects. It may be that such development would not normally be acceptable under other policies.[118] In such cases, an evaluation of the pollution reducing effects of the development will be made and, where this outweighs the adverse effects in terms of other policies, (e.g. the impact on the landscape), then permission can be given.

1.8.4 Other Development in Relation to Sources of Pollution Generally

The Local Planning Authority also has a role to play in controlling other development in proximity to any existing sources of pollution. **Policy E24** deals with general cases.

E24 (i) makes clear that the operation of an existing industry which causes pollution will be a consideration. There is a need to prevent the encroachment by housing and other sensitive developments[119] into areas near facilities that are authorised or licensed under pollution control legislation. Such encroachment could lead to pressure for the imposition of higher standards at considerable expense to the facility, or revocation or refusal to renew the authorisation or licence or closure of the facility.

Appendix X lists existing businesses within Blyth Valley that have applied for local authority authorisation under Part B of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

E24 (ii) states that development proposals near existing premises subject to the pollution control legislation, will be considered in relation to their distance from that potential polluter.

E24 (iii) makes clear that the decision whether to grant permission could hinge on whether the applicants are willing to introduce their own safeguarding measures - usually in the form of a barrier of some sort.

E24 (iv) refers to the weight which will be given to other proposals in this Plan. So if a potentially polluting use is a proposal for a particular site, within the local Plan, and a sensitive development is the subject of a planning application nearby, then the existence of the proposal would be material in deciding whether or not to grant permission for the sensitive development.

1.8.5 Development in Areas Subject to Aircraft Noise

A second policy on development relating to pollution sources, **Policy E25** deals specifically with aircraft noise. The Local Planning Authority has a responsibility to ensure that, wherever practicable, noise sensitive developments such as housing, hospitals and schools are separated from major noise polluters, including those resulting from air transport.

The Policy reflects Government guidance [120] which seeks to avoid conflict between aircraft noise and public amenity. The policy aims to ensure that noise sensitive development is not permitted on land which is now or may in the future be subject to high aircraft noise levels, and that at lower levels the impact of aircraft noise is reduced through noise attenuation. This policy will apply to the conversion of existing buildings as well as the construction of new buildings.

116 *A very good example of this is provided by combined heat and power stations which use the heated cooling water to provide a district heating system for nearby areas.*

117 *For example, providing clean water and dealing with sewage is an important requirement. The statutory obligations and compliance with the relevant environmental standards and EC legislation, (Urban Waste Water Directive (91/27/EEC) and Drinking Water Directive (80/778/EEC)), may require the water and sewage undertakers to extend existing and develop new sites for such treatment. (All new treatment works will normally require comprehensive landscape and boundary treatment to help mitigate the visual impact of the development).*

118 *For instance, a slurry store on a farm may not be a desirable building visually, say, within an Area of High Landscape Value or a Conservation Area, but would be designed to contain pollution effects which would be worse otherwise.*

119 *Such as schools.*

120 *This guidance is contained within PPG24 Planning and Noise.*

Policy ***E 22*** — *POTENTIAL SOURCES OF POLLUTION*

Planning applications for developments which may be detrimental to amenity through becoming a source of pollution will be considered in relation to:

i **Any impact, resulting from the release of pollutants and waste to water, land or air, (whether on site or in adjacent areas), on health and the natural environment, landscape or general amenity, taking into account the aims of Policies E1 to E5;**

ii **The expectation for risk or contamination on site, on access roads or in adjacent areas, and measures proposed to minimise such risks;**

iii **The need to prevent or minimise nuisance in terms of smoke, fumes, gases, dust, steam, heat, light, vibration, smell, noise or discharge to water;**

iv **The design of the site including road access and the impact on the road network of any change in traffic flows as a result of the proposed use;**

v **Its proximity to residential areas and other sensitive developments;**

vi **Any constraints imposed on the operation of the site as a whole or surrounding operations as a result of the need to comply with any statutory environmental quality standards or objectives that need to be imposed in relation to the pollution source;**

vii **The possible need to restrict the types of development or impose special conditions on new development in the area surrounding the potentially polluting development;**

viii **The hours of operation;**

ix **The potential for energy and materials recovery as ways of reducing pollution.**

Where it is known in advance of any application that the proposal is likely to be the source of significant pollutants, an application for full planning permission will normally be expected.

Policy ***E 23*** — *DEVELOPMENT WITH NET BENEFIT IN POLLUTION TERMS*

Pollution sources will be controlled by granting planning permission in certain circumstances as follows:

i **Development which may become a source of pollution or an extension to an existing such development, will be granted planning permission:**

- **a** **where it is necessary to meet standards imposed by a statutory body ; and/or**
- **b** **where it leads to an overall reduction in levels of pollution by reducing the polluting effects of an existing source of pollution while not itself acting to return pollution to previous levels;**

so long as it is not considered otherwise unacceptable in terms of the provisions of Policy E22 or other Policies in this Plan.

ii **Development which has the effect of physically containing or reducing pollution, which would not normally be acceptable in terms of another Policy in this Local Plan, will be granted planning permission where it is considered that the advantages in terms of the reduction in pollution outweigh the disadvantages in terms of breaching the other Policy.**

The extent of the Noise Exposure Categories, as provided by Newcastle International Airport, is shown on the Proposals Map. The areas most prone to aircraft noise lie under the principal departure and arrival air corridors used by Newcastle International Airport. As the pattern of traffic movements, routes and aircraft types will change with time, affecting the location of the noise contours, the extent of the noise exposure categories will periodically be reviewed by the Borough Council, in association with Newcastle International Airport. At present, the area shown is outside settlement limits / within the proposed Green Belt and is therefore limited in the development that would be allowed. Notwithstanding this, the standards in **E25 (i) to (v)** will be applied to development proposals.[121]

1.8.6 The Storage of Hazardous Substances

A separate body of legislation deals with the storage of hazardous substances.[122] These are substances that would present a major fire, explosion or toxicity risk to people in the vicinity. Appendix XI lists the existing notifiable installations within Blyth Valley as registered under the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Act 1990. Hazardous Substances Consent is required where the level of notified materials as listed in Schedule 1 of the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Regulations 1992 is exceeded.[123] In all cases, the Health and Safety Executive will be consulted in order to reach a decision. Where hazardous substances are already stored, any proposals for development close by will also be subject to consultation with the Health and Safety Executive.[124] Where there is uncertainty, the criteria in Policy E22 will be applied.



View towards Seaton Delaval from the South

121 *Leq is a measurement of continuous sound levels and dB(A) is the measurement of decibels, measured on a sound level meter, incorporating a frequency weighting. (See Appendix XXVIII).*

122 *The Planning (Hazardous Substances) Act 1990 and its related regulations.*

123 *This includes certain instances where a parallel planning consent would not be required.*

124 *Each such installation will have a defined consultation zone within which certain development may not be permitted.*

Policy ***E 24*** *DEVELOPMENT NEAR EXISTING POLLUTION SOURCES*

Where planning applications are made for new development in the vicinity of existing development which is subject to pollution control legislation, the following will be taken into account in deciding whether or not to grant planning permission:

i The operating requirements of the existing development, with permission normally being refused if the development would result in:

a the imposition of higher standards at unreasonable expense to the existing development;

b the revocation or refusal to renew the pollution control authorisation or licence of the facility, resulting in the closure of the development;

ii The distance of the proposed development from the facility subject to pollution control legislation;

iii The provision of measures to safeguard the amenity of the proposed development such as noise abatement measures, landscape buffers etc.;

iv Site specific considerations including any Proposals in this Local Plan.

Policy ***E 25*** *AIRCRAFT NOISE*

Planning applications for residential and other noise sensitive development proposed in areas subject to aircraft noise will be determined in accordance with the following standards, as well as other Policies in this Local Plan:

i New residential development will not be permitted within Noise Exposure Category D;

ii Residential development proposed within Noise Exposure Category C will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. Where permission is granted the developer will need to demonstrate that by incorporating noise attenuation measures an acceptable sound environment can be achieved;

iii Planning permission may be granted for residential development within Noise Exposure Category B provided developers can demonstrate that an acceptable sound environment can be achieved;

iv Other non-residential noise sensitive development such as offices, schools and hospitals will not be permitted in locations which are subject to noise exposure level of 60 Leqdb(A);

v Noise will not be considered a determining factor in granting permission for developments in areas subject to Noise Exposure Category A.

Where appropriate, planning conditions will be imposed to achieve an acceptable and sustainable sound environment.

The extent of the Noise Exposure Categories is shown on the Proposals Map, which will be reviewed from time to time, in consultation with Newcastle International Airport.

1.9 TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Developments in telecommunications[125] are treated alongside pollution control matters because they lead to an array of effects on the environment which are difficult to predict or categorise but which still have to be dealt with through some sort of structured planning approach. Just as developments in technology can remove some forms of pollution but create others, they can provide new forms of communication with their own particular environmental implications.

In recent years there has been considerable growth in the telecommunications industry, with an increasing demand for better communications both at home and at work. Modern telecommunications benefit the environment through reducing the need to travel, hence cutting the emission of carbon dioxide and other pollutants into the atmosphere. Fast, reliable and cost-effective communications can also attract industry and office development into an area and make existing firms more competitive. This is particularly important in the development of the single European market and in the creation of an environment in which major national and international companies would want to expand.

A telecommunications network can involve the laying of cables, the erection or conversion of buildings for use as exchanges or switches, the erection of masts and towers, and the erection of antennae and dish aerials on purpose built structures or existing roof tops. It is current Government Policy [126] to facilitate the growth of new and existing telecommunications systems.

1.9.1 Major Telecommunications Development

The general approach of this Plan in relation to the facilitation of technological advances is, therefore, generally a favourable one, subject to their environmental impact on the surrounding area. It is the larger scale of telecommunications development, epitomised by masts and antennae within the open landscape, which is likely to have the greatest impact on the surrounding area.[127] **Policy E26** deals with these larger scale structures.

E26 (i) recognises the need for the efficient development of telecommunication networks and that various demands are imposed by changing technology.[128]

The use of existing buildings or masts is encouraged, where possible, for operational purposes. Site sharing agreements are also encouraged between operators in order to reduce the environmental impact of telecommunications networks. Wherever possible, no more than the minimum practical number of apparatus needed to run an efficient telecommunications network should be erected. Only where sharing is not possible, will a new structure be allowed. They will also only be allowed if they are in effect providing a missing element within a recognised network. Within open land areas,[129] telecommunications will be treated as one of the exceptional categories of development which may be permitted in certain circumstances. The policy therefore sets out criteria against which proposals can be assessed in terms of their overall impact on the landscape.

E26 (ii) deals with situations where a proposal falls within one of the main statutorily protected areas. In general, this situation should be avoided, unless there are no satisfactory alternative sites available. The relevant policies will be taken into account. Thus S.S.S.I.'s, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, archaeological remains and A.H.L.V.'s should be avoided wherever possible, with views into and from the latter two categories of area also taken into consideration.

Thirdly, **E26 (iii)** recognises the outside possibility that telecommunications structures could be positioned in such a way that, later, the implementation of a development proposal would be prevented - e.g. by the need to retain openness between masts. Where this is considered possible, it will be a factor in determining the application.

The last part of the Policy covers buildings and structures which may intervene to disrupt an existing or planned telecommunications network, thus affecting commercial activities or the interests of residents. It will therefore be legitimate for certain factors relating to that building [130] to be assessed in relation to existing local telecommunications development.

1.9.2 Minor Telecommunications Development

Much minor telecommunications development is permitted under the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1995. However there may be circumstances where the exercise of a permitted development right may have a serious impact on

125 *Reference to telecommunications should be read to include all forms of communications by electrical or optical wire, cable and radio signals (whether terrestrial or from satellite), both public and private.*

126 *As outlined in PPG8: Telecommunications.*

127 *The location of transmitter aerials is important as signals from one cell cannot be allowed to spill over into another cell with the same frequency. To avoid blind spots from hills and buildings, antennas must usually be high up. The greatest need for base stations is likely to be within built-up areas and within a mile or two of the main roads. Many antennas have special siting needs because they have a limited range or require line-of-sight.*

128 *Early consultation is encouraged between the planning authority and the telecommunications operators to enable the requirements of telecommunications networks, routing and phasing of network development to be taken into account.*

129 *i.e. areas beyond settlement limits, as defined in Policy G6, including the Green Belt, as defined in Policy G7.*

130 *These might include the height or width of each face of the new building or structure, the material and outside surface finish and the orientation of the sides of the building or structure.*

Policy ***E 26*** *TELECOMMUNICATIONS*

The likely growth in telecommunications during the Plan period will be facilitated, while protecting amenity by granting planning permission for new masts or similar structures, but only:

i Where it can be demonstrated that:

a the sharing of an existing mast or other existing structure or building is not possible or feasible; and

b the development would form part of a recognised telecommunications network; and

c subject to technical and operational requirements, full account has been taken of:

- **the impact within the wider landscape including visibility, height and the relationship to the topography and the proximity to similar structures or other high buildings and structures;**
- **the appearance and siting of the main structure and any ancillary development;**
- **other amenity considerations such as the provision of landscaping and screening associated with the development.**

ii For proposals in a Conservation Area, the vicinity of a Listed Building, Area of High Landscape Value, Site of Special Scientific Interest, important archaeological site or other protected area, if it can be demonstrated that there are no satisfactory alternative sites available, while applying the criteria in Policies E1, E2, E4, E12, E13, E14 and E15;

iii Where there would be no possible compromising of the implementation of other Policies and Proposals in this Plan.

Where there is considered to be a possibility of physical and electrical interference to the existing or planned telecommunications network, the Local Planning Authority will need to be satisfied that this has been fully taken into account in the siting and design of the development.

amenity. The Local Planning Authority may therefore either:

- decide that prior approval is required for the details of the siting and appearance of certain telecommunications development;[131] or
- intervene to seek the relocation of an antenna installed under permitted development rights, in order to minimise its effects on the external appearance of a building;[132] or
- withdraw the right, if necessary, (in which case it will serve a Direction under Article 4 of the Order).

Such interventions will depend on the peculiarities of each case and it is not possible to summarise in a policy, the circumstances in which these powers will be utilised.

1.9.3 **Satellite Receiver Dishes**

In certain circumstances planning permission or Listed Building Consent is required for the installation of a satellite receiver dish. It is advised that, before a satellite dish is purchased, the owner contact the Local Planning Authority to check if planning permission is required.[133]

Advice has been produced [134] to inform householders of the best and most acceptable locations for the siting of satellite dishes on dwelling houses, flats and commercial premises. The intention is to avoid the need for planning applications and, where permission is not required in any case, to reduce the risk of the removal of permitted development rights at a later date.[135]

131 *A code system operator must apply to the planning authority before installing certain telecommunications apparatus under permitted development rights, for a determination as to whether their approval of the details of the siting and appearance of the development is required. The Local Planning Authority can require changes to siting and appearance with the aim of protecting amenity such as shielding buildings with landscaping and planting or encourage the use of materials, colours and design which would minimise obtrusiveness.*

132 *It is a condition of the permitted development rights to install an antenna on a building that the antenna shall, so far as practicable be sited so as to minimise its effect on the external appearance of the building on which it has be installed. If, in the view of the Local Planning Authority an antenna has not been so sited, it may serve a breach of condition notice requiring the resiting of the antenna, giving guidance on the preferred siting to minimise the impact of the antenna.*

133 *At the time of writing, within Northumberland, planning permission is not required for suitably sited dishes of up to 90cm in diameter.*

134 *A free guidance leaflet on fixing satellite receiver dishes is published by the Council.*

135 *See (2) above. (Poor siting of the dish may lead the Local Planning Authority to require the dish to be moved at the expense of the householder).*

Policy E27 will be applied in assessing those satellite dish proposals that require planning permission.[136] It reflects the main elements of the advice (mentioned above), which it is hoped will be applied to all proposals, irrespective of whether or not planning permission is required. The main aim is to minimise any adverse visual impact on the external appearance of the building.

E27 (i) deals with the additional controls available in Conservation Areas and in relation to Listed Buildings.[137] These will be used to restrict the proliferation of satellite dishes, which, by their nature, are out of keeping with the types of buildings and areas covered by the designations.

E27 (ii) is a second layer of control which will be applied. The emphasis at this level of scrutiny will be placed on those parts of the built-up area outside Conservation Areas which are considered to be particularly sensitive, as well as Areas of High Landscape Value.

E27 (iii) stresses the importance of the exact positioning and design of the satellite dish in relation to the building(s) that it is intended to serve. It is preferable that the dish is placed in an inconspicuous place, such as on a rear wall, preferably no higher than 2 metres above ground level, towards the back of a flat roofed garage, or in a back garden protected by shrubs.

In normal circumstances, when considering the siting / features of a dish, the following would not be granted permission:

a positioning on any part of the front elevation of a building or on any side wall where it would be clearly visible from the street;

b protrusion of any part of the aerial above the highest point of the building, normally a ridge line or chimney;

c positioning in close proximity to the windows or doors of neighbouring buildings, (particularly dwellinghouses);

d positioning within front gardens, unless the dish is well hidden by shrubbery and at a low level;

e a colour or design of dish that is not considered to blend in with its immediate background and surroundings.

In large blocks of flats communal satellite TV systems are favoured to individual household satellite dishes. In terms of design it is normally suggested that a dish is selected that is no larger than the minimum required for good reception.

1.10 ENERGY GENERATION AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

As explained in the Introduction to this Local Plan, energy conservation forms one of the four main aims of this Local Plan. Environmental protection and enhancement, the subject matter of this first main chapter, is another of the overall aims. There is, of course, an interface between the two, in that the conservation of energy has net environmental benefits.

The basis of environmental problems associated with energy is threefold:

1 The raw materials associated with some of the main methods of energy generation are finite and/or their winning causes environmental damage;

2 Secondly the main methods of energy generation are, generally speaking, polluting in a variety of ways;

3 Thirdly, the higher the level of energy use, the more potential there is for (1) and (2) above.

The basis of any solution to the above is two pronged:

1 Alternative, less environmentally damaging, sources of energy and methods of generation have to be explored;

2 Energy conservation measures should be pursued.

1.10.1 Renewable Energy

The alternative sources of energy which have the greatest potential benefit to the environment are renewable.

Renewable energy is a term used to describe a wide range of naturally occurring, replenishable energy sources that will never run out. It includes energy from the sun, wind, oceans and from falling water, as well as energy from waste (biogas) and crop harvesting (such as coppicing).[138]

In the UK, Government and European Commission programmes have played an important role in the development of renewable energies. In particular, the Government's introduction of the Non-Fossil Fuel Obligations (NFFO) in England and Wales and similar arrangements in Scotland and Northern Ireland has given considerable impetus to the deployment of renewables technologies.[139]

More "conventional" sources of energy normally require processes (in order to convert them for general use), which are large scale, regional operations often with major implications for land use, visual impact and possibly pollution.[140] Land use decisions relating to these

136 *This policy is not intended to refer to telecommunications code system operators.*

137 *See also Policies E15 and E13 respectively.*

138 *Energy from the earth, i.e. geothermal, is also classed as a renewable, although locally it cannot sustain continuous extraction.*

139 *Under the NFFO, electricity companies are obliged to derive a proportion of their power from renewable energy projects, which receive a premium price for the electricity they generate.*

Policy ***E 27*** — *SATELLITE RECEIVER DISHES*

Proposals for the installation of satellite receiver dishes of over 90 centimetres diameter will require planning permission. These will be determined so as to minimise any adverse visual impact, and in particular the following will apply:

i Within Conservation Areas and on Listed Buildings, the fixing of apparatus will be strongly resisted unless it can be clearly shown that the development would not have a detrimental effect on the character of the area and its visual amenity;

ii Where (i) above does not apply, proposals will be assessed in relation to the overall visual appearance and character of the area, applying Policy E17, with particularly close scrutiny where:

a the proposal can be viewed from a Conservation Area;

b the proposal affects other built-up areas of traditional character as described in Policy E17 (i);

c the proposal is within an Area of High Landscape Value as defined in Policy E4;

iii Within the context of (ii) above, a full assessment will be made, taking into account local practicalities of the siting, size, design and appearance of the satellite dish on or adjacent to the building or buildings that it is intended to serve.

are therefore long term and limited in number; such decisions have not needed to be taken in Blyth Valley.[141] On the other hand, the securing of energy by renewable means, can be much more localised and less land intensive. As such, it may become the potential subject of more regular land use decisions within the area covered by the Local Plan.

In terms of the three "problems associated with energy" outlined above, the use of renewable, as opposed to conventional energy sources, can assist in overcoming the first *two*. As such, a generally favourable approach is taken to it by this Local Plan.[142] In doing so, it is borne in mind that whilst renewable energies emit no significant harmful pollutants or wastes,[143] there may be environmental impacts associated with them, such as visual intrusion or interference with natural phenomena. Renewable energy systems also differ from conventional energy sources in that they tend to require more land to generate a given amount of electricity and in many cases will have very specific land requirements. Wind power installations for example usually require rural or coastal location which can often conflict with landscape or wildlife designations.[144]

Policy E28 has the aim of accommodating, so far as is practicable given other Policies and Proposals in this Local Plan, the built development associated with the small scale exploitation of energy from renewable sources.

The policy states the favourable approach to be taken towards renewable energy proposals. However account will be taken of the scale of the proposal and particular regard is required for the assessment of a proposal in relation to the following:

- Firstly the likely impact on the existing landscape, (**E28 (i)**). An application that falls within an Area of High Landscape Value[145] will be assessed against the landscape as it is now, but consideration will be given as to whether the proposal can be assimilated into that landscape - e.g. by blending in sufficiently with it, or, in contrast, by forming a new positive visual feature within it. Similarly the assessment of a

140 *Such as coal fired power stations or the extraction of gas from the North Sea.*

141 *The nearest example of a large electricity generator is Blyth Power Station within Wansbeck District.*

142 *Additionally, the Government sees renewable energy as being one way of reducing Carbon Dioxide emissions. The White Paper on the Environment, "This Common Inheritance" (1990), set down the Government's intention to reduce CO2 emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2000 and Energy Paper 62 "New and Renewable Energy: Future Prospects in the UK", published in 1994, confirmed the policy of working towards 1,500 MW (DNC) of new electricity generating capacity from renewable sources by the year 2000. This attitude is also reflected in Planning Policy Guidance Note 22 on Renewable Energy, which recognises the general importance of renewable technology to meet national energy demands.*

143 *Although the possible proximity of renewable generators to housing and other sensitive development, may require the pollution control policy in the previous Section to be applied in appropriate cases - as a safeguard.*

144 *See for example Policies E1 & E4.*

145 *As defined above in Para 1.3.1*

proposal within the setting of a Conservation Area or Listed Building will have to take account of the unconventional appearance of much of the technology involved.[146]

- Secondly the impact on sites of acknowledged environmental importance, (**E28 (ii)**). Care must be taken to ensure that major natural assets, in the form of internationally important nature conservation sites and Sites of Special Scientific Interest, alongside non-statutory wildlife areas, such as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest or Local Nature Reserves, are left undisturbed. However recognition is given to the possibility that the siting of certain features - such as wind turbines or solar panels - may be possible without causing damage to the wildlife interest concerned.

- Thirdly the likely impact on existing residential development must be taken into account, ensuring that no significant loss of amenity will result from the development (**E28 (iii)**).

- Fourthly, in line with the landscape strategy,[147] the Policy aims to reduce the impact of overhead wires on the landscape, (**E28 (iv)**). Avoiding the use of such wires, or the removal of existing wires, could be one positive impact of an alternative energy scheme.[148]

1.10.2 **Energy Conservation**

The other facet of the energy strategy is the implementation of energy conservation measures. Measures available for the conservation of energy cover the whole spectrum from national policy to the design of individual dwellings and individual items,[149] however even on a local scale, planning policy and decisions are able to cover only a limited range. Nonetheless, in the light of the overall aims of the Plan, the approach, as set out in **Policy E29**, is to allow for and take positive measures towards encouraging energy conservation, to the extent that they can be influenced by planning policy.

A major strand of the energy conservation strategy is, of course, the minimisation of unnecessary movement. **E29 (i)** refers to this as a strategic aim of the settlement policy as set out in the next Chapter and **E29 (ii)** reflects this in the movement policies themselves.[150]

The most positive situation into which energy conservation measures can be put into effect is within new housing development. **E29 (iii)** refers to the detailed approach in relation to housing, set out in Chapter 3.[151] A particular area has been selected where energy efficient housing will be applied. This is the South-West Cramlington Community Development Area.[152]

Overlaying all of this, however, it is important that any opportunity for energy to be conserved, through decisions on development proposals, is taken. This is the purpose of **E29 (iv)**.



Plessey Wagonway

146 *Even a single wind turbine would probably be too prominent for the setting of a Conservation Area or Listed Building not to be adversely affected. However the Policy allows for the possibility that technology will evolve and that such equipment could be permitted in the future.*

147 *This is explained in section 1.3 above.*

148 *Such as the placing of a single wind turbine in an isolated location.*

149 *Such as low energy light bulbs.*

150 *See Chapter 2, sub-section 2.2.1 and the introduction to Chapter 7.*

151 *See Chapter 3, Sub-section 3.6.2 and Policy H21 (iv).*

152 *See Chapter 11, Proposal SW1.*

Policy ***E 28*** — *RENEWABLE ENERGY*

Proposals for development which assists the exploitation of renewable energies will be encouraged and normally permitted, but subject to Policy G12 (iii) where the scale of the proposal warrants, provided that:

i It is not likely to result in unacceptable intrusion into the intrinsic landscape qualities of the area; and

ii It will not harm features of acknowledged environmental importance or otherwise have a significant adverse effect on the environment; and

iii It will not result in a significant adverse effect on residential amenity; and

iv Connections to the national grid or user building are located so as to minimise any significant adverse environmental impact.

Policy ***E 29*** — *ENERGY CONSERVATION*

Planning decisions will be directed towards energy conservation, as follows:

i Through settlement Policies G1 to G5;

ii Through applying the overall principles on Movement in Policy M1;

iii Through decisions on new housing developments, applying Policy H21 (iv);

iv Subject to other policies, by taking a positive attitude towards development proposals which offer the opportunity for energy conservation measures to be taken.

1.11 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This chapter has covered a wide range of issues, topics, land uses and development types where there is a need for policies to protect and/or enhance the environment as a result. Overlaying all of this is a mechanism which ensures that, where the adverse environmental impact of a development proposal may be significant, an all-encompassing environmental impact assessment will be carried out in advance of the granting of planning permission.[153]

Environmental assessment draws together in a systematic way, quantitative analysis and qualitative assessment of the environmental effects of a project, and presents the results in a way which enables the importance of the predicted effects and the scope for avoiding, modifying or mitigating any adverse effects to be properly evaluated before a decision is given.[154]

Environmental assessment techniques can help both developers and the Local Authority to identify likely effects at an early stage and thus to improve the quality of both project planning and decision making.

153 *The Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1988, as supplemented by the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Assessment and Permitted Development) Regulations 1995, implement the requirements of a European Community Directive, (Directive No. 85/337), which requires that projects which are likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of their nature, size or location shall be subject to an assessment of those effects, before planning permission can be granted.*

154 *The scope of information which may be called for where an environmental statement is to be provided for a project includes the impact of the project on human beings, flora, fauna, water, soil, air, climate, the landscape, the interaction between any of the above, material assets, and the cultural heritage. Consideration may also need to be given to the use of natural resources, the emission of pollutants, the creation of nuisances, and the elimination of waste and any other issues of local importance affecting the planning proposal. If an application is not accompanied by sufficient information on which to reach a decision, the Local Planning Authority may request supplementary information.*

The regulations contain two Schedules:

- Schedule 1 is the list of those types of project for which an Environmental Assessment will be required because there is the possibility of major implications over a wide area;[155]
- Schedule 2 lists the types of project which may, under certain circumstances, have such implications. In this case it is at the discretion of the Local Planning Authority to decide whether an Environmental Assessment is required.

Developers should aim to include measures in their proposals to minimise their impact on the environment.

Whether or not applicants for Schedule 2 projects will be asked to submit statements, will, in reality, (in most cases), depend on whether any of the following apply:

- Where major projects are determined to be of more than local importance;[156]
- Where projects on a smaller scale are proposed in particularly sensitive or vulnerable locations;[157]
- In a small number of cases, (for projects with unusually complex and potentially adverse environmental effects), where expert and detailed analysis of those effects would be desirable and would be relevant to the issue of principle as to whether or not the development should be permitted.

In all cases, early consultation with the Local Planning Authority is advised. For projects for which Environmental Assessment may be necessary, there will be benefits to developers[158] if the assessment process is initiated at a sufficiently early stage and particularly if consultations are undertaken with the Planning Authority and other interested bodies during the preparatory stages.[159]

Clearly, large scale proposals, especially where they encroach onto previously open countryside, will have an environmental impact which will need to be weighed up against positive effects. The next Chapter includes a general development control Policy which sets out a series of criteria against which applications for planning permission should be judged.[160]

155 *Schedule 1 includes such developments as large power stations and major chemical works.*

156 *Examples of this type of project could include minerals extraction or engineering operations, substantial new manufacturing plant, (of which several categories are listed in Schedule 2), and major infrastructure projects. Major projects which substantially depart from the approved development plan may particularly require Environmental Assessment.*

157 *Examples of this type of project could include sites that may affect a Site of Special Scientific Interest, or a Listed Building.*

158 *e.g. in terms of the overall costs of designing the scheme - expensive redrafting being avoided.*

159 *Further information on the Environmental Assessment requirements is given in DOE Circular 15/88 and in the Department's booklet "Environmental Assessment - A Guide to the Procedures" published by HMSO in November 1989.*

160 *See especially part (iii) of Policy G12 in Sub-section 2.7.6 within Chapter 2.*

2. General Development

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter has mapped out the natural and built environment of Blyth Valley and taken this as a template against which development proposals should be assessed. At the same time, that chapter has also recognised the environment as a positive asset in its own right with scope for enhancement.

This chapter, by contrast, takes a more development related point of view, covering some of the principles that will be applied to development through the planning system during the decade plus of this Local Plan.

It begins by setting out a settlement policy for the Plan area, i.e. those parts of Blyth Valley where built development will generally be allowed and, within these, where it will be encouraged, (taking a hierarchical approach to different types of development).

Then, reinforcing the settlement policies, the chapter goes on to define the areas where there will be blanket restrictions on development. This is done by defining limits to settlements and therefore simultaneously defining open land areas where the restrictions will be applied. Superimposed on this, it defines a Green Belt area covering the southern part of the Plan area.

Following this, the chapter defines precisely the development restrictions to be imposed on the open land and Green Belt areas and those types of development which would normally be allowed - or may be in exceptional circumstances.

The latter part of the chapter sets down the Council's approach to reacting to and dealing with development proposals as they arise - in terms of the initial approach, the submission of a planning application, the granting of permission and the period of implementation, (as dictated by planning conditions and, in some circumstances, Planning Agreements between developers and the Planning Authority). There is also an overview of the range of things that are taken into account when assessing a development proposal, (the "material considerations"), and the opportunity is taken to draw together the strings of the necessarily wide array of additional, detailed policy guidance which is used to assess applications and which is referred to at intervals throughout this document.

2.2 SETTLEMENT POLICY

This section looks at the main building blocks which make up the geography of the area. These are the settlements - the towns, villages, hamlets and individual buildings where people live, work and partake in community activities. The section takes the main aims of the Plan and tries to assess their positive roles as places at present and whether these should remain as they are or change.

2.2.1 New Settlements?

The main aims of this Local Plan were explained in the Introduction to this Written Statement as "the four e's". One of these, energy conservation, is very much at the heart of the proposed settlement policy, not only in Blyth Valley, but County-wide (through the Structure Plan).

In brief, the existing main settlements in Northumberland are all relatively well located in relation to the transport network - particularly the public transport system - and, being (mostly) market towns, they are also centrally located for the areas they serve.

Meanwhile the demand for new housing to accommodate growing (or incoming) population is healthy enough for a rural County during a period of economic stagnation. However in absolute terms development rates are slow.

For these reasons the Northumberland County Structure Plan discourages entirely new settlements. It is considered that the growth of new isolated settlements would be too slow to encourage the establishment of services at an early date. If away from public transport routes, residents would have to rely entirely on motor cars for many years.

In line with the above, it will not be the intention to plan or grant planning permission for any new settlements in Blyth Valley during the period of this Local Plan. The vast majority of new built development will therefore be in the form of additions to the existing settlements.

Policy ***G1*** *CRAMLINGTON AND BLYTH: GENERAL SETTLEMENT POLICY*

The towns of Cramlington and Blyth, as defined by their settlement limits, shall accommodate the majority of housing, employment and other development in the Borough during the Plan period, including all large scale development.



New Offices under Construction in Blyth Town Centre

2.2.2 Existing Settlements

Having established that there should be no new settlements, policies can concentrate on defining the role of existing settlements. The settlements in question are the towns of Cramlington and Blyth, the central village of Seaton Delaval, the villages of Holywell, Seghill, New Hartley, and Old Hartley / Seaton Sluice, East Hartford and East Cramlington.

THE ROLE OF THE TWO MAIN TOWNS IN ABSORBING MOST DEVELOPMENT

The County Structure Plan makes a clear distinction between settlements of different size and status in terms of the accommodation of new development. The County's main service centres will have the role of absorbing the majority of development during the Plan period. Additional development in these towns will help maintain the viability of services; the existence of the services where new development is planned will assist in the meeting of overall sustainable development / energy conservation aims.

Policy G1 applies this to the two main settlements within the Plan area, Blyth and Cramlington. These will have the role of absorbing most new housing, work activity and other development. The strategic reasons for concentrating development in main service centres have already been stated - the maintenance of services, the concentration of energy and resources etc.

In Blyth Valley, there is another overriding reason why it is necessary to concentrate such a high proportion, as previously may have been the case, of development in the two main centres. It relates to the environment of South-East Northumberland where the areas between settlements are tight in comparison with a more thinly populated rural area. Smaller settlements, in spite of an industrial past, have been seen as relatively attractive places to locate new development, especially housing, and, as a result, have expanded to a point where they have begun to merge.

It comes down to a question of land supply. It has become necessary to recognise that, within Blyth Valley, against a background of environmental protection, land for development has become a scarce resource outside the two main settlements. It is time to slow down the expansion of smaller settlements and concentrate development into the two main towns. Generally speaking, these have a good supply of land for most forms of development.[1]

Apart from taking the bulk of future development, it is necessary for the Plan to define more precisely - and individually - the role of the two settlements.

1 *This will be noted in later topic chapters, (although the two towns are not without specific constraints of their own - e.g. the limited further land supply at Blyth town centre).*

THE ROLE OF CRAMLINGTON

Four themes, relating to the role of Cramlington are explored briefly below. These are:

i Its role as a **new town**;
ii Its role in absorbing **population**;
iii Its role as a **sub-regional growth point**.
iv Its role as a **service centre**.

i Role as a New Town

The proposal for a new town at Cramlington was first put forward in 1959. Unlike nationally designated New Towns, the closest of which were in County Durham, (Washington, Peterlee and Newton Aycliffe), Cramlington was a locally generated idea, promoted by Local Councils in tandem with the Private Sector,[2] without the additional driving force of a Government sponsored Development Corporation.

In spite of its local designation, the role envisaged for Cramlington was similar to that of the nationally designated New Towns. That is, it was intended to accommodate overspill population from a conurbation, (in this case the northern part of Tyneside), in a self contained community, providing the incomers not only with housing but also with work and all the other facilities associated with everyday life.

As with many new towns, the reality has been somewhat different, primarily because of proximity to the conurbation which encourages cross fertilisation rather than separation. Only about a quarter of Cramlington's working residents have jobs within the town, while about half work on Tyneside and use Cramlington as a dormitory town.[3]

On the other hand, the town has been very successful in attracting work activity.[4] Cramlington has become a place to which people in surrounding areas (as well as the indigenous population) go to work. More than half of the jobs in Cramlington are occupied by people from outside the town, especially from other parts of south-east Northumberland.

In terms of services and community facilities, the town has developed to an extent but still lacks certain key elements which would be expected in a self contained town of the same size.[5]

ii Role in Absorbing Population

The originally planned population of the new town was to be 47,500. The rapid growth of the town during the 1960's led to this figure being increased to 60,500 by the time of the final version of the Cramlington Comprehensive Development Area Plan towards the end of that decade.

Again, the present reality is somewhat altered from predictions. The present population is still short of 30,000 and the end population of the town is likely to be much lower than 60,000 after all. It may well be quite close to the initial target of about 47,000.

This reflects a number of factors - not least the slackening off in population growth and pressure for land to accommodate that growth. The phenomenon of a net overspill of population from Tyneside has slowed.[6] In addition, the average size of households has been decreasing. Much of the demand for new accommodation within Cramlington has been generated from within the town or its surrounding area.

All these factors have assisted in easing the pressure for the town to absorb large numbers of people. This in turn has reduced the need for high density development, a trend that has also been assisted by a rapidly evolving housing market, (with increased owner occupation manifesting itself in increased demands for lower density detached and semi-detached houses). Also, more recent phases of development in the town have devoted a greater proportion of land to open space and incidental landscaping.

In the above context, the analysis in the Housing chapter in this Local Plan finds that the original Comprehensive Development Area of Cramlington, with one or two modifications, can still offer sufficient land for housing to be able to meet predicted requirements for the duration of the Plan period and probably well beyond.

iii Role as Sub-Regional Growth Point

The Northumberland County Structure Plan has always defined the role of Cramlington separately from that of other main towns - as a sub-regional growth point for employment and housing. The implication has been that Cramlington should take a large amount of development in these two categories, partly because the expansion plans for the town necessitated a catching-up exercise with other towns, partly because it was being promoted as an attractive location in its own right - as a "flagship" for the revitalisation of south-east Northumberland.

On the employment side, the accessible location and the financial incentives available have been the driving force behind the policy.[7]

On the housing side, land availability factors, the open, new town environment, and the need to boost the

2 *Under the Town Development Act.*
3 *The introductory background on the local economy, (Appendix XXIII), includes a full analysis on travel to work patterns.*
4 *See also Chapter on Work Activity (Chapter 6, especially Section 6.2.*
5 *See Community Facilities Chapter, (Chapter 4) and also Chapters 8 and 10 on particular parts of Cramlington.*
6 *It has been demonstrated that there is sufficient land within Tyne and Wear to accommodate predicted growth there. See, for example DoE Strategic Guidance for Tyne and Wear.*
7 *See also background on the Local Economy, (Appendix XXIII), and Work Activity Chapter.*

population to encourage service provision, have taken over from population pressures as the main reasons for the promotion of growth.

The most recent County Structure Plan has dropped the term "growth point" but continues to differentiate between Cramlington and other towns - now describing it as a "sub-regional focus for housing and employment development". This slight downward shift in emphasis is partly in recognition that the town is well on its way to being fully developed and that land has become a finite resource.

On the housing side, if all new housing development required in Blyth Valley was concentrated in Cramlington, the total supply of possible housing land would probably be used up before the end of the Plan period. In fact, the fastest growing town in Northumberland, in terms of housing completions between 1981 and 1991, was not Cramlington but Blyth. (Cramlington was in second place). This was in spite of the Structure Plan housing target for Cramlington being higher than for the whole of the rest of Blyth Valley put together.

This reality will be taken on board in the new Plan period, with a substantial allocation of housing land in both Blyth and Cramlington. At the same time, the Local Plan needs to strike a balance whereby housing provision in Cramlington is on a sufficient scale and of sufficient variety to attract new population to support the role of the town, while recognising that it is no longer necessary to concentrate large volume housing developments in the town.[8]

On the work activity side, a similar situation applies. Land supply is finite but Cramlington continues to have a role which stands slightly apart from other towns of similar size, connected with the location, the status and the general environment. While it should provide the sub-regional focus in certain senses, it will not be sought to concentrate all categories of employment growth into the town. In particular, at the very top end of the size range, while some provision is made, there will not be unlimited scope for the most land intensive employment uses to be suitably located in the town.[9]

iv Role as a Service Centre

With the population at 30,000, is Cramlington providing town-wide services to meet the needs of that population? The details of individual facilities are dealt with in the Community Facilities chapter. However in general, a simple comparison with Blyth - a similar sized town (with 35,000 population) - shows that some key facilities are still lacking.

The County Structure Plan puts Cramlington in the same category as Blyth and all the other market towns in the County, defining it as a "main service centre". The town now acts in this role which is becoming more firmly established. One way in which this has been assisted, apart from the encouragement of development, has been to take advantage of the accessibility of the town centre and promote it as a sub-regional location for retail warehouse development.[10] The hope is that the creation of this attractor will raise the profile of Cramlington for retailers and service providers generally and so improve it as a service centre for its own residents.

Policy on the Role of Cramlington.

The points raised under the above four headings are covered further elsewhere in this Written Statement.

Policy G2 crystallises out of this a simple general policy for the role of Cramlington as a settlement through the Plan period.

G2 (i) aims to ensure that the principal settlement status is maintained and enhanced so that Cramlington will sit on the same level of the settlement hierarchy as other main towns including Blyth, by encouraging a focusing of housing and work activity development applying the approach suggested under "iii" above.

G2 (ii) aims to enhance Cramlington's status as a service centre, taking into account that it may be appropriate for the town to play a partially sub-regional role in the field of service provision, as argued under "iv" above.

THE ROLE OF BLYTH

The uniqueness of Cramlington and the lack of clarity surrounding its role have necessitated the full consideration set out above, in advance of Policy G2 being formulated.

With Blyth, the picture is much simpler. It has a long established role as a main service centre. Its coastal location and the proximity of other main centres means that the town does not have a hinterland and its service role is in the main, limited to its own population.

That population has remained relatively static in recent years but this has been at the same time as there has been considerable activity in terms of housebuilding and the development of the town's service base.

Its role as an employment centre has held up, in relative terms, in spite of the disappearance of deep mining. The

8 *As well as Blyth, the towns of Bedlington and Ashington, within south-east Northumberland, have scope for considerable housing expansion.*

9 *See Chapter 6, Sub-section 6.2.2.*

10 *A substantial retail warehouse park is now trading, see also Community Facilities Chapter, (Chapter 4, Section 4.8).*

Policy ***G 2*** *CRAMLINGTON: SETTLEMENT POLICY*

The town of Cramlington shall:

i Continue to be developed as one of the two principal settlements within the Plan area and as a sub-regional focus for housing and employment development, by encouraging, through other policies in this Plan:

a housing development, to a level and of a variety that will ensure that the resident population of the town continues to grow in order to support services, generally enhance the above role and remove pressure for development from more sensitive parts of the Plan area;

b work activity development, in recognition of the strategic role of the town, within the physical constraints of the town and its surrounding area;

ii Continue to act as a main service centre for its catchment population and to provide the sub-regional location for certain services, as appropriate, where this assists in enhancing the town as a service centre.

fact that the town is longer established than Cramlington helps to explain the much greater degree of self-containment within the employment market. Blyth provides work for about half of its employed residents, a group which makes up well over half of its total workforce. The take up of new employment land over the last ten years has been limited and land available for additional work activity is also fairly restricted.[11] In spite of this, sufficient land remains readily available to meet anticipated needs assuming that the employment role of the town remains local rather than strategic.

Although the role of Blyth is well established, according to the above description, the role defined for the town in this Local Plan needs to take into account the following:

- Based on recent experience, **it will be necessary to sustain past levels of development simply to keep the population at its current level**. Net population loss could undermine the service role of the town.

- A reduced role is defined for some of the smaller settlements in terms of housing land (see below). In addition, as stated above, the supply of land for housing in Cramlington is finite. In combination, these two facts imply that **Blyth is likely to have an enhanced, rather than reduced role in terms of housing** over the coming decade. This is the assumption made in drawing up the housing policies of this Local Plan. The main means of doing this will be by increasing the range of sites and opportunities available.

- In terms of employment, as described above, **it should be possible to provide land to meet the needs of the local employment market throughout the Plan period**. However, it must be borne in mind that Blyth may become able to fulfil an enhanced role especially since the Assisted Area Status of the town has been upgraded to the equivalent level of Cramlington.[12] The other major uncertainty relates to the future operation of the Port. It is difficult to predict whether there will be a net increase or decrease in its activity during the Plan period. The Port occupies a pivotal position in both the economy and the physical fabric of the town.[13]

- In terms of its service role, **the "main service centre" status is unlikely to be challenged**, although the relationship between this and sustaining the population level has already been mentioned. The Community Facilities Chapter points to the need to make provision to ensure that, within reason, any changes in the land requirements of retailing are capable of being met in the town.[14]

11 *See also The Background on the Local Economy , (Appendix XXIII).*

12 *See also Chapter 6, Sub-section 6.2.2.*

13 *See also Chapter 6, Sub-section 6.2.3.*

14 *See Chapter 4, Section 4.8 and also Chapter 8, Sub-section 8.2.1.*

Policy on the Role of Blyth

Policy G3 expresses the above in terms of a simple policy on the role of Blyth through the period of this Local Plan.

G3 (i) seeks the maintenance of the town as a principal settlement, drawing attention to the need, at least, to maintain existing population levels and stating its essentially local employment role, while recognising that there may be opportunities to enhance this role.

G3 (ii) simply seeks to maintain the status quo in terms of the service centre role of Blyth.

THE ROLE OF SEATON DELAVAL

Seaton Delaval is the main settlement in the area referred to variously in this document as "the Seaton Valley villages / settlements / area" or "rest of district".

Although still a village rather than a town, it occupies a slightly more important place on the hierarchy of settlements than the surrounding villages. It provides services which these villages do not have, by virtue of its centrality to them. It therefore has the status of "local service centre".

This status is reflected in a Structure Plan policy which places the village at the same level of the hierarchy of settlements countywide as such places as Allendale, Rothbury and Seahouses.

The catchment areas of these rural settlements can be very wide - in some cases wider than those of many main service centres in the County. Such rural local service centres are relied upon for a range of regularly needed services by people from a wide area, simply because they are the only place within easy reach.

Local service centres such as Seaton Delaval, within the more densely built-up parts of the County, although occupying the same tier in the hierarchy, are not as secure in their role as their more rural counterparts because they are physically close to main service centres. Yet their role as local service centres is an important one, especially for less mobile elements of the population.

There is evidence that the distinctive role of Seaton Delaval as a central place for services for surrounding villages has been gradually eroded through increased mobility and the accessibility of surrounding facilities. This has particularly been the case in the field of retailing, where out of town facilities compete with main service centres as alternative attractors for the more mobile.

One of the only reasons that the village has retained any role as a local service centre has been the continued existence of certain fixed services there - e.g. the High School and the local Housing Office.

The main aim of the Local Plan in terms of the role of Seaton Delaval will be to try to reinforce it as a local service centre. This recognises the overall approach of the Plan, which includes the aim of minimising the need to travel to obtain day-to-day services.

The intention will be to upgrade the village as a retail and service centre through improvements and new provision. Details of the various policies and proposals involved in this effort are contained in the Community Facilities chapter and Chapter 15 on the Seaton Delaval Community Development Area.

The task will be made more difficult because of the housing strategy which is to minimise additions in the Seaton Valley area.[15] It is important that any significant additional housing requirement for the Seaton Valley settlements, should be concentrated into Seaton Delaval in order to maximise the chances of securing improvements in local service provision.

In terms of work activity and employment centres, it is less easy to put forward policies on a strictly hierarchical basis at this level because the existing pattern has evolved according to land and development opportunities available.[16] Seaton Delaval does include the largest concentration of work activity in the Seaton valley area but Seghill is likely to provide an equally significant focus for new local employment related development during the Plan period.

Policy on the Role of Seaton Delaval

Policy G4 defines the role of Seaton Delaval within the Plan period.

Firstly, **G4 (i)** emphasises the importance, within the context of general restraint in the Seaton Valley area, of concentrating the majority of housing and miscellaneous development into Seaton Delaval rather than the other villages, as a way of maximising opportunities for enhancing its service centre role.

G4 (ii) lists the villages that Seaton Delaval is intended to serve with local community facilities and is a statement of intent on the continuation of that role.

15 *See Housing Chapter, (Chapter 3, Section 3.2).*

16 *See Chapter 6, Sub-section 6.2.1.*

Policy ***G 3*** *SETTLEMENT POLICY: BLYTH*

The town of Blyth shall:

i Continue to be developed as one of the two principal settlements within the Plan area, by encouraging, through other policies in this Plan:

a housing development, to a level and of a variety that will ensure the maintenance of the existing level of population, in order to support services, and remove pressure for development from more sensitive parts of the Plan area;

b work activity development, to meet the requirements of the population of the town and/or any enhanced role which the town may gain within the sub-regional economy;

ii Continue to act as a main service centre.

THE ROLE OF THE VILLAGES

The roles of the small villages within Blyth Valley have changed substantially in recent decades. In some cases the changes have been almost as far reaching as the creation of the new town at Cramlington.

Of course Cramlington itself has absorbed two or three settlements which were previously freestanding villages. This was normal in the creation of a new town and had the effect of injecting variety and a sense of community into the new settlement from the outset. The absorption of small settlements by larger ones, has always been a feature of the natural growth of settlements. Within the Plan area, for example, the axis between Seaton Delaval and Holywell - now a continuous built-up area - was originally four separate settlements: Seaton Delaval, Seaton Terrace, Bates Cottages and Holywell.

The villages which remain as freestanding are Seghill, Seaton Sluice / Old Hartley, New Hartley, East Hartford and (partially) Holywell and East Cramlington. They have survived as separate settlements in spite of, rather than because of the natural pattern of settlement growth. Mostly, their original reasons for existence as self-contained communities have long since disappeared to be replaced by a role which can best be described as "residential". The change has come about due to the combined effect of a changing employment base, environmental improvements and increased mobility.

Some areas have changed from being dominated by industrial dereliction to becoming seen as attractive places to live. As a result, they have been added to the list of places favoured by commuters. This applies particularly to some of the Seaton Valley villages, although the degree of commuting to Tyneside is unlikely to have reached the levels present in Cramlington,[17] (which has more long-standing ties with Newcastle).[18]

There is no evidence from the 1991 Census that levels of economic activity are significantly lower in the villages than elsewhere, nor that there are above average levels of retired people. Instead, there appears to be a mix of people, (some working, some seeking employment, some economically inactive), who look to a variety of places, (including the local service centre of Seaton Delaval and the individual villages themselves), for their employment or other activities. This disjointed pattern confirms that the villages no longer operate in any sense as self-contained communities and are simply part of an open network of settlements, activities and movement covering the south-east corner of Northumberland and parts of North Tyneside.

Further proof of this has been the gradual disappearance of services from smaller villages.[19] The fact that development occurred in these settlements during the boom years of the 1980's did have the benefit of helping to maintain some local services.

17 *The issue of the residential attraction of the Seaton Valley villages is dealt with more fully in the Housing chapter, (Chapter 3, Sub-section 3.3.3).*

18 *Information on commuting from the 1991 Census is awaited*

19 *See also Chapter 4 on Community Facilities, especially Sub-section 4.8.1.*

Policy **G4** — *SETTLEMENT POLICY: SEATON DELAVAL*

The village of Seaton Delaval, as defined by its settlement limit and the Green Belt, shall:

i Accommodate the majority of new development within the Seaton Valley area for which policy allows and provision does not already exist;

ii Continue to act as a local service centre for the Seaton Valley area including the villages of Holywell, Seghill, New Hartley and Seaton Sluice / Old Hartley.

Policy **G5** — *SETTLEMENT POLICY: THE VILLAGES*

The villages of East Hartford, East Cramlington, Seghill, Holywell, New Hartley and Seaton Sluice / Old Hartley shall accommodate development only within settlement limits defined in Policy G6. In making decisions on development proposals, regard will be had to the need to retain the villages as vital communities for their residents in terms of:

i A range of housing provision with an emphasis on local needs including the application of Policy H14 (ii);

ii The appropriate accommodation of local businesses, applying Policies W8;

iii The retention of local services including the application of Policy C17(iv).

The tight-knit nature of the settlement pattern in Blyth Valley has already been mentioned in this chapter.[20] There is a need to avoid the coalescence of settlements. This along with the roles defined above for the larger settlements, means that no significant expansion of the villages, over and above existing commitments, will be permitted within the Plan period. These matters are examined in more detail in the following sections on Green Belt and settlement limits and in the Housing Chapter.[21]

Against this background, **Policy G5** sets out the approach which must be to retain the villages as communities, so far as this is possible. The fact that their populations will not grow during the Plan period will make the task of retaining services less easy than would otherwise be the case.

Part of the approach must be to maximise the continued vitality of the villages as communities within the physical constraints being placed upon them. Decisions on development proposals within their boundaries should be as flexible as possible without compromising other policies or threatening local environments.

G5 (i) cross refers to the Housing Chapter. Proposals for infill development, conversion of premises etc. Where local needs are clearly being met, applications will be treated as sympathetically as possible.[22]

G5 (ii) cross refers to the Work Activity Chapter which sets out policies for maximum flexibility on the accommodation of business uses.[23]

G5 (iii) seeks the retention of essential local services and, in particular, cross refers to the shopping section of the Community Facilities Chapter where there is a policy allowing for a greater degree of mixing of retail and non-retail uses in shop premises in crucial cases.[24]

20 *See above, Sub-section 2.2.1, headed "New Settlements?".*

21 *See Sections 2.3 and 2.4 below and Chapter 3, Sub-section 3.3.3.*

22 *See Chapter 3, Sub-section 3.3.3.*

23 *See in particular Chapter 6, Section 6.5.*

24 *See Chapter 4, Sub-section 4.8.1.*

Policy ***G6*** *SETTLEMENT LIMITS - DEFINITION*

Settlement limits are defined on the Proposals Map in accordance with the detailed criteria set out in Appendix IX of this Written Statement, in order to control sporadic development in areas of open countryside and to ensure that all significant built-up areas have clearly defined limits to expansion for the duration of this Local Plan.

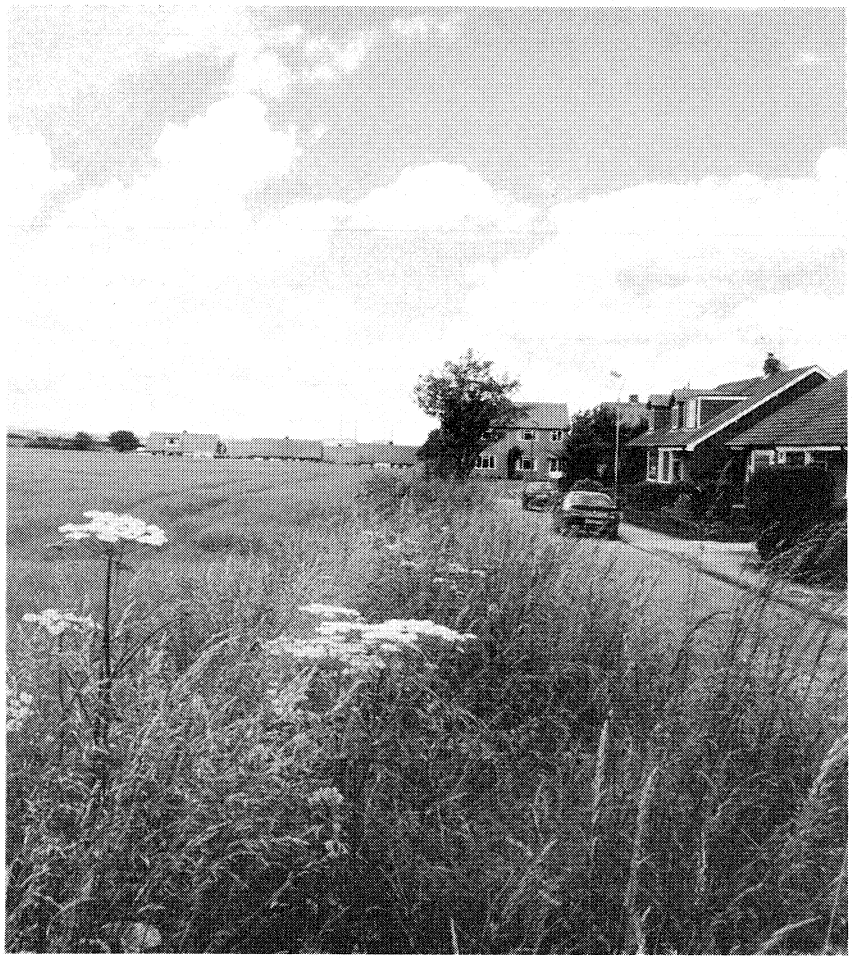
2.3 SETTLEMENT LIMITS

Having identified the role of the existing settlements in the Borough, it is necessary to ensure that the separate character of these settlements is maintained. This means keeping uninterrupted stretches of countryside between the settlements by regulating their expansion and by controlling sporadic development in areas of open countryside.

Policy G6 defines settlement limits to the expansion of the built-up areas in the Plan area. Beyond these limits development will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.[25] The positioning of the settlement limits has been determined by two main criteria:

- Firstly, the limits have been drawn to provide a logical shape to the edge of the settlements. Thus irregular extensions into open countryside have been avoided;
- Secondly, the limits have, on the whole, been drawn along features that are clearly identifiable on the ground and on the map.

Within this framework of assessment, in each particular location, there has been an assessment of the visibility and impact of the settlement edge, (or potential edge), as viewed from the open countryside, main roads, rights of way and other settlements, taking account of the local topography and landscape features. In some cases the results of this local assessment has taken precedence over the simple application of the two criteria above. The details of this are set out in Appendix IX.



Edge of Settlement, Seaton Sluice

25 *See Policies G8 to G10.*

2.4 GREEN BELT

Green Belt policy is a central government initiated control that has been in operation around the main conurbations for many years. The Plan area is affected in that it is close to the Tyneside conurbation.

Green Belts are primarily intended to have a broad, positive planning role in checking the unrestricted sprawl of built-up areas, safeguarding the surrounding countryside from further encroachment and assisting in urban regeneration. The concept of Green Belts dates back to the recognition in the inter war period, that ribbon development along main roads between settlements[26] was becoming a problem and settlements were coalescing.

Prior to this Local Plan, the extent of approved Green Belt within Blyth Valley was restricted to a narrow strip to the west of the East Coast main railway line and the A1068. This is part of a substantial Green Belt, designated by Northumberland County Council in 1963.[27] This, in turn, forms part of a wide Green Belt stretching, almost continuously around the Tyne and Wear conurbation[28] with the exception of the quadrant to the north-east - between the coast and the London to Edinburgh railway.

The principal reasons for having a Green Belt are equally applicable to this zone. The area is close to the conurbation, contains villages in danger of merging and is subject to increasing development pressures.[29]

Policy G7 defines the Green Belt in Blyth Valley such that it now extends through to the coast south of Blyth, incorporating the settlements of Seaton Delaval, Seaton Sluice, Seghill, Holywell and New Hartley. The policy relies for its effectiveness, on a sufficient depth of Green Belt - i.e. including a similar designation in parallel with it, south of the Plan area boundary in the District of North Tyneside. The outer boundary, in accordance with Government advice, follows recognisable features such as roads, streams or belts of trees.

Government advice [30] also states that the essential characteristic of Green Belts is their permanence. Once defined, the detailed boundaries should endure beyond the time scale of other policies and be altered only exceptionally.[31]

An area of approximately 116 hectares immediately east of Cramlington and south of East Cramlington has been excluded from the extension to the Green Belt in order to keep future options open for accommodating a use of regional significance. However exercises to review Regional Planning Guidance, the Structure Plan and this Local Plan may bring forward other, more acceptable options, in which case the area referred to could be added to the Green Belt at the first review of this Plan.

The essential role of the Green Belt in Blyth Valley will be to retain the separateness of settlements. There are four elements to this:

- **G7 (i)** emphasises the need to retain the separate character of each of the villages within the Plan area, by keeping openness between them, bearing in mind the coalescence that has already occurred;[32]

- **G7 (ii)** concentrates on the key corridors of open land between settlements, the retention of which will rely on the strict application of the Green Belt policy;

- **G7 (iii)** recognises that there is a need to co-ordinate the approach with neighbouring districts, insofar as settlements close to the boundary of the Plan area could be in danger of coalescing with settlements beyond that boundary;

- **G7 (iv)** gives recognition to the importance of retaining corridors of open land between settlements and the coast, where these exist, (in this case towards the southern end of Seaton Sluice).[33]

26 *Ribbon development was less costly to builders than new estates which involved the construction of new access roads. Nowadays, with heavy traffic movement along main routes, there is, in any case, a presumption against direct access to individual premises. Ribbon development, these days, would serve to exacerbate traffic problems.*

27 *The Green Belt designated in 1963 is primarily intended to: (1) protect the countryside in the eastern Tyne Valley and to the north-west of Tyneside from sporadic and isolated development; (2) check any substantial expansion of the built up area of the Tyneside conurbation; and (3) prevent neighbouring settlements from merging with one another, thus retaining their individual identities.*

28 *i.e. from the coast between Sunderland and South Shields around the south, south-west, west and north-west sides of the conurbation*

29 *These pressures reflect the proximity to the Tyneside conurbation and the increasing attractiveness as a location for commuter housing as environmental improvements take place.*

30 *PPG Note 2.*

31 *This is the main explanation for any variations between the Green Belt boundary and settlement limits, the latter category being defined to take account of the present Plan period only.*

32 *See above under "The Role of the Villages".*

33 *Allowing a coastline to become entirely built-up would be to allow a form of ribbon development and would be equivalent to coalescence between settlements through development along main transport routes.*

Policy ***G 7*** *GREEN BELT - DEFINITION*

A Green Belt is designated, the boundaries of which are defined on the Proposals Map, to be strictly maintained over the long term in order to:

i Maintain the separate character of Seghill, Seaton Delaval, Holywell, New Hartley and Seaton Sluice;

ii Retain areas of open countryside separating the following settlements:

- **Seaton Sluice and Blyth;**
- **New Hartley and Blyth;**
- **New Hartley / Seaton Delaval / Holywell and Seaton Sluice;**
- **Seghill and Seaton Delaval;**
- **Cramlington / East Cramlington and Seghill;**
- **Cramlington and Dudley / Annitsford**
- **Cramlington and Seaton Burn;**

iii Contribute towards the retention of areas of open countryside between:

- **Built up parts of North Tyneside District and**
  - **a Seaton Sluice / Old Hartley;**
  - **b Seaton Delaval / Holywell;**
  - **c Seghill;**
  - **d Cramlington;**
- **Built up parts of Newcastle / Castle Morpeth Districts and Cramlington;**

iv Protect land between the existing built-up area of Seaton Sluice / Old Hartley and the coast, south of Collywell Bay, from development.

2.5 RESTRICTIONS ON DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT AND OTHER AREAS BEYOND THE SETTLEMENT LIMITS

The purposes of defining settlement limits and superimposing onto this structure a Green Belt have been explained above.

In order to satisfy the defined purposes, it is necessary to limit the forms of development that are permitted in countryside areas to those which are essential to the economy and functioning of these inter urban zones or those which cannot reasonably be accommodated anywhere else. Within the Green Belt areas, there must, necessarily, be an even stronger presumption against inappropriate development. It is vital that the exceptions - those limited types of development which may be given permission in certain circumstances - are precisely enough defined to avoid confusion.[34]

The policies which follow are therefore lengthy and have many cross references, especially to the housing chapter. The first covers the strong restrictions on development in the Green Belt. The second covers the somewhat lesser restrictions applying to other areas outside the settlement limit, lying beyond the outer edge of the Green Belt. The third policy provides a code of practice for assessing applications in the context of the countryside in general.

2.5.1 Criteria for Development Proposals in the Green Belt

Policy G8 sets out the limitations to be placed on development within the Green Belt.[35]

BUILT DEVELOPMENT WHICH MAY BE ACCEPTABLE

G8 (i) refers to the circumstances in which new buildings can be permitted. The first two cover categories of use which are appropriate in the countryside and/or where the permitting of buildings may assist in retaining the openness, separation etc., which form the purposes of

34 *This recognises that any departure from the true intent of Green Belt and settlement limit policy, due to an ambiguity in defining forms of development that are permissible outside those limits, would only serve to undermine the protection which the policies are intended to afford.*

35 *There are cross references to Policy G10, which is the set of criteria applicable across the whole of the countryside.*

Policy **G8** — *DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE GREEN BELT*

Within the Green Belt Area defined under Policy G7:

i The construction of new buildings or structures will only be permitted in the following circumstances:

a where they provide for agriculture and forestry, applying as appropriate Policy H24 on agricultural dwellings;

b where they provide essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation, (excluding major stadia), cemeteries or other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt, where a need can be demonstrated and where the use is not considered to undermine existing reasons for surrounding land being open, with the new buildings being permitted only if:

- **they are strictly ancillary to the outdoor use;**
- **they are as small / unobtrusive as possible, taking account of the particular requirements of the use proposed;**
- **account has been taken of the possibility of converting any existing, redundant buildings on the same site;**

c where they involve the unobtrusive extension of a dwelling which accords with Policy H22, or the replacement of an existing dwelling in accordance with Policy H26 (i);

d where a structure is related to essential infrastructure services but does not reduce the openness of the Green Belt nor diminish its ability to justify the purposes for which it has been designated and no alternative is available, in which case the proposal would also be assessed against other environmental Policies in this Plan.

In addition, where not overriden by this Policy, other relevant Policies pertaining to new buildings will be applied, especially Policy G10 on development in the countryside;

(continued....

Green Belts. Following this, the topic of new dwellings is touched upon.

Agriculture and Forestry

The first area is agriculture and forestry. In spite of policies such as set aside and the increasing amount of land being devoted to rural recreation, agriculture remains at the heart of the non-urban economy and is the main way that land can remain largely open while being productively used.[36] Many agricultural buildings are outside planning control. A Policy in the Housing Chapter deals with the subject of agricultural dwellings.[37] Uses which require an application will be generally favoured under this policy. Occasionally, forestry requires built development to serve it. Such buildings will be looked at in the same terms as agriculture.

Outdoor Sport, Recreation, Cemeteries etc.

The Community Facilities chapter deals extensively with the topic of outdoor sports provision. Most outdoor sport needs to be within easy reach of the people that use it and is located within the settlement limits. Here it can provide important green breaks within the urban environment.[38] Certain townwide sports facilities can however be located around the outskirts of towns so long as the location meets accessibility requirements. The sports fields themselves can then be placed outside the settlement limits / in the Green Belt and will form a useful buffer between residential and agricultural use, serving to strengthen the settlement limit itself.

Within the Green Belt, stadium type sports grounds including large stands will not normally be permitted because of their bulk within the landscape. Any other buildings associated with the facilities should be

36 *Section 1.4 in Chapter 1 deals with the topic of agricultural land and the agricultural economy.*

37 *See Chapter 3, Section 3.7.*

38 *See Chapter 1, Sub-section 1.6.2.*

Policy ***G8*** *continued* — *DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE GREEN BELT*

ii Planning permission for the change of use or conversion of an existing building may be granted provided that:

- **a it does not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the openness of the Green Belt nor diminish its ability to justify the other purposes for which it has been designated;**
- **b the building concerned is of permanent and substantial construction and capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction, although criterion c below may apply in certain other instances;**
- **c any derelict, vacant or deteriorating building not conforming to (b) above, is considered important to retain because it is:**
  - **Listed and/or within a Conservation Area; or**
  - **otherwise considered worth retaining for reasons of architecture or history; or**
  - **otherwise important for the local landscape or settlement pattern;**

In addition, where not overriden by this Policy, other relevant Policies pertaining to development involving the conversion of buildings will be applied, especially Policy G10 on development in the countryside;

iii All applications affecting significant areas of open land will be assessed in terms of any positive or negative effect on the achievement of the objectives for the use of land in the Green Belt as set out in Policy G7 and as follows:

- **a providing opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population;**
- **b providing opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas;**
- **c improving damaged and derelict land for an open use, in accordance with Policy E11;**
- **d securing nature conservation interest in line with Policies E1 and E2**
- **e retaining land in agricultural, forestry and related uses.**

essential, ancillary and as small as possible, taking into account the particular needs of the sport.[39]

Apart from sport, there are other forms of recreation, which generally take place in the countryside areas. These sometimes require a small element of built development. Many are associated with the leisure and tourist related activities.[40] [41]

Another category of use involving building, that may be permitted in Green Belt areas, is cemeteries, of which fall within the area proposed for Green Belt.

Finally, certain other building projects, though not associated with agriculture, forestry, sport or outdoor recreation, may serve to preserve the openness of an area within the Green Belt.[42] [43]

The Replacement or Extension of Existing Dwellings

The Green Belt has many existing dwellings. Additions, modifications or redevelopment cannot be prevented completely. However controls are necessary. A policy in the Housing Chapter covers replacement.[44] The Policy on house extensions, (Policy H22) will be applied but, firstly, the proposed extension should not be considered obtrusive in terms of the reasons for the Green Belt covering the area.

39 *Where possible, existing buildings will be converted for these purposes.*

40 *See also Chapter 5*

41 *Examples would be bird watching where a hide building might be proposed, or a small stable.*

42 *Examples of appropriate uses may include development concerned with alternative energy generation, which may enable a farm unit to continue operating, or a small study centre associated with an SSSI.*

43 *As with sport and recreation, any buildings associated with such uses should be as small as possible, and where feasible involve conversions of existing farm or other buildings.*

44 *See Chapter 3, Section 3.7.*

Essential Infrastructure Services

From time to time structures related to essential infrastructure services will need to be located in the Green Belt. Many such structures have permitted development rights but this is not always the case. Should planning permission be required and the service concerned is essential, permission may be granted provided that there is no alternative beyond the area of the Green Belt.

CHANGE OF USE OR CONVERSION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

Areas within the proposed Green Belt contain isolated buildings and some substantial groupings which could almost be described as settlements in themselves. In a dynamic local economy with the changing demands of farming, countryside recreational and urban fringe related activities, these buildings become redundant and/or an alternative use becomes appropriate.[45] Many of the buildings are either Listed or within a Conservation Area or otherwise worth preserving.

In recognition of this, **G8 (ii)** sets out criteria which will allow for changes of use and conversion of buildings without compromising the strength of the Green Belt.

The tests applied when assessing such proposals are:

- Whether it reduces the strength of the Green Belt by, for example, intensifying the use of the building and its surrounding area unacceptably.[46]
- Whether it requires a large amount of rebuilding work. If so, it could, in effect, be classed as a new building, rather than a conversion.
- Whether it is a building for which there are strong reasons for retention, (even if it is ruinous), not necessarily be for historic or architectural reasons - e.g. purely visual within the landscape.[47]

OTHER GREEN BELT RELATED REASONS AGAINST WHICH DEVELOPMENT WILL BE ASSESSED

Apart from the main characteristics of Green Belts already mentioned, such as openness, Government Guidance specifies certain other factors which can contribute towards the strength of, and reasons for having a Green Belt, such as providing opportunities access to the countryside, outdoor recreation etc. **G8 (iii)** gives the full list. Applications which involve areas of land will be assessed in terms of whether they will have a positive or negative effect on each of them.

2.5.2 Criteria for Development Proposals in Areas of Open Countryside Beyond the Green Belt

A significant proportion of the open land in the Plan area lies beyond the Green Belt. As such, it is not as crucial to adhere as strictly to the practice of not permitting any new buildings, (other than the essential rural uses listed at G8 (i)). On the other hand, it is important to respect the existing settlement pattern, preventing existing settlements from merging and avoiding the creation of new settlements.[48]

Policy G9 therefore sets criteria for assessing development in these areas in a similar but less strict way to that of Policy G8 in relation to the Green Belt.

BUILT DEVELOPMENT WHICH MAY BE ACCEPTABLE

G9 (i) refers to the circumstances in which new buildings or structures can be permitted.

- **Built development for agriculture and forestry**, will be treated favourably, as with the Green Belt, with agricultural dwellings being assessed in accordance with a Policy in the Housing Chapter.[49]

- **Sport, recreation, cemeteries** and other contributory open uses will be treated in a similar way to that within the Green Belt. The main differences are that, where there are exceptional circumstances, such as a strategic requirement for a sporting facility that could not be accommodated in the built-up area, large buildings, (e.g. stands, stadia, or buildings associated with a golf driving range), could be permitted.

- There may be circumstances where **the rural economy** would benefit as result of employment provision or otherwise. A new building could, for example, allow for the visitor potential of a tourism feature to be fully realised, A positive decision on this kind of matter could, in turn allow for the necessary diversification to enable a local farm to continue to operate profitably.[50]

- The **replacement or extension of existing dwellings** may be permitted in accordance with a policy in the Housing Chapter.

- There may be a need to provide a structure related to **essential infrastructure services**. This may be acceptable so long as it would be acceptable in terms of other environmental Policies in the Local Plan.

45 *See also Sub-section 1.4.3 on Farm Diversification.*

46 *Large amounts of additional parking could form one reason for refusing an application.*

47 *Rebuilding of dwellings in the countryside is covered in Chapter 3, Sub-section 3.7.2.*

48 *In line with settlement policies at the beginning of this chapter.*

49 *See Chapter 3, Section 3.7.*

50 *Horse related uses are common within the Plan area. Whereas any newly built stable facility would, if possible, be housed in an existing building or at least kept as small as possible in the Green Belt area, it would be possible in areas beyond the Green Belt to give consideration to a more substantial building.*

Policy **G 9** — *DEVELOPMENT IN COUNTRYSIDE BEYOND GREEN BELT*

In areas outside settlement limits which are not part of the Green Belt:

i The construction of new buildings will not be permitted except for the following purposes:

- **a agriculture and forestry, applying as appropriate Policy H25 on agricultural dwellings;**
- **b the provision of ancillary facilities for:**
  - **outdoor sport and recreation;**
  - **cemeteries;**
  - **other uses of land which preserve the openness of the countryside;**
- **c other uses which would benefit the rural economy, including those benefiting tourism in line with Policy L2 and farm diversification in line with Policy E8, provided that the Local Planning Authority considers the proposed use to be appropriate in a countryside area and having regard to the possibility of their accommodation within the settlement limits and other policies in this Local Plan;**
- **d the extension or replacement of existing dwellings in accordance with Policies H22 and H26 (ii);**
- **e Where a structure is related to essential infrastructure services in which case the proposal would also be assessed against other environmental Policies in this Plan.**

In all cases, other environmental protection Policies will be strictly applied.

Any new buildings complying with the above will normally only being permitted where they are as small / unobtrusive as possible taking account of

- **the particular requirements of the use proposed**
- **the possibility of converting any existing buildings on the same site although larger buildings may exceptionally be permitted if they will meet**
  - **a strategic need within the above list such as a sports stadium or**
  - **in very exceptional circumstances, a large work activity use requiring an individual site, in line with Policy W2 (iii);**

ii Planning permission for the change of use or conversion of an existing building will normally be granted, subject to an assessment against Policy G10 (i), (where applicable).

As well as applying environmental protection Policies, new building proposals will be examined in terms of the effects of the use proposed - e.g. on scale, appearance, overspill effects etc. Also, account will be taken of the possibility of nearby existing buildings being converted for the same use, especially if any adverse environmental impact would be significantly less.

Strategic needs may, exceptionally, justify permitting a building of significant scale. One example would be a sports stadium, as already mentioned. There may, in addition, be very exceptional circumstances in which large work activity uses involving an individual employer requiring a very large, accessible site could not be accommodated within the settlement limits. These are explained in Chapter 6, Sub-section 6.2.2.

CHANGE OF USE OR CONVERSION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

A more relaxed attitude on the conversion of buildings can be taken in the outer countryside area than in the Green Belt.

G9 (ii) therefore states that, subject to detailed site considerations and the application of the general countryside policy below, conversions of buildings will normally be permitted in the area beyond the Green Belt. Another factor in favour of this approach is that, in areas further away from main centres of population, it may be less easy to secure an alternative use for a vacant building within the very narrow range defined for the Green Belt. In particular, conversion of buildings to provide space for employment activities other thagriculture, as with new buildings, may be acceptable in certain circumstances.

2.5.3 General Criteria for Development Proposals in Countryside Areas

The preceding policies, while they deal with the assessment of development proposals within the countryside, concentrate only on one aspect of it. This is the need to retain a meaningful Green Belt, in terms of openness and other ways in which fulfils its role, and the need to retain separation between settlements elsewhere.

There is, however, also a need for development to have regard to other aspects of the countryside, such as farming,[51] forestry, nature conservation, recreation etc. as well as characteristics such as tranquillity and the relatively low level of human activity.

With this in mind, **Policy G10** sets further criteria which should be applied irrespective of whether the proposal is within or beyond the Green Belt.

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS IN A COUNTRYSIDE CONTEXT

The first part of the Policy, **G10 (i)**, concentrates on how well proposed uses and buildings will be capable of fitting into the countryside context, both generally and in site specific terms.

It firstly recognises that, even outside the settlement limits, there exists a settlement pattern - that is, a pattern in the distribution of farmsteads, hamlets and isolated buildings which gives the countryside a particular character. Decisions will take account of any positive or adverse effects of proposals on that character.

The criteria which then follow cover the relationship between a proposal and its surroundings.

Adverse Effects of New Uses on Existing Surrounding Uses

Firstly, regard must be had to the pre-existence of various structures, land uses etc. in the immediate surroundings. The new use should not prejudice the continuation or survival of these. Relevant considerations are:

- the form of existing buildings, especially if there are Listed Buildings in sight, or vistas into or within a Conservation Area.
- uses adjoining the proposal.[52]
- nature conservation interests, most of the best examples of which lie in countryside areas.
- operational aspects of the dominant countryside uses of farming and forestry.[53]

Adverse Effects of Existing Surrounding Uses on New

Secondly, it needs to be ensured that the new use would not be adversely affected by the existing uses.[54] Farmers are sometimes concerned that incoming users will complain about overspill effects of pre-existing farming activities and even seek compensation.

Environmental Impacts

The third concern is to avoid unacceptable environmental effects, however small scale, such as overloading existing drainage or access roads[55]

Anticipated Additions

There needs to be a certain amount of "looking into the future" when considering proposals in a countryside setting. In deciding any application for development, account will, where possible, be taken of additional needs that can reasonably be predicted in order to make sure that these too can be adequately accommodated within the context of surrounding buildings and land uses.[56]

Positive Effects

There may be positive effects that need to be taken into account. Firstly, mitigating measures may be put forward by an applicant. Secondly, a proportion of applications in the countryside will be linked to the diversification of the rural economy away from farming.[57] Given Government advice on the latter, due weight will have to be given to such proposals without undermining other policies.

Where Residental

Additional criteria will be applied where the proposed use is residential.[58]

51 *Section 1.4 in Chapter 1 of the Local Plan deals with the development needs of farming. This section deals with all forms of development that may take place in a farming context.*

52 *It would not, for example, be acceptable for a sport or recreational proposal to go ahead if it was to take land from an existing farm to the extent that it becomes unviable.*

53 *For instance the overspill effects of converting a set of farm buildings into workshops, such as noise or vehicular movement, could have adverse effects on the operation of a nearby farm.*

54 *For example, conversion to restaurant use would not be very pleasant adjacent to a farming use such as a pig sty.*

55 *It is often unfeasible, where small scale, isolated development is proposed, to link it satisfactorily to existing infrastructure. Any compromise arrangement needs to be cautiously planned.*

56 *e.g. where a business is of a type that would normally be expected to expand within a short timescale, it would be appropriate to secure premises in a less sensitive location.*

57 *See Chapter 1, Sub-section 1.4.3.*

58 *Policies H24 and H25, plus the residential care home Policy (H16) are of most relevance.*

Policy **G 10** *DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA IN THE COUNTRYSIDE GENERALLY*

Within all areas beyond the settlement limits defined in Policy G6, whether or not designated as Green Belt:

i The determination of all planning applications, whether for new development or change of use, will have regard to the existing settlement pattern and permission will only be granted where the location of the proposal in relation to other buildings and uses and the scale of proposed activities or any physical alterations are such that:

a there will be no significant adverse effect on:

- **existing buildings and structures, where appropriate taking account of Policies E12 to E15;**
- **existing neighbouring uses;**
- **nature conservation interests, including protected species in line with Policy E2;**
- **the management of any surrounding farm land, forestry or other countryside activity;**

b the new use itself will not be adversely affected by surrounding uses;

c its likely impact on the environment will be acceptable in terms of drainage, visual amenity, noise, other pollution, traffic generation, parking needs and general activity.

d it is not anticipated that there would be any unacceptable adverse effect in the future, resulting from future additional accommodation needs that can reasonably be predicted, where these would add significantly to the size of the building or the intensity of the use;

In addition, it will be assessed whether there would be positive effects resulting from the proposal that could outweigh any adverse effects identified under a to d above, including:

- **any proposed mitigating measures**
- **the needs of farm diversification and other aspects of the rural economy with particular reference to Policies E8 and G9 (i)(c) and (d).**

Where the proposed use is residential, Policies H24, H25 or H16 will also be applied as relevant.

ii A new building, permissable in the terms set out in either G8 (i) or G9 (i) above, and part (i) of this Policy, will not be permitted if it is isolated from existing buildings, unless the applicant can demonstrate that such a position is necessary in terms of the use proposed.

Where proposed within a group, permission will only be granted if:

a the scale, height, massing, positioning and alignment of the new building is well related to those of existing buildings within the group, with the avoidance of isolated buildings;

b the architecture and externally visible materials are in keeping with those of existing surrounding buildings, applying Policy E17;

In certain cases, in consultation with an agricultural applicant, it may be agreed that the operational needs of agriculture should take precedence over the above considerations.

POSITIONING OF NEW BUILDINGS, WHERE OTHERWISE ACCEPTABLE

The second part of this Policy, **G10 (ii)**, looks at situations where a new building can be permitted, applying as appropriate the Green Belt policy, (Policy G8), or the complementary policy dealing with areas beyond it, (Policy G9).

There is a need to avoid, wherever possible an isolated setting. This will be especially the case in the Green Belt.

A more favourable approach will be taken where the building is associated with an existing building or group. Where this is the case, the building should be well related to the existing in its scale, (including bulk and height), and its positioning.[59]

A second consideration for any new building in the open countryside is the need, to assess the design aspects particularly closely. Materials must be in keeping with those of the surroundings.[60]

Finally, where an agricultural building requires permission, while the above will be applied, it will be recognised that there are functional requirements which may necessitate a relaxing of the guidelines.

2.6 PLANNING PERMISSION

Having set the framework within which development will take place over the Plan period, it is necessary to look at how proposals for development will be handled, in particular, to set out how planning applications will be determined to achieve the maximum gain in terms of the main aims of the Local Plan.[61]

2.6.1 Pre Application Discussions

Before an application for planning permission is submitted to the Council, there are often discussions between officers and the potential applicant (or their agent). At such discussions, significant obstacles to the proposal gaining planning permission can be removed so that, by the time the application is lodged, the applicant can be reasonably confident that the scheme will be generally acceptable to the Council in planning terms.

2.6.2 Planning Applications

In some cases, particularly large new developments, developers will submit an "outline" application for the use of the land, in order to avoid the time and expense of preparing a detailed scheme before being absolutely sure that it can proceed further. In such cases, where approved, submission of "reserved matters" will be required (within 3 years) before development can commence.

2.6.3 Planning Conditions

Even detailed applications (the vast majority) almost always lack certain details which are necessary to their full approval. Again this may be to avoid costs until approval is obtained or it may be due to the need to consult and agree matters with separate statutory bodies such as the Water Authority.

The planning system copes with this situation by imposing "planning conditions." In most cases these provide that development cannot commence (or reach a certain stage) before details, known as "reserved matters", are agreed on a particular aspect. This may be drainage, means of enclosure, access, car parking, building materials, landscaping etc. Conditions may also do other things such as making the permission temporary or personal to the applicant. In all cases, a reason must be given for imposing the condition.

Blyth Valley Council has a set of standard conditions which are intermittently updated. Those in use at the time of writing are set out at Appendix XII to this Written Statement.[62]

Conditions are a mechanism to ensure that a satisfactory form of development is achieved, i.e. that it is provided with all features which are essential for it to go ahead and that these are implemented in the right order.[63] Conditions can also be the means of mitigating expected adverse effects of a proposal.[64]

2.6.4 Enforcement

Enforcement action can be taken in various circumstances where the terms of a planning permission are not being complied with or where development occurs without the necessary planning consent. This represents a further layer in the armoury of planning actions that seek to maintain the quality of the environment.

Enforcement action may be taken when considered expedient to do so, if there is a breach of the Planning legislation which would allow such action to be taken. It will be pursued, in particular, where there is a clear threat to the quality of the environment or the development concerned is contrary to a policy in this Local Plan or supplementary guidance.[65]

59 *In relation to scale, it could be that a group of buildings is so dominant within the landscape, that any additions whatsoever would have the effect of putting the grouping out of balance with its surroundings. Normally, however, it will be possible for some additional building to be absorbed without detrimental effect. It will usually be appropriate, in order to minimise the risk of changing the character of the group, that the height of the new buildings should not exceed the highest point of the existing. In relation to positioning, applications for buildings which fall within the perimeter of a group of buildings or between two buildings are more likely to be looked upon favourably than proposals for buildings which are appended to the edge of or slightly removed from a group. The latter situation would only be considered if the new building were to represent a major enhancement of the group from a visual point of view, or if it was within the curtilage of a building and backward of any building line.*

60 *The main Policy dealing with design of buildings and their visual appearance in relation to their surroundings is in Chapter 1. See Sub-section 1.6.2.*

61 *The aims of the Local Plan, as set out in the introduction are environmental protection and enhancement, economic development, energy conservation and equality of opportunity.*

62 *It should be noted that this list is not comprehensive and all applications are examined on a site specific basis and specific conditions formulated if appropriate.*

63 *So, for instance, if insufficient landscaping details are included in the original application a condition can make sure that a landscaping scheme is agreed before development commences, a further condition can stipulate that all or part of the requisite planting is carried out before a particular stage of the development is reached.*

64 *For example buffer planting to protect surrounding areas from anticipated noise or visual intrusion of the proposal.*

2.6.5 **Planning Obligations**

There are instances where it is not possible legally to impose planning conditions but where it is still considered essential to the development that the applicant or other party with an interest in the land:

- takes certain action or carries out specific operations or activities in, on, under or over the land; or
- undertakes to use the land in a specified way; or
- observes some sort of restrictions on the development or use of the land; or
- contributes financially towards the provision of something - usually infrastructure or a community facility - which is considered to be essential to the development going ahead.

In such cases, a "Planning Obligation" can be entered into by any party with an interest in the land. This can take the form of an Agreement between two parties or it can be a "Unilateral Undertaking" whereby one party - normally the applicant - undertakes to carry out certain works, in connection with the granting of planning permission. Most usually, the Local Planning Authority, following discussions, will make it clear that they are minded to grant planning permission subject to the signing of an Agreement covering one or more above four points.[66]

It must be emphasised that, wherever possible, planning conditions should be used as a way of achieving the aims necessary for planning permission. Only where this is not possible, should Planning Obligations be employed.[67]

Although particular to the requirements of an application, Planning Obligations are typically necessary in the following types of circumstance, (particularly in relation to larger development proposals):

- Where there are significant infrastructure requirements, not confined to the application site, with the possibility that not all would need to be in place before the development could start but all of which would be essential to the development as a whole;

- Where the development would have a net adverse effect on the surrounding community or environment but satisfactory remedial measures[68] or additional works[69] would counterbalance the effect;

- Where a coherent approach is required, especially in infrastructure provision but there are a number of applicants in the area concerned.

Planning Agreements can be used as a way of securing the stated provision, either directly or indirectly through financial and/or land contributions, where the provision is necessary to allow the development to start, proceed or be completed, or where it will become necessary at a particular point later in the development, before it can proceed further.

If Planning Obligations are not adhered to, (whether they take the form of a two-way agreement or a unilateral undertaking), compliance can be insisted upon. On the other hand, should the Obligation become unnecessary or counter-productive because of changed circumstances, it is possible to modify the Obligation or discharge it completely. If a party to a Planning Obligation ceases to have an interest in the land concerned, a successor can be made liable for any unfulfilled obligations.

Having set the ground rules for the securing of Planning Obligations, Policy G11 restates that they will be sought where necessary for the development to go ahead. and in the following particular situations:

- Where it is essential to a development that off-site works are carried out and another agency would not, in any case, be required or able to carry out the work as part of their statutory duties relating to the maintenance or provision of infrastructure etc. - at least not within the timescale of the development; (planning conditions cannot be applied outside the application site itself).[70]

- Where the phasing of development on a large site needs to be organised so that detailed planning permission is not granted for the development of one area of land before a certain stage is reached in the development of another. This would be the case where a number of developers were involved but could also apply if one developer was gradually developing a large area of land.

- Where, at the time of the application, it is possible to identify social, recreational or other community facilities for which there is an immediate or future need generated by the occupation of the proposed development and which is not part of the applica-

65 *See sub-section 2.7.5. below.*

66 *Where Obligations are initially sought by a Local Authority, it has to be for sound reasons connected with the planning of the application site and, where necessary, the wider area. As such, the Council will have firmly in mind what needs to be sought as a Planning Obligation and would wish to have control over that. Wherever possible the Local Planning Authority will seek to influence the scope of Planning Obligations by applying a consistent, cooperative and efficient approach to the drawing up of Planning Agreements with applicants or other parties with an interest in the land on which development is proposed. For this reason, it would be preferable if Planning Obligations could take the form of a Planning Agreement involving the Planning Authority, rather than a Unilateral Undertaking. A positive, consistent approach to the handling of Planning Obligations should minimise the perception of Unilateral Undertakings as a quicker or more attractive option than two way Agreements. For this reason, it is hoped that a "Good Practice Guide" on the use of Planning Obligations in Blyth Valley can be produced shortly.*

67 *It is, for example, possible to use planning conditions, (known as "Grampian Conditions"), to ensure that certain aspects of a development are undertaken at certain points during the implementation of the proposal.*

68 *e.g. buffer planting or traffic management measures.*

69 *e.g. the provision of a replacement for a displaced facility.*

70 *This would be the case, for instance, where a large new housing area necessitated capacity improvements at various points along an existing approach road and it would not be possible to incorporate these into the definitions of the application site.*

PANEL G-P1

TABLE TO ASSIST APPLICANTS FOR PLANNING PERMISSION IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY, WHERE FACILITIES, SAFEGUARDS OR OTHER MEASURES MAY NEED TO BE SECURED THROUGH THE USE OF PLANNING OBLIGATIONS, APPLYING POLICY G11.

(1) POLICIES IN WHICH REFERENCE IS MADE TO THE SEEKING OF PLANNING OBLIGATIONS UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES AND WHERE THE APPLICATION OF POLICY G11 TO SECURE PROVISION IS THEREFORE RELEVANT

POLICY	***FACILITY, SAFEGUARD OR OTHER MEASURE SOUGHT (SEE NOTE 1 AND NOTE 2).***	***NORMAL APPLICABILITY (SEE NOTE 2).***	***WHETHER APPROPRIATE FOR DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS***
E1 (ii)	*Nature Conservation: Designated Sites of National Importance: Safeguards / enhancements etc due to effect of proposal*	*L or N*	*In certain circumstances*
E1 (iii)	*Nature Conservation: Designated Sites of Regional / Local Importance: Safeguards / enhancements etc due to effect of proposal*	*L or N*	*In certain circumstances*
E2 (i)	*Nature Conservation: General Protection / Enhancement Measures relating to wildlife affected by Proposal*	*L or N*	*In certain circumstances*
E5 (vi)	*The Protection of the existing Tree and Shrub Cover where this is affected by the proposal*	*L*	*In certain circumstances*
E6 (ii)	*The Enhancement of the Tree and Shrub Cover where this necessary as a result of the proposal*	*L*	*In certain circumstances*
E12 (v)	*Archaeology where this is affected by the proposal and, with suitable measures, permisssion could be granted*	*L*	*Not Normally*
H14 (i)	*Affordable Housing Provision where a necessary part of the proposal in terms of the Local Plan Policy*	*L or N*	*Unlikely*
H15	*Affordable Housing: Controlling Occupancy where this is necessary in order to retain the level of affordable housing sought under Policy H14*	*L*	*No*
C2 (i)	*Outdoor Playing Space for Sport: New provision of playing pitches, courts, greens, athletics tracks and related facilities, where necessary for the proposal to go ahead. INCLUDES C2 (i)(b) RELATING TO NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS OF TEN DWELLINGS OR MORE*	*L, N or T*	*In certain circumstances*
C2 (ii)	*Outdoor Playing Space for Sport: Improvements to Existing provision of playing pitches, courts, greens, athletics tracks and related facilities, where necessary for the proposal to go ahead.*	*L, N or T*	*In certain circumstances*
C4 (i)	*Children's Playing Space - Equipped, new provision of or improvements of existing Local Equipped Areas for Play, or, occasionally toddler's play areas, where necessary for the proposal to go ahead. INCLUDES C4 (i)(g) RELATING TO NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS OF TEN DWELLINGS OR MORE OF THREE BEDROOMS OR MORE*	*L or N*	*In certain circumstances*
C7	*Open Space: Provision of Formal parks, parkland settings, where necessary for the proposal to go ahead*	*L or N*	*In certain circumstances*
C8 (ii)(a)	*Allotments: Securing Replacement Provision where displaced by the proposal and where local demand is no longer met as a result.*	*L or N*	*Unlikely*
C10	*Education Facilities: School or Nursery School provision where necessary at some stage during the implementation of the proposal and as a result of it.*	*L or N*	*In certain circumstances*
C19	*Cultural Facilities: Provision of various types of local facility, including local community, cultural and/or religious buildings in large scale development areas, where necessary for the proposal to go ahead.*	*L or N*	*In certain circumstances*
C23	*Other Community Facilities: provision of toilets / baby changing facilities where necessary for the proposal to go ahead.*	*L*	*Unlikely*
M2	*Non-Powered Movement: Routes and Links: New links or the improvemnent of existing, for pedestrians, cyclists etc., where necessary for the proposal to go ahead or the retention / improvement of existing where affected by the proposal.*	*L or N*	*In certain circumstances*
M3	*Non-Powered Movement: Static Features: The provision of proper access and various features such as off-site pedestrian crossings or cycle parking facilities, where necessary for the proposal to go ahead.*	*L*	*Not Normally*
M5 (viii)	*Movement by Bus: Static Features: The provision of off-site bus stops / laybys, where necessary for the proposal to go ahead.*	*L*	*Not Normally*
M6 (iv)	*Traffic Management or Traffic Calming, where necessary for the proposal to go ahead.*	*L*	*Not Normally*
M8	*Car Parking: Off-site parking improvements necessary for the proposal to go ahead*	*L*	*In certain circumstances*

PANEL G-P1 continued

TABLE TO ASSIST APPLICANTS FOR PLANNING PERMISSION IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY, WHERE FACILITIES, SAFEGUARDS OR OTHER MEASURES MAY NEED TO BE SECURED THROUGH THE USE OF PLANNING OBLIGATIONS, APPLYING POLICY G11.

(2) ITEMS WHICH ARE ARE NOT THE SUBJECT OF PARTICULAR POLICIES ON THEIR PROVISION BUT MAY BE SOUGHT VIA PLANNING AGREEMENTS UNDER POLICY G11 FROM TIME TO TIME WHERE DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED AND NECESSARY TO ENABLE IT TO GO AHEAD

FACILITY, SAFEGUARD OR OTHER MEASURE THAT MAY BE SOUGHT (SEE NOTE 1)	***NORMAL APPLICABILITY (SEE NOTE 2).***	***WHETHER APPROPRIATE FOR DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS***
Libraries	*L or N*	*In certain circumstances*
Donation or acquisition of land required for certain of the facilities listed above or below	*L or N*	*No*
The provision of or improvement of off-site drainage or other infrastructure necessary to serve the development	*L or N*	*In certain circumstances*
Recycling Facilities	*L or N*	*Usually*
The laying out of planting and provision of facilities within parkland areas, public squares etc. which may serve a wider area than the proposed development but which are agreed between those party to the Agreement as serving the development	*L or N*	*Usually*
Bus shelters	*L*	*Usually*
The restoration of a Listed Building within the site which would have a community benefit	*L*	*Usually*
Enhancement works, interpretation boards and other features relating to sites of nature conservation, archaeological or other interest where there is a wider community / education benefit on a site which requires other works to safeguard its integrity as a result of the proposed development within or adjacent to the development site	*L, N or T*	*In certain circumstances*
Sports facilities which though privately controlled are partially inaccessible to the public but with a guaranteed	*L, N or T*	*In certain circumstances*
Enhancement Works relating to local shops or other existing local services which will serve the development	*L or N*	*In certain circumstances*
(3) THE MAINTENANCE, MANAGEMENT AND AFTERCARE OR SUBSIDY OF THE RUNNING COSTS OF CERTAIN OF THE ABOVE, IN FULL OR IN PART, AS APPROPRIATE, OVER AN LIMITED PERIOD AND TO A MAXIMUM AMOUNT, WHERE SUCH ONGOING PROVISION IS NECESSARY AND DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED.	*AS APPLICABLE*	*IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES*

NOTE 1: The facilities sought would, where appropriate be expected to include all requisite ancillary provision, such as access, cycle and car parking, landscaping, attached playing fields (in the case of schools) etc.. Facilities could, unless otherwise stated and depending on circumstances, be required in their entirety to serve a certain development proposal. As such, the Obigation could seek them in their entirety if appropriate.

NOTE 2: The "Normal Applicability" column gives an indication in terms of whether the type of facility or measure sought would meet a localised need, (and therefore have to be local to the site), (Shown as "L"), a neighbourhood need, (and therefore under normal circumstances need to be within easy reach on foot), (Shown as "N"), or a townwide need, (and therefore accepted as serving the site even if somewhat removed from it), (Shown as "T") or a combination of these.

NOTE 3: The following would not normally be funded via Planning Obligations: Art in the environment is the subject of a separate policy which limits its public funding to certain categories of development. Funding for this is through the "Percent for Art" scheme; Listed Building or Conservation Area work within the site but not necessary for the development to go ahead. This also has its own separate funding sources, (see Environmental Protection Chapter, Sections 1.6 and 1.7).

tion. Where a need is identified it is desirable that provision for it is ensured in association with the application, irrespective of the timing of the need or whether the provision is on- or off-site.

- Where, due to the predicted adverse effects of a proposed development, there is a need for the proper management of an existing natural feature, such as a meadow, woodland or pond; this might involve some capital expenditure, such as fencing it off nd/or a maintenance agreement.

- Where affordable housing is sought as part of a larger development. More details on this policy are set out in the Housing Chapter.[71]

- Where there is an agreement to provide a financial contribution towards the provision of facilities which are necessary to the development but, for reasons of practicability, timing etc., would be separately provided. This is expanded upon in an explanatory sub-section (2.6.6), below.

The Local Plan endeavours to set out, as precisely as possible in its various Policies, the matters on which the Local Authority will seek to negotiate with developers for necessary Planning Obligations associated with development proposals. Where this is the case, Policies include a cross reference to this Policy.

Part (i) of Panel G-P1 lists these other Policies in order of their appearance in the Written Statement, (not priority order).

It should be emphasised that in relation to any given development, any Planning Obligation would only include provision relevant to and necessary to enable the development and it is unlikely that more than a few of the areas of provision covered by the list of Policies in Panel G-P1, would be relevant at any one time.

Furthermore, in most cases it has not been possible within the topic-based Policies to define precisely what should be sought. This will vary from development to development and be a matter for negotiation between the Planning Authority and the developer at the time.[72]

In the case of playing space, it is possible to be more precise as to the level of provision that will be sought, (see Policies C2 (i)(b) and C4 (i)(g)).

The Policies referred to in the part (1) of Panel G-P1 do not cover all areas of provision potentially sought via Planning Agreements. In part (2), the panel lists a few other items which are not the subject of Local Plan Policies, some of which would only ever be sought in part. Items / elements sought must be necessary to enable a particular development to go ahead.

On the right hand side, the panel also gives an indication of:

- whether the type of facility or measure sought would meet
  - a localised need, (and therefore have to be local to the site);[73] or
  - a neighbourhood need, (and therefore under normal circumstances need to be within easy reach on foot where reasonable and practicable);[74] or
  - a townwide need, (and therefore accepted as serving the site even if somewhat removed from it);[75]
- whether that which is sought could be a candidate for funding through developer contributions - see below.

2.6.6 **Commuted Payments (Developer Contributions).**

Policy G11 lists situations in which Planning Obligations can be sought. The last of these is where there is agreement to provide a financial contribution towards the provision of necessary facilities.

There will be occasions where a particular application is simply one phase of a long term development. While the community needs of the development as a whole can be agreed between the applicant and the Planning Authority in general terms, they are not precisely definable and/or it would be premature to put them in place at the time of the implementation of the particular proposal concerned.

Similarly, in smaller development areas, it is often difficult to identify how or where (geographically) provision can be made even if the demands / needs of the new households can be quantified and can be agreed with the applicant as being necessary and directly related to the development.

In the above two cases, it is not possible to define within a Planning Agreement, the precise requirements; yet a developer may be agreeable to provide necessary finance, (depending on the resources released by the development), on the basis that the community provision so funded, albeit removed geographically and/or in its timing, is agreed as serving the development.

71 *See Chapter 3, Section 3.4.*

72 *In some cases, while it will be quite clear what is required in a particular case, it will nevertheless not be possible to devise a Policy which fixes the provision sought because of variations in existing provision in the locality: for instance, in the case of Policy C10 on schools, the number of school places required as a result of a housing development will vary according to house types etc., as will the availability and accessibility of existing school places.*

73 *This would be only if in the immediate locality of a particular development (such as a small housing estate), as it could not be argued to be serving it otherwise.*

74 *This would, depending on the scale and catchment of the facility, be either in the immediate locality or slightly further afield. This would therefore include "neighbourhood" facilities, which, unless other standards apply, will, for practical purposes, (depending on the geography of the area), be defined as within a walking distance of about 600 metres of the development or 300 metres in the case of shops.*

75 *This would, depending on the scale and catchment of the facility, be either close by, in the neighbourhood or "townwide" which, in most cases, will be defined as within the same part of the Plan area as the proposed development - i.e. either Blyth, Cramlington or the Seaton Valley area.*

Policy **G 11** — *PLANNING OBLIGATIONS*

Planning Obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 will be sought, in connection with the granting of planning permission, where the benefits from them are necessary in full, to allow the development to proceed, and cannot be achieved by conditions attached to a planning permission. They will be sought specifically in the following situations:

- **Where the provision of specific off site infrastructure, services and/or facilities is regarded as essential before or during the implementation of the development proposal, and should not be provided by another agency within the timescale of the development;**
- **Where the application covers a large area of land and there is a need to ensure that development is phased in a satisfactory manner;**
- **Where the provision of some identifiable social, recreational or community facility, which would be required to serve the development is not part of the application or cannot be accommodated within the application site;**
- **Where, due to the effects of the proposed development, it is necessary to ensure the protection and management of an on-site or adjacent feature of open space, landscape or nature conservation interest;**
- **Where the provision of affordable housing is sought, in accordance with Policy H14;**
- **Where it is considered necessary to secure a financial contribution towards the provision of facilities which are necessary to the development.**

In all cases the scale of a necessary Obligation or financial payment will be directly related to the benefit which the proposed development will, over time, derive from them.

In such situations, it is appropriate for there to be an alternative way for developers to contribute financially towards necessary and directly related provision. This is the purpose of "commuted payments" (or "developer contributions") into community funds.

At present, only certain parts of the Plan area are covered by a community fund but it is expected that more will be set up to cover other relevant parts of the Plan area.

Where such funds are formed in association with substantial developments, it will be appropriate to use them, where applicable, to secure any of the safeguards, enhancements or facilities set out in Panel G-P1 but particularly where indicated in the right hand column.[76] In all cases the scale of the required payments will be directly related to the benefit which the proposed development will, over time, derive from them.

Funds will normally be administered by the Council at the Council's expense. Developers will be provided, on request, with an account of expenditure of their contributions to date, at pre-arranged times in the development process.

76 *In some instances commuted payments could be utilised to part fund facilities. This would be applicable, particularly, where planned facilities serve more than just the development which is the subject of the application, or where non-public organisations are involved in providing the development with what is regarded as an important service.*

2.7 MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS IN PLANNING DECISIONS

The above sections have explained how proposals for development are dealt with through the Planning system - the processes by which proposals become planning applications and the methods used to enable planning decisions to influence the environment in a positive way. This section is an overview of factors that need to be taken into account when considering an application for planning permission. Collectively these are know as the "material considerations" in making a planning decision.

2.7.1 Considerations Specific to Applications

The consideration of most planning applications will need to take account of all sorts of factors specific to the application - often connected with the site or its location, sometimes concerning the particulars of the proposed use or even the applicant. They are material considerations but vary from application to application to such an extent that it is not possible to devise a policy to deal with them.

2.7.2 General Policy Considerations

Another area which is duly considered when applications are determined is the general policy background - aside from planning policies, (see next sections). These will include:

- Those of various service providers, particularly their policies in relation to the geographical and physical requirements of their service to ensure its efficient and effective provision;
- The policies of Central Government, particularly as laid down in Departmental Circulars where the subject matter is relevant to the application. For example, the policies of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food become material where an application involves the development of agricultural land;
- The policies of the European Community.

As with material considerations which are specific to an application, the relevance of non planning policies will vary from application to application and it is not appropriate or necessary to have a policy on their application.

2.7.3 Central Government Planning Guidance

The Government draws up the planning legislation upon which the whole planning system and its operation are based. The current Planning Act is the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compensation Act, 1991. Apart from the Planning Acts, there is a whole series of Statutory Instruments which set out rules, norms and exceptions for the implementation of the Act.

Below this is D.E.T.R.[77] guidance which is issued intermittently in order to assist Planning Authorities to interpret the legislation a little more clearly. Recently, this has taken the form of Planning Policy Guidance Notes, ("P.P.G.'s"), however it may also be issued as a Circular. There is also the Regional Guidance referred to in the Introduction.

Such guidance is often also the first way in which new developments in policy or technology are first translated for planning purposes - i.e. in advance of any planning legislation on the matter.[78]

Again, there is no need to have a policy in this Local Plan on the application of this guidance. All the Policies in the Plan take full account of the guidance issued. It is sufficient to state here that all individual development control decisions will take full account of the guidance of relevance to them.

2.7.4 The Development Plan

The Development Plan itself, of which this Local Plan forms part, is a two tier system, as explained in the Introduction. Development Control decisions must now have full regard to the contents of the Development Plan. The policies in this Plan and the subject local plans which deal with minerals and waste - plus the strategic policies in the Northumberland County Structure Plan combine to form the Development Plan for Blyth Valley.[79] Legislation now makes quite clear that the Policies and Proposals in the Development Plan are much more than just one material consideration in relation to an application. They are the starting point for the consideration of an application. Indeed, there is a strong presumption in favour of development which is fully in accordance with the Development Plan. Other material considerations would need to outweigh considerably the Policies of the Development Plan for this principle to be overturned and for there to be a "departure" from the Plan.

2.7.5 Supplementary Planning Guidance

Nesting below the Local Plan is a whole range of locally devised planning guidance which has been built up over time in order to assist planning control in Blyth Valley. The generic term for this is "supplementary planning guidance". It is used in order to guide developers when they are drawing up their planning applications. It will be of particular help to individual applicants who may lack access to the full range of skills necessary to lodge a

77 *Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions.*
78 *So, for example, the appearance in the landscape of wind turbines has been tackled by a Planning Policy Guidance Note, (see Chapter 1, Policy E28).*
79 *Northumberland County Council produce the Structure Plan and the Mineral and Waste Local Plans - see also Chapter 1, Section 1.5. This Plan supersedes previous, adopted Local Plans, the Blyth Valley East Local Plan, adopted in 1991, and the Blyth Town Centre Local Plan, adopted in 1984.*

successful application. It can also provide a detailed template against which planning officers can assess an application.

Supplementary planning guidance generally goes into much more detail than would a policy in this Local Plan. Local Plan policies will normally limit their criteria to purely land use issues. Supplementary guidance adds to this a layer which includes detailed design, layout, materials, detailed controls etc. While not instrumental in deciding an application one way or the other, the guidance does provide an aid to examining the detailed content of a planning application and from that point of view can be material in its determination. It must be emphasised that Supplementary Guidance does not have the same status as Policies contained in this Local Plan.

Appendix XIII is a list of the supplementary guidance currently in use. In some cases the guidance has been reproduced in an Appendix to this Local Plan Written Statement. In all cases, the essential land use elements are the subject of one or more policies in the Local Plan. The relevant cross references are included in Appendix XIII.

2.7.6 **A General Development Control Policy**

Clearly, applications will be assessed in relation to all the considerations above. However, It is necessary to include in the Local Plan, a Policy which sets down the general approach that will be used to determine planning applications. This is the purpose of **Policy G12** and it, necessarily, selects from and prioritises between the various considerations.

G12 (i) emphasises the Local Plan itself as the template against which all applications will be initially assessed. With a wide range of policies contained within the Plan, there will certainly be instances where a proposal appears to comply with some but go against others. In such cases, there will need to be a weighing up exercise, having regard to the detailed provisions of the policies and proposals concerned.

G12 (ii) deals with the considerations which would be applied to all applications, irrespective of whether there is a relevant local plan Policy. Sustainability in relation to the functioning of the proposal, (including during its construction). will be the key consideration. However it will be examined in terms of all other relevant material considerations. G12 (ii) then picks out the general categories of material considerations that are regularly part of the process of the site specific determination day-to-day applications.

- Some reflect some of the overall aims of the Plan - for instance any effects of the design on energy conservation will be a legitimate factor to assess, as will any overspill on the surrounding environment.
- Others refer to the practicalities of making a site developable in an acceptable way:
  - Access for pedestrians including disabled people will be part of virtually all applications.
  - Vehicular access and parking will feature in a large proportion.
  - Other infrastructure provision, while implicitly included in applications has to be assessed as to whether it provides the best solution.
  - Crime prevention and the safety of the public, (including road safety), are now recognised as legitimate concerns in virtually all types of application.
  - Existing vegetation is a feature of many application sites. This plus the regular need for additional planting on sites make landscaping a legitimate concern in relation to a significant proportion of applications.
  - The protection of amenity is another important factor. Amenity is defined in the glossary as "The level of pleasantness and local advantages enjoyed at a particular location which is a focus of human activity." It therefore will apply in the case of most, if not all applications.
- As stated above, the considerations listed in part ii of this policy are those which apply to all or a large proportion of applications. The reference to "other material considerations recognises the wide array of other matters which, as explained earlier in this section, may be part of the consideration of an application.

G12 (iii) gives a general approach for dealing with applications which, by virtue of their physical scale or the type of proposal, are considered likely to have a wider impact than simply on the application site and its immediate surroundings. Clearly, where this is the case, other policies in the plan will apply. However, in general terms in such cases, the following will always be assessed:

- The impact on the Natural environment, especially in terms of nature conservation, the water table, the ground and other elements covered in the early part of Chapter 1.[80]
- Energy Conservation considerations can range from the impact of a large scale proposal on the settlement pattern to concerns about a large scale design or layout beings wasteful of energy.[81]
- Adverse effects of proposals on local communities. These can be in the form of disruption or disturbance. Long term construction projects, for example, can have a negative psychological as well as functional effect on a nearby community. In making this assessment, significant weight will be given to the views of people, as articulated during consultations on the proposal.[82]

80 *See also Chapter 1, Policies E1 and E2 on Nature Conservation and certain other policies later in that chapter.*
81 *See Chapter 1, Policy E29.*



Rocky Island, Seaton Sluice

- Effects on the existing the infrastructure. A very large scale project would be more likely to have implications for the wider road and rail network - possibly considerably removed from the site.[83] The volume of traffic generated both by the finished project and during the construction period, will affect the way in which any permission is conditioned.[84] The decision made, its conditioning etc., must also acknowledge that communities along these routes could also be disturbed by the additional traffic generated.[85]

- Accessibility, which can be positively or adversely affected by proposals. For example, a proposal to build a road could sever pedestrian links between a housing area and the local services. One accessibility issue is the very sensitive one of public rights of way. Where a development, (even a change of use of land), covers a large area, the likelihood that public rights of way will be affected increases significantly. The normal approach will be to ensure the suitable diversion of displaced routes. Where a proposal is temporary, and it would be possible to reinstate a route after a period of years, this too may be sought.[86]

- Effects on the local economy, which, again, can be positive or negative. For example, if an existing local business was seen as likely to be adversely affected, physically, by the proposal concerned, or if significant work would be created as a result of the proposal itself, these could be material considerations in reaching a decision.[87]

- The wider effects of a proposal on the landscape or the visual environment.

- Agriculture, which can be severely disrupted where a proposal involves a substantial land take. Policy E7 covers land of high quality. There may be other adverse effects on agriculture irrespective of land quality, for example management difficulties caused by severance, loss of viability of a farm business or increased trespass."

The final part of the Policy refers to the term "cumulative". Even where, on its own, a project would not have a negative impact to the degree that it would be refused, it may be that, in combination with nearby, current or past developments of a similar type, the "cumulative" impact would be such as to justify refusal or additional mitigating measures being sought.

82 *See also Chapter 3, Policy H20 on Gypsies.*

83 *For example, it is reasonable to anticipate that improvements may be needed to the A19 trunk road, most notably at the important Moor Farm and Seaton Burn junctions, if there are further large scale developments along its corridor between the A1 and the Tyne Tunnel.*

84 *Off-site measures may be sought via a Planning Obligation. See Policy G11 above.*

85 *See also policies on Movement in Chapter 7 and Policy E9 in Chapter 1 on the water table etc.*

86 *See in particular Policy M2 on pedestrian access, Policy L3 which deals with the public rights of way network from a leisure point of view and policies in Chapter 4 on Community Facilities, where issues of accessibility to various types of facility are dealt with.*

87 *See also Policy E7 on agriculture and Policies in Chapter 6 on Work Activity.*

Policy **G 12** *DEVELOPMENT CONTROL DECISIONS*

The general approach to determining planning applications will be as follows:

i **Unless material considerations give clear reasons for setting the provisions of this Local Plan aside:**

- **a development complying with all relevant Policies and Proposals in this Plan will be allowed;**
- **b development complying with some but conflicting with other Policies or Proposals in this Plan will be allowed if the relevant Policies and Proposals associated with its benefits outweigh those associated with its disbenefits;**
- **c development not complying with relevant Policies and Proposals in this Plan will not be allowed.**

ii **In considering all planning applications, permission will be dependent upon adequate provision being made on the site and its immediate surroundings for all that is necessary for its sustainable functioning, including during any construction period. This will include, as relevant and not in priority order:**

- **the protection of the surrounding natural and/or built environment;**
- **the conservation of energy in the site and any building;**
- **satisfactory access for pedestrians and people in wheelchairs, prams and pushchairs and people on horseback;**
- **satisfactory access and parking for motor vehicles and bicycles;**
- **necessary infrastructure;**
- **crime prevention and public safety;**
- **In part (iii), add a new bullet point: "agriculture".**
- **suitable landscaping;**
- **the protection of local amenity;**
- **other material considerations.**

iii **In addition to (ii) above, where the scale or nature of a proposal justifies, the wider impact will be taken into account, with reference to Policies in this Plan. In doing so, the benefits of the development will be weighed against any adverse impact upon (not in priority order):**

- **the wider natural environment;**
- **energy use in the wider area;**
- **local communities in terms of disturbance or disruption to their normal functioning, with relevant views of local residents being taken into account;**
- **the infrastructure, including the drainage system and the road and rail network and communities alongside that network;**
- **accessibility factors including, the public rights of way network, with a requirement that displaced sections of the network are diverted and/or replaced as appropriate;**
- **the local economy;**
- **the landscape and other visual aspects of the environment;**
- **agriculture.**

Where a proposal is adding to the impact of previous or concurrent proposals in the vicinity, the cumulative impact, as assessed in the above terms, will be taken into account.

3. Housing

INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTERS 3 to 7 ON DEVELOPMENT

Chapter 1 of this Local Plan Written Statement sketched out the environmental backdrop against which development proposals will be seen.

Chapter 2 then gave emphasis to the need to be positive about development within this environmental context. In effect, with the settlement policy, it drew a map of the Plan area defining contours for future growth and restraint. It clearly stated the need to accommodate development while respecting the environment.

The next five chapters proceed to examine particular types of development, taking full account of the sentiments of both the first two chapters. In each case:

- *on the one hand, the extent of the need or opportunity for that type of development within the Plan area is assessed; and*
- *on the other hand, the degree to which this can or should be accommodated, given the environmental constraints that exist, is estimated.*

Apart from the environment, the topics are dealt with taking full account of the other three basic objectives of the Local Plan: energy conservation, economic development and equality of opportunity. Another key word throughout is "community". It is considered that a key role of the Local Plan is to assist the preservation and, where appropriate, the creation of communities.

The careful arrangement of land uses and emphasis on securing certain provision can help to foster a sense of community where none existed previously or to strengthen existing communities. The best opportunity to achieve this is in the new and growing areas - based around housing but where many other facilities are also required. This is the thinking behind the "Community Development Areas" which are the subject of area specific chapters later in this Plan.

Specific categories of land use or development conveniently fall into five topic areas - each the subject of a chapter:

- ***Housing** - covering all aspects of residential accommodation: **This Chapter;***
- ***Community Facilities** - covering the full range of local, neighbourhood and area-wide provision within the built-up areas, including public open space, sports facilities, shops, educational, health, cultural and other community facilities: **Chapter 4;***
- ***Leisure and Visitor Activities** - covering outdoor recreation in coastal and countryside areas, plus tourism generally: **Chapter 5;***
- ***Work Activity** - covering areas such as industrial estates as well as offices and mixed uses: **Chapter 6;***
- ***Movement** - covering the land needs for the movement of people (and goods) through the area, whether on foot, cycle, rail, road or water: **Chapter 7.***

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Housing is the first type of development dealt with in this Plan because:

- It is the most basic necessity that a land use plan must address. Housing needs generated by the population of any given area must, so far as is reasonable, be accommodated within that area;
- It is the largest land user that involves development activity.

Planning has a key role in facilitating housing provision through the release of land but also by means of other policies and individual decisions ensuring the provision of housing.

3.1.1 Ensuring a Supply of Housing to Meet both Needs and Demands

"The housing market" is a term that is often used to describe the full spectrum of housing provision but can cause confusion. Markets revolve around "supply" and "demand", which implies that the demand for housing will be matched by supply; but housing "need" and housing "demand" are two different things. There is an overlap in that a large part of housing need is expressed as housing demand. However:

- **There is an additional element of housing need which is hidden or "latent".** It does not translate itself into demand for one reason or another. One example is homelessness. Homeless people may not feature in calculations of housing demand carried out by the housing industry, because they cannot afford to enter the housing market - at least in that particular area. Another example is the type of potential household which lives as part of another household, either because they cannot afford to en-

ter the housing market or because the housing market does not offer anything locally to meet their requirements.

- **There are aspects of housing demand which are not strictly part of housing need.** An extreme example would be "second homes" but a much more commonplace one is simply migration into an area.[1]

In planning for housing provision, the Local Planning Authority must take a facilitating role which caters not just for local housing needs but also for the fullest reasonable range of housing demand.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POPULATION CHANGE AND THE REQUIREMENT FOR ADDITIONAL HOUSING

The key to assessing housing need and demand is population change. Comparing the 1981 and 1991 Censuses of Population, a striking feature is that, while the population of Blyth Valley increased by about two per cent in those ten years, the number of households rose by as much as ten per cent. This dramatic difference means a significant reduction in average household size and is explained by a complex web of changes in household structure including:

- Almost a tripling (a 171 per cent increase) in the number of **single parent households**.[2] (This does not include single parent households which are part of another household);
- A 45 per cent increase in the number of **single person households** (above or below pensionable age), made up of:
  - A 24 per cent increase in households containing **one pensioner** on their own;
  - Almost a doubling (an 81 per cent increase) in the number of **single adult** households **below pensionable age**;
- A 21 per cent rise in households containing **only pensioners** (i.e. those household containing just a single pensioner, as mentioned above, plus households with two or more pensioners but no younger members).

These statistics demonstrate the complexity of planning for housing provision. Most of the above changes have a ripple effect on housing need and ultimately housing demand. The primary changes tend to be the ones which have to be coped with by the Housing (or other caring) Authority in terms of provision for special needs, (see above and also Section 3.4 below).

Other changes such as shifts in the type and size of dwelling needed or demanded by groups of the population, are more likely to be met by the housing market without public intervention; although the further out the ripple effect spreads from changes in the primary needs, the more difficult it becomes to estimate the effect on the supply, demand, need and provision of new housing.[3]

THE DYNAMICS OF THE HOUSING STOCK

It is clear from the above that additions to the housing stock, whether through new building or conversion, do contribute towards solving a complex web of needs and demands - which is not a simple matter of more people needing more houses.

The other side of the housing supply equation is, of course, the existing housing stock. As already stated, this has increased faster than the population - by about ten per cent over ten years. This may appear to be a high rate of new house building but it must be remembered that, nowadays, there is a virtual absence of demolition.[4] [5]

This, in turn, means a gradual ageing of the housing stock.[6] Moreover, current estimates are that about one sixth of the private sector housing stock alone is in some way unfit.[7] Unless there is a very substantial improvement in the rate of renovation of the existing stock, the overall condition of the stock is likely to deteriorate further as it ages.[8]

It is consistent with the overall aims of this Local Plan that large scale demolition and replacement should be avoided wherever possible. It makes sense in environmental, energy conservation and economic terms to pursue, instead, a policy of renovating existing dwellings.

The strategic approach of this Local Plan towards changes in the housing stock will be to encourage

1 *For instance, households coming from outside Blyth Valley wishing to set up home within the district would not normally be regarded as part of housing need in Blyth Valley unless they were key workers within the area. They would nevertheless form an element of housing demand in the area.*

2 *The figure used counts households which have just one adult plus children. The adult may not necessarily be the parent of the child (ren) but will be in the vast majority of cases.*

3 *For example, with the marked increase in single person households and the general reduction in household size, it might be expected that the average 1991 dwelling would be smaller than its 1981 counterpart. In fact the mean number of rooms in all dwellings in Blyth Valley increased by 4 per cent during that period, demonstrating that affluence and a higher expectation of what a home should offer influenced supply. Many of the new houses built in Blyth Valley during the boom period of the 1980's were detached houses with several bedrooms. The detached house effectively replaced the semi-detached as the house type to which people aspired. The subsequent recession of the late 1980's showed how economic cycles cause even more dramatic changes. Not only did the number of houses built show a major reduction but the average size of dwelling constructed fell so as to attract first time buyers, (who were not tied to selling a property during a recession).*

4 *The routine demolition of old houses and their replacement with newer ones ceased to be the norm in the 1970's; the 1980's saw a house clearance rate of virtually zero in Blyth Valley.*

5 *The issue of the demolition of individual dwellings is covered in Section 3.6 below.*

6 *Blyth Valley has a housing stock with an age range spanning 100 years plus. The fact is that, without an element of demolition and replacement, the rate of new house building needs to be of the order of double recent rates to avoid a gradual increase in the average age of dwellings in the Plan area.*

7 *It should be noted, however, that the definition of "unfit" has recently been extended to include a wide range of defects which are not purely structural.*

8 *In crude terms, there is a direct relationship between the age of housing and its condition. Without demolition and replacement, the only way in which the condition of the stock can be maintained at a particular level is for renovation / renewal to take place at roughly the rate at which the stock is ageing. The achievement of an overall improvement in the average condition of the stock would require a faster rate of renovation / renewal.*

additional housing, (whether through new building or conversion), to the extent that it may be required to meet additional need and demand but to discourage demolition and replacement except as a last resort. The improvement of the existing housing stock will be facilitated as far as possible through planning decisions and positive planning measures. This aspect is touched on again in Section 3.6.

ROLE OF THE LOCAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

The planning and housing functions are both those of Blyth Valley Council and there is a strong relationship between the two in ensuring that housing needs and demands are met. The role of the the Local Housing Authority is, nowadays, set down in an annual housing strategy and a Local Housing Plan.

The Housing Authority traditionally owns a large stock of housing and is responsible for maintaining that stock and allocating it, for rent, to people on its waiting list.

The role of the Housing Authority is, however, much wider than one of looking after its own property. It has a remit to ensure that there is an adequate provision of dwellings to satisfy housing needs within Blyth Valley. The Council's Housing Strategy is set out in Appendix XIV.

This demonstrates that the Housing Authority has a wide role in overseeing the meeting of needs but relies in part on the planning process in order to fulfil it.

The Local Housing Authority does not have a wide role in ensuring that all housing ***demand*** is met, although there are qualitative aspects to its role over and above the meeting of basic needs. For example it aims to ensure a good quality private housing sector within Blyth Valley, including overseeing the general condition of that private stock, (in addition to its own).

This illustrates that many of the ways in which the Local Housing Authority meets an objective have very little connection with planning powers; that there is a reliance on various local authority functions in its achievement; but that the objective in itself is one which the land use planning should also have as an objective.

THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY

Generally speaking the planning system does not distinguish between housing demand and housing need. It must simply respond to and aim to facilitate housing as required, from whatever source, within the constraints of other planning policies. There are particular aspects of housing need, the meeting of which do call for an input from the planning system, (see Section 3.6 below).

So in what ways and to what extent should planning make provision for housing generally? The main ways are:

1 Through the **allocation of land for new house building**, (or otherwise making sure that it becomes available) and the granting of planning permission thereon;

2 Through the granting of planning permission for **conversion**, **refurbishment** or **sub-division** of existing buildings to provide housing units;

3 Through **special planning measures** to ensure that particular needs are met, including **planning obligations**;

4 Through employing planning decisions towards **optimising the environment** of new and existing housing areas areas and facilitating the maintenance and improvement of the housing stock.

The following sections deal with these and other housing topics as follows:

		Policies
3.2	The Supply of Land for Housing	**H1 - H4**
3.3	Settlement Specific Housing Policies and General Housing Land Allocations	**H5 - H13**
3.4	Housing for Special Needs	**H14 - H19**
3.5	Housing Associated with other Development or Mixed Development	**H20**
3.6	The Environment of Housing Areas: Detailed Planning and Controlling Measures	**H21 - H23**
3.7	Housing in the Countryside	**H24 - H26**

3.2 THE SUPPLY OF LAND FOR HOUSING

Not all housing needs or demands require the identification of new land in order to meet them. However, one of the main roles of the planning system is to provide for an adequate and continuous supply of land for housing.

For the purposes of planning the supply of housing land, the Plan area is divided into **3** housing land supply areas - **Blyth**, **Cramlington** and the **rest of the Plan area**, (including all the villages with defined settlement limits and all open land areas).

Blyth and Cramlington are to be given a strong role in accommodating most new housing development during the Plan period.[9] They must be tightly defined, in terms of housing land supply because all smaller settlements in Blyth Valley are now seen as vulnerable as regards the accommodation of significant additional housing. Land available for housing within a village will be regarded as a more precious commodity than a similar sized piece of land in one of the two towns.[10]

3.2.1 The Overall Supply of Land for Housing

Northumberland County Council's Replacement Structure Plan presents a requirement figure for new building in the Plan period for each district in the County, based upon Structure Plan population projections and housing need forecasts.

Overall, the Replacement Structure Plan seeks the provision of **16,000** dwellings in the County during the period 1991 to 2006. Of these, just below one third, (**5,200**) would be sought within Blyth Valley.

Policy H1 therefore sets out the position of the Local Plan to allocate sufficient land so that the County total can be accommodated. Sub-section 3.2.3 below interprets figures set out in Appendix II to explain that, during the Plan period (1991 to 2006), it will not just be sites actually allocated in this Plan that provide new housing. Sites already in progress, complete or with permission will make (or have already made) a contribution, as will unexpected sites, (known as "windfalls") and small infill sites. For this reason, the land allocated only accounts for an estimated **3,840** new dwellings, with other elements making up **2,060** further units. The total of these two is **5,900**. Although this is slightly higher than the Structure Plan target of **5,200**, it allows the necessary flexibility, to take account of the following.

- Firstly, the capacity of most sites can only be estimated at this stage;[11]
- Secondly, it may be that some allocated sites prove more difficult to develop than expected;
- Thirdly, it may be that, for one reason or another, a site is required for a different use;[12]
- Fourthly, it may be that some sites with planning permission will not be implemented;.[13]

Policy H1 also sets out the general intention that this supply of land should provide a range of sites able to accommodate a variety of house type. This general statement of intent is carried forward in a number of policies on special housing needs and types later in the chapter, as well as in the many site specific proposals towards the end of the Plan.

3.2.2 A Five Year Supply of Land for Housing

Policy H2 seeks to ensure the five year supply of housing land explained above. It will be the aim that the supply of housing land immediately available for new development at any one time in the Plan area as a whole, or in either of Blyth or Cramlington, should be comparable to the overall supply across the whole Plan period, in terms of the range of sites and their capability of accommodating a variety of house types. Phasing Policies, contained within Policies H6 and H9 below, as well as more detailed phasing proposals within the area specific chapters, will assist this aim.

3.2.3 How the Housing Requirement Could be Met

The following section is intended to illustrate how the housing requirement could be met. There are six elements to this:

1 **Sites in Progress or Complete** - i.e. sites already completed or under construction at the time of writing.

2 **Sites with Planning Permission and/or where there is a Commitment to Housing Development** - i.e. sites which have planning permission at the time of writing but where development has not yet commenced.

3 **Land Allocations for Housing** - i.e. sites which will be proposed for housing development in this Local Plan. At the time of writing these sites

9 *See also the Section 2.2 of Chapter 2, on settlement policy.*

10 *Unlike the areas used to assess housing need, the definitions of Blyth and Cramlington, for housing land supply purposes, are strictly limited to the area within their settlement limits, as defined in Policy G6 - see also Section 2.5 of Chapter 2. Areas within small settlements, even if available for housing, cannot be regarded as interchangeable with the two towns for the purposes of housing land supply. In Section 3.4 below, the various specialised housing needs - especially the need for affordable accommodation - are looked at in terms of three housing sub areas, with East Cramlington and East Hartford being regarded as part of the catchment area of Cramlington as far as housing needs are concerned.*

11 *For the most part, an average density of 25 per hectare is applied, although, where the site is identified for special needs housing or where it is thought capable of contributing towards the provision of "affordable housing", higher figures may be applied. (See also Section 3.4 on Affordable Housing below).*

12 *It is hoped, in practice, to keep such changes to a minimum and in any case, they could be counterbalanced by so-called "windfall sites" coming forward for housing development from some other use. (See explanation of "Element 5" below). See also Policy W2 (iii).*

13 *As explained immediately below, there is the need to ensure that at least a five year supply of housing land is available at any given time. This includes the later part of the fifteen year Plan period. Some of the allocated land allows for phasing beyond 2006, although there is an outside possibility that all the land would be taken up within the Plan period.*

Policy **H1** — THE OVERALL SUPPLY OF LAND FOR HOUSING

Taking account of the Structure Plan requirement of 5,200 dwellings in the fifteen year period up to 30th June 2006, this Plan will allocate or otherwise release, on a range of sites for a variety of house types, land with the capability of accommodating an estimated 5,900 dwellings if fully developed.

Policy **H2** — A FIVE YEAR SUPPLY OF LAND FOR HOUSING

At least a five year supply of land for the construction of new dwellings will be made available consistent with the provisions in Policy H1, and in Blyth and Cramlington housing sub-areas, consistent with the requirements of Policies H5 and H8 applying phasing Policies and Proposals elsewhere in this Plan.

neither have permission for nor are otherwise committed to housing development.

4 **Land Allocations with a Housing Component** - i.e. sites which will be the subject of proposals in this Local Plan but where housing will form only part of the overall scheme because it will only be permitted on part of the site and/or in association with some other form of development.

5 **Windfall Sites** - i.e. sites which come forward unexpectedly during the course of the Plan period.

6 **Infill Sites** - i.e. Small sites which come forward within existing built-up areas during the course of the Plan period.

Each of these elements is represented in a series of tables contained within Appendix II. These are intended to assist an understanding of how the total housing requirement will be realised. The figures in the tables are **for illustrative purposes only.**

Table 1 in that Appendix, is a summary of the estimated possible contribution of each element towards meeting the total requirement of land in each part of the Plan area. Tables 2, 3 and 4 are separate site-by site summaries for Blyth, Cramlington and the Rest of District, respectively. They will be referred to at intervals in the sections below. In each case, Elements 3 and 4, comprising the housing allocations, are further expanded upon in Section 3.3, the settlement by settlement housing land strategies, where most of the allocations of housing land are made and Section 3.5, where housing land is allocated in association with other uses.[14]

Each of the six elements which make up the housing land requirement is now explained in more detail.

ELEMENT 1 - SITES IN PROGRESS OR COMPLETE

The fifteen year period of this Local Plan started in mid 1991. Clearly, there many of sites of various sizes where development has taken place since that date. They may be totally or substantially complete at the time of adoption of this Plan. It is not appropriate to include these as proposals in the Local Plan. Nevertheless they contribute towards meeting the requirement. It is estimated that this element is responsible for contributing about **2720** dwellings towards the total requirement.

ELEMENT 2 - LAND WITH PERMISSION

A substantial element of the housing total will be built on sites which already have planning permission at the time of writing. Other land will have been committed to housing development even though planning permission may not yet have been sought or may have lapsed. At present, it is estimated that this element makes a contribution of about **310** dwellings towards meeting the total requirement.

Local Plans cannot allocate sites which have already been the subject of a planning decision, for the simple reason that they have already been open to public challenge and have been accepted as housing sites in that context.

14 *The main general needs housing allocations are in Policies H7, H10 and H13. Policy H20, (on mixed use sites), also allocates land for housing.*

ELEMENT 3 - LAND ALLOCATIONS

These are the sites which are effectively given the status of housing land through this Local Plan. As stated earlier, the allocations are made formally in Sections 3.3 and 3.5, below, with cross references to area specific chapters. Some of the allocations are large sites which will go beyond the Plan period and, though allocated in their entirety, an upper limit is placed on their likely contribution in the period to 2006. Taking this into account, provision is made for Element 3 to contribute up to about **2475** dwellings within the remainder of the Plan period.

ELEMENT 4 - LAND ALLOCATIONS WITH AN ELEMENT OF HOUSING

There are proposals in this Local Plan where housing development forms part of the proposal but where its development is in some way conditional on other circumstances.[15]

The uncertainty surrounding the timing and viability of this element of potential house building means that it is difficult to put a figure on its possible contribution towards the total housing requirement. However, it is estimated, for the purposes of Table 1 in Appendix II, that this element could reasonably be expected to contribute about **175** dwellings mostly in the Blyth area.

ELEMENT 5 - "WINDFALL SITES"

These are sites which are not identified in the Local Plan for housing but which nevertheless present themselves as being suitable for housing development for whatever reason during the Plan period. This Plan contains a fuller array of designations and protection policies on land than previous forward planning documents covering the area. As such there will be less uncertainty surrounding most land and the windfall situation is less likely to arise. Nevertheless, there are situations where it could happen - e.g. where a long-standing land use ceases unexpectedly. If this is, say, an industrial use, while the continuation of the existing use may be perfectly acceptable, its replacement with dwellings may be preferable to a new industrial use on environmental grounds.

Policy H3 sets out criteria for the consideration in the event of a planning application for "windfall" housing. It is not possible to define windfall sites precisely. However, they will contrast with "infill sites", defined below, by virtue of being of significant enough size to form an appreciable addition to housing in the locality. They will not necessarily be within or immediately adjacent to existing housing areas.[16] They must also lie within defined settlement limits and not be the subject of any other site specific, positive proposals in this Local Plan.

H3 (i) makes clear that a positive attitude will be taken where windfall sites come forward, unless there are certain adverse effects.

Firstly, it must be recognised that, however well designed, housing may not be an appropriate use given the character and visual appearance of the surroundings.[17]

A second negative situation would be where housing is proposed close to existing dwellings and the residential amenity of a significant number of existing households would be affected in negative way, (e.g. overlooking, blocking of views, increased traffic etc.).

The third reason why it may be necessary to refuse permission would be if it, in any way, would prejudice the achievement of some other policy or proposal in this Local Plan.[18]

H3 (ii), conversely, states that, even if some of the above negative effects exist, there may be positive reasons to allow housing, which outweigh them. For example, housing could assist the achievement of a planning policy.[19] Alternatively it may allow the removal or reduction of an existing, recognised environmental problem.[20]

The unpredictability of windfall sites coming forward means that it is difficult to estimate their contribution towards meeting the total housing requirement. However the highest likelihood will be in Blyth.[21] A much lower level is predicted in the more planned environment of Cramlington. All together, it is estimated that about **175** sites could become available in this way, through the remainder of the Plan period, with probably well over half falling within Blyth.

ELEMENT 6 - INFILL SITES

In any built-up area, there is always going to be a flow of small sites which, though their existence and their suitability for housing may be known, are too small to be identified as housing sites in a Local Plan. Such sites may only be able to accommodate one or two dwellings,

15 *These are covered in Section 3.5 below, (see Policy H20 (i)) and Area Specific Chapters 15, 17 and 18.*

16 *This is to distinguish them from "infill" sites, which are literally "infilling between existing development and are normally small. For infill sites, a slightly different, more varied approach is taken. They are the subject of a separate policy - see H4 below.*

17 *Criteria for this test are contained in Policy E17. One example of this is at Blyth Links, (see Chapter 18), where it is considered that it would be inappropriate to site housing within the Links area itself, in spite of the fact that development is proposed in the form of a hotel, and in spite of the good environment that would be enjoyed by residents there.*

18 *An example would be land adjoining the site of proposed sports facilities, where building too close may affect the ability of the land to accommodate the sporting activity in a satisfactory manner, (because of balls going into back gardens etc.).*

19 *An example would be a proposal to redevelop on the site of a run down community facility where, the incorporation of some housing, would allow the release of resources for the provision of a replacement community facility within the site.*

20 *An example would be the bringing of a derelict site back into use.*

21 *Policy H9 gives some positive encouragement to infill development in the town.*

Policy **H3** — WINDFALL SITES

Where planning permission is sought for housing development within the settlement limits defined in Policy G6 but where the development of the site concerned:

- **once developed would form a significant addition to the housing in the locality - i.e. more than a small infill site between or immediately adjoining existing housing; and**
- **is not allocated for any other purpose in this Local Plan and is not intended to meet any special need as defined in Policies H14, H16 and H17, unless that Proposal is no longer appropriate due to changed circumstances;**
- **is not protected from development through any Policy in this Local Plan**

then:

i Planning permission will be granted unless the development of housing on the land concerned would:

a have an unacceptably detrimental effect on the visual appearance or character of the area in terms of Policy E17; or

b cause an unacceptable loss of amenity to existing residential properties; or

c significantly prejudice the achievement of any proposal or be contrary to any other Policy in this Local Plan;

ii Where there would be adverse effects, applying (i) above, planning permission may be granted if there are positive effects that would outweigh them, including where the development of the site would:

a assist the achievement of another Policy or Proposal in this Local Plan; and/or

b remove an existing environmental problem.

Policy **H4** — INFILL SITES

Where planning permission is sought for housing development on small sites which are

- **within the settlement limits defined in Policy G6; and**
- **between or immediately adjoining other residential property;**

it will be treatied as infill development and granted planning permission, subject to site specific considerations, including those relating to residential amenity, set out in Policy H21 below.

although a larger number is not unusual. Infill sites are most common in older parts of built-up areas often as gap sites between houses.

The General Development chapter contains a Policy setting out strict criteria for the assessment of exceptional infill development proposals within small groupings of buildings in the open countryside.[22] Within the built-up areas, however, infill development for housing will generally be looked upon favourably, subject to other planning requirements.

22 *See Policy G10.*

This is stated in **Policy H4** where a definition of infill development is given which complements the above definition of windfall sites. Not all small scale housing development can be classed as infill.

In order to be acceptable under this policy, it must adjoin existing residential properties, preferably on at least two sides.[23] [24] It should also not be allocated specifically for some other use or protected from development.

In such circumstances, there is usually no reason why planning permission should not be granted, unless there are found to be site specific reasons against it. (An example might be parking congestion). Many different Policies in this Plan will be applied in assessing infill housing applications, but particular attention is drawn to a Policy later in this Chapter, which deals with the positioning of new houses in relation to existing, from a residential amenity point of view.[25]

It is assumed that, due to its new town character, the contribution of Cramlington towards the total housing requirement in terms of infill development will be negligible. A figure of five dwellings per annum for Blyth is thought reasonable, based upon past experience. In the villages, opportunities may be more likely to be taken and about three infill dwellings per annum may still be built. The total contribution of infill housing could therefore be in the region of **45** during the remainder of the Plan period.

3.3 SETTLEMENT SPECIFIC HOUSING POLICIES AND GENERAL HOUSING LAND ALLOCATIONS

Within each of the three housing land sub-areas, of **Blyth**, **Cramlington** and the **rest of the district**,[26] there is a need to prioritise how the development of housing will take place.

In order to do this effectively, it is best to define, for each of the three housing land sub-areas, a figure - a ceiling or a target - for total new housing provision within the Plan period, based upon a sub-division of the total Blyth Valley figure of 5,900 dwellings defined in Policy H1.

Each of the following three sub-sections of this chapter therefore begins by setting out the housing requirement for that sub-division of the Plan area, before proceeding define priorities for housing development and then allocating housing land within the area. The figures for each sub-area are derived using the same proportions as emerge from the analysis in Appendix II, Table 1.

3.3.1 Housing Land in Cramlington

The role of Cramlington in absorbing housing development along with the other town of Blyth has been explained in the General Development Chapter. In the previous Plan period, the Northumberland County Structure Plan set a housing requirement for Cramlington which was rather higher than the rest of Blyth Valley put together, based on the role that had been defined for the new town. But, as explained in the previous chapter, the reality was that Blyth experienced more housing completions than Cramlington.

Within this Plan period, there will be a need for Blyth to take a substantial proportion of new housing. Nevertheless, it is considered that Cramlington should still be given scope for somewhat more housing development than Blyth.

TOTAL HOUSING REQUIREMENT, CRAMLINGTON

In line with the above, **Policy H5** aims to ensure that sufficient land is allocated within Cramlington to allow for the completion within the town, during the full 15 year Plan period, of approaching half of the total housing requirement of Blyth Valley - 2,870 out of the total of 5,900. The reasons for this emphasis are:

- The continuing role of the town as a growth point;
- The relatively greater emphasis that needs to be given to the satisfactory and early completion of the north-east sector of Cramlington as compared with, say, the completion of the two main development areas in Blyth, (South Beach and West Blyth), which is explained by the greater shortfall of infrastructure and community facilities. More details are given in Chapter 10;
- The major opportunity that exists for increasing the range of housing opportunities in Blyth Valley through the opening up of the South-West Sector with its dual advantages of
  - being an entirely new development area offering the chance to introduce new standards for housing and related provision;
  - having a strong and mature landscape structure and a pleasant environment as the backdrop for new development.[27]

The figure of 2,870 allows for past development rates to continue throughout the Plan period with some additional scope to take account of the fact that two sectors of the town may well be being developed in parallel over a number of years. It is a figure which should ensure the substantial completion of the North-East Sector, (where it is estimated that over 300 dwellings remain to be built), well within the Plan period.

23 *It should be noted that not all small areas of land within housing areas can be looked upon as potential infill sites. Some are specifically protected from development under other policies in this Local Plan, (e.g. as strategic open space under Policy C7).*

24 *It may be that housing will be acceptable in gap sites between existing uses other than residential. However these will be exceptional cases and, if appropriate, are specifically proposed elsewhere in this Local Plan.*

25 *See Sub-section 3.6.3, later in this Chapter.*

26 *The reason for defining the settlements tightly in terms of housing land allocation has been pointed out above. Coupled with this, is the need to have full regard for the roles defined for the settlements in the previous chapter of this Written Statement.*

27 *More details are given in Chapter 11.*

Policy ***H 5*** — *TOTAL HOUSING REQUIREMENT, CRAMLINGTON*

Within the settlement limit of Cramlington, in the fifteen year period up to 30th June 2006, this Plan will allocate or otherwise release, on a range of sites for a variety of house types, land with the capability of accommodating an estimated 2,870 dwellings if fully developed.

Policy ***H 6*** — *THE RELEASE OF HOUSING LAND AT CRAMLINGTON*

While the initial release of housing land in the South-West Cramlington Community Development Area, through the granting of detailed planning consent within areas allocated at Policy H7 (v) below, will be permitted at an early date up to a maximum of 300 units for general housing purposes (plus any specialised or affordable housing units that may be proposed), the granting of planning consent for further general housing units will be withheld until it can be demonstrated to the Local Planning Authority that less than a five year supply of land for general housing purposes remains to be completed in Cramlington or if other exceptional circumstances apply.

THE RELEASE OF HOUSING LAND AT CRAMLINGTON

Policy H6 covers, in general terms, the order of housing development which will be pursued in Cramlington as a whole. The most important principle to establish is the avoidance of the scenario in which the substantial completion of development of the significant amount of housing land remaining in the North-East Sector of the town, slows to any significant degree (or is even abandoned) in favour of the South West Sector.

It is realised that there will be an overlap between the development of the two parts of the town. This could be regarded as beneficial in that it will mean a continuing supply of land in two entirely separate parts of the town. However the momentum of development in the North-East sector must not be allowed to slacken to any great extent, especially because the continued construction of housing in that area should ensure additional community facilities to fill gaps in provision.[28]

The Policy is designed to put a control on an unregulated start to the development of housing in South-West Cramlington. It is reasonable that development there should be allowed to commence in parallel with the completion of the North-East Sector. However, in order that the North-East Sector should not be abandoned in favour of the newer area, detailed planning permission beyond the first 300 dwellings in the South-West Sector will not be granted until the availability of housing sites in Cramlington as a whole falls below a five year supply.[29]

Separate sectorial approaches will also form part of the housing strategy for Cramlington. The residential and community facility elements of an area benefit each other. The maximum degree of additions to community facilities is being sought in North-East Cramlington in association with current and committed developments (or separately). This in turn should make the remaining housing sites a more attractive proposition for early development.

Meanwhile, in the South-West Cramlington Community Development Area, there will be a careful and cautious phasing of development, such that there is not a "free for all" for house builders as the development progresses. This will include:

- an insistence on the provision of particular access points before housing development will be approved in particular parts of the Sector, (there being just a single vehicular access way available until such time as substantial investment takes place);
- a requirement for strong landscape structure; and
- a co-ordinated and positive approach on energy conservation.

28 *See Chapter 4, on Community Facilities, and Chapter 10, on the North-East Cramlington Community Development Area*

29 *The figure of 300 should allow housing in South-West Cramlington to roughly the extent that would be possible without substantial new infrastructure investment. (See Chapter 11).*

ALLOCATION OF LAND FOR HOUSING PURPOSES AT CRAMLINGTON

Policy H7 allocates land at Cramlington for general housing purposes. The tabulation of allocations in the policy cross refers, to Area Specific Proposals Chapters which set out the detailed criteria for the development of the allocated land. Once again, it should be stressed that the capacity figures alongside the Policy, taken from Table 3 of Appendix II, are **illustrative only.**

North-East Cramlington Community Development Area

North-East Cramlington Community Development Area

There are few areas in North-East Cramlington which do not have permission. Allocations are therefore limited to the following.:

- **H7 (i)** is a substantial area of land which is brought forward for general housing purposes, for reasons explained in Chapter 10. (It was previously brought forward for a combination of other uses).

- **H7 (ii)**, adjacent to Northburn Glade, is a further site within North-East Cramlington which will be available for general housing but where, due to its proximity to the Brockwell Centre, affordable housing will be sought, under Policy H14 and as detailed in Proposal NE3 and also a special design element, as detailed in Proposal NE2.

South-West Cramlington Community Development Area

H7 (v) comprises the general housing land allocations, for the Plan period, in the South-West Cramlington Community Development Area. Two major parcels of land within the new sector are allocated for development under this Policy - known as the "Whitehall" and the "North Moor" areas. Although, together, they are estimated to have a capacity of 1850 dwellings, this Plan anticipates that 1180 of these sites will be released in the Plan period. It is expected that an element of this figure will be affordable, (see Policy H14 and Proposal SW2).

The phasing measures for these two housing areas are detailed in Chapter 11. Other areas, outside the currently defined settlement limit, will come forward for housing development beyond the Plan period. The detailed Proposals in Chapter 11 will ensure that these elements will be capable of full integration with the allocated areas.



New housing facing onto Horton Burn, North-East Cramlington

Policy ***H7*** — *ALLOCATION OF LAND FOR HOUSING, CRAMLINGTON*

Land is allocated for housing purposes at Cramlington as follows:

REF	SITE	SUBJECT TO	Estimated Capacity(D.P.P.) = Indicative number of dwellings likely to be built during the Plan Period)
i	Land adjacent to Westwood Grange, North-East Cramlington Community Development Area	Proposal NE1	215
ii	Land adjacent to Northburn Glade, North-East Cramlington	Proposals NE2 and NE3, subject to an element of special design and including the negotiation of an element of affordable housing, in accordance with Policy H14	70
iii	South West Cramlington: Whitehall and North Moor Areas, less Affordable Housing site, allocated at Policy H15 (v)	Proposal SW2 on the detailed phasing and development of the area and including the negotiation of an element of affordable housing,	1180 D.P.P. out of capacity of 1850



New Housing under Construction, 1999, North-East Cramlington



New Housing on "Brownfield" Land, Isabella, Blyth

3.3.2 **Housing Land in Blyth**

Blyth, as stated earlier, absorbed more housing units than any other town in Northumberland during the decade of the 1980's, which was not the intention. In terms of policy, its role will be enhanced, (in terms of the proportion of the total housing allocation for Blyth Valley that it will be expected to absorb);[30] but in practice, it will simply continue to build on the pattern that has been established for it in the previous Local Plan (Blyth Valley East) which allocated land for the full range of local housing needs that a town of its size, age and population structure would be expected to generate. The opening up of a second major development area over and above the long established South Beach - i.e. at Chase Farm (or West Blyth) - has created the right environment for housing provision to become further varied following the recession. It will allow the growing potential of the town within the regional housing market to be realised.

TOTAL HOUSING REQUIREMENT, BLYTH

In line with the above, **Policy H8** aims to ensure that sufficient land is allocated within Blyth so that, by the end of the Plan period, the town could have absorbed 2,355 dwellings - some 40 per cent of total new housing in Blyth Valley allowed for in this Plan.

THE RELEASE OF HOUSING LAND AT BLYTH

Policy H9 sets out the priorities for the development of housing land within the town.

General housing is encouraged to concentrate into the main development areas, insofar as there is a plentiful supply of land in these areas and there is a need to ensure a continuity in their expansion so that their development as fully serviced communities will not be delayed any longer than necessary.

South Beach and the Chase Farm areas will be the dual focuses of house building activity in the early years of the Plan period. West Blyth, within which Chase Farm is situated, has a Southern Development area which will eventually be released but where development is likely to be delayed to the later part of the Plan period, due to various constraints. Similarly, west of South Beach, the South West Newsham area will be a location for long term expansion of Blyth, which may come on stream towards the end of the period to 2006. It will ensure a continuity of supply of general house building land in the southern part of the town of Blyth. Detailed phasing policies for these are contained in the area specific chapters.[31]

The existence of the main development areas ensures that the bulk of housing needs can be met in concentrated areas with the spin-off of the creation of new communities. On the other hand it is important to make sure that the residential fabric of the rest of the town remains vibrant. This includes the allowance for new housing to be inserted at other points in the town, where appropriate. One of the main ways in which housing can provide benefit elsewhere in the town is by meeting local needs.[32] A second way is where it offers a way of improving the environment of a particular locality.

The latter can take many forms including the situation where housing forms part of a mixed development - possibly the major element.[33] Some of the ideas behind mixed development are explained in the Work Activity

30 *This refers to past versions of the Northumberland County Structure Plan, which split the District, in terms of the housing requirement, and allotted the "lion's share" of the district housing requirement to Cramlington.*

31 *See Chapters 12 and 14 respectively.*

32 *See Section 3.4, on Special Needs, below.*

33 *See Section 3.5 below.*

Policy H8 — TOTAL HOUSING REQUIREMENT, BLYTH

Within the settlement limit of Blyth, in the fifteen year period up to 30th June 2006, this Plan will allocate or otherwise release, on a range of sites for a variety of house types, land with the capability of accommodating an estimated 2,355 dwellings if fully developed.

Policy H9 — THE RELEASE OF HOUSING LAND AT BLYTH

The orderly development of housing within Blyth in accordance with Policy H8 will be ensured through encouraging the concentration of housing development within the main housing development areas while regulating the release of large new development areas, by:

- **continuing to grant detailed planning permission without undue delay on remaining housing sites, (allocated in Policy H10), within the Chase Farm and South Beach areas, subject to detailed provisions set out in Chapters 12 and 13 respectively;**
- **requiring certain preconditions and measures to be taken before the release of land at the West Blyth Southern Development Area and South West Newsham, applying Proposals WB12 and SN1 respectively.**

Chapter.[34] The main example promoted within this Plan is the Crofton Mill area.[35]

Some of the allocations in the next policy have as their main aim environmental improvement. However, as well as these, there will be a positive attitude towards proposals for schemes which fall into the categories of windfall or infill development under Policy H3 and H4. Since Blyth is an older, more established town, it contains a variety of existing housing areas. Older areas of housing, particularly Victorian terraces, lend themselves to infill development more than would, say, a modern estate of detached houses. This will be taken into account. Sometimes, the removal of an environmental problem is desirable and the granting of permission for a small housing scheme or an individual dwelling could help to achieve it.[36] There are also instances where the granting of permission for a small amount of housing could assist in achieving a community related goal.[37]

ALLOCATION OF LAND FOR GENERAL HOUSING PURPOSES AT BLYTH

Policy H10 allocates land for general housing purposes within the town of Blyth. Once again, it should be stressed that the capacity figures alongside the Policy, taken from Table 2 of Appendix II, are **illustrative only**.

H10 (i to iii) are the allocations in the West Blyth area. The first refers to the remainder of the Chase Farm area, which has previously been the subject of outline permission, (which has lapsed). The second is an area of land which may be added to the Chase Farm area, depending upon other factors. The third allocates the major "Southern Development Area" for housing, as referred to above.[38]

H10 (iv to vi) are the allocations in the South Beach area. The second of these is a special design site in similar vein to sites allocated at North-East Cramlington.[39] The third is the area to the west of the railway which, though not part of the original South Beach definition, nevertheless has strong linkages with

34 *See Chapter 6, Section 6.5.*
35 *See Chapter 17.*
36 *An example would be the many derelict garage sites within housing estates.*
37 *See Policy H20.*
38 *See Chapter 12.*

Policy ***H 10*** — *ALLOCATION OF LAND FOR HOUSING, BLYTH*

Land is allocated for housing purposes at Blyth as follows:

REF	SITE	SUBJECT TO	Estimated Capacity (D.P.P. = Indicative number of dwellings likely to be built during the Plan Period)
i	Chase Farm - Remaining Areas	Proposal WB1	80
ii	Chase Farm - "Additional Area"	Proposal WB8	47
iii	Southern Development Area, West Blyth	Proposal WB12 and H14	150 D.P.P.
iv	Western Development Area, South Beach	Proposal SB1 (a) and H14	165
v	Land in Vicinity of Sandringham Drive, South Beach	A Special Design of Development in line with Policy H21 (vi) and accordance with Proposal SB2	55
vi	Land at South Newsham Road	Proposal SB1 (b) and H14	140
vii	Land at South-West Newsham	Proposal SN1 and H14	125 D.P.P.
viii	Land to r.o. Hedley Avenue / Plessey Avenue	Proposal CM1	17
ix	Land to r.o. Hunter Avenue	no particular Proposal	7
x	Land at Brierley Road	no particular Proposal	34
xi	Land at Chestnut Avenue	no particular Proposal	18

the Western Development Area in terms of the provision of infrastructure and services.[40]

H10 (viii) allocates the South-West Newsham area. As stated above, this area is not expected to come forward until the substantial completion of the South Beach sites and it is not anticipated that much over 100 dwellings should be completed within the Plan period, although the allocated site is capable of accommodating an estimated 200. Most of South-West Newsham, which will eventually include a swathe of land northwards to Laverock Hall Road and further inorth from that - to the southern end of Blyth golf course, is placed outside the settlement limit for this Plan period. Eventually, South-West Newsham could accommodate, perhaps, 800 to 1000 dwellings.[41]

H10 (viii and ix) are the two straightforward housing land areas to be allocated in the Crofton Mill area. The area centres on a mixed use allocation which is allocated under separate policy below.[42]

H10 (x) is land at Brierley Road which is within the Cowpen estate, close to shopping facilities. It is envisaged that the site could provide for special needs groups.

H10 (xi) at Chestnut Avenue, is a small area of land, previously partly occupied by garages, within the Hodgsons Road estate which, due to a lack of land for housing in this part of Blyth, could be valuable in terms of local housing needs.

39 *See Policy H21 (vi) for the definition of the overall purpose of "Special Design Sites".*

40 *See Chapter 13.*

41 *See Chapter 14 for further details.*

42 *See Chapter 17.*

Policy H11 — TOTAL HOUSING REQUIREMENT, REST OF DISTRICT

Within the limits of settlements other than Cramlington and Blyth, in the fifteen year period up to 30th June 2006, this Plan will allocate or otherwise release, on a range of sites for a variety of house types, land with the capability of accommodating an estimated 675 dwellings if fully developed, taking account of planning constraints in the area.

Policy H12 — THE RELEASE OF HOUSING LAND - REST OF DISTRICT

Development of land for housing within the area described in Policy H11 above will be limited to:

i Sites where there is already a commitment to housing development;

ii The main new community development area at Wheatridge Park, allocated at Policy H13 below; and

iii Sites which meet the "windfall" or "infill" criteria set out in Policies H3 or H4, with encouragement being given to schemes which meet affordable housing needs as defined in Policy H14 below.

3.3.3 Housing Land in The Rest of the District

The reducing role of the villages in absorbing additional housing development has been explained at some length in the previous chapter, (see Section 2.2.2).

Table 4 of Appendix II, however, shows that a significant number of housing units, (some 300), remained to be built on sites with outstanding planning permission in the Seaton Valley villages at the beginning of the Plan period. With the recent recession, some still remain to be completed at the time of writing. This means that there has continued to be a flow of housing land to meet local market demands for the first few years of the Plan period.

Whether local needs are also being met by this housebuilding is considered in more detail in section 3.4 below. One of the conclusions of the consideration of that section is that local needs in the individual villages of the Seaton Valley could be met, to the satisfaction of the Local Housing Authority, anywhere within the Seaton Valley area. It has therefore been assumed, for the purposes of planning for housing land provision, that all of the Seaton Valley villages, centred on Seaton Delaval are part of, not just the same housing needs area, but also the same housing market area. That is, additional needs or demand for housing could be met in any part of that area. Since it is the policy of this Local Plan to give some additional emphasis to the central place role of Seaton Delaval while implementing a policy of restraint in the other villages, (see Section 2.2.2 above), it is proposed that any significant additional requirement for housing land, (over and above that which was outstanding at the commencement of the Plan period), should be met in Seaton Delaval. In addition it is assumed that any significant housing need or demand generated within the villages of East Hartford or East Cramlington would be met in Cramlington itself. It is considered that individual villages may still have scope for some infill development (or conversions etc.) which could meet genuinely localised need.

TOTAL HOUSING REQUIREMENT, REST OF DISTRICT

Policy H11 acknowledges that, by the end of the Plan period, the completion of sites with permission, plus the one (major) land allocation, as well as other elements - notably infill, should account for the completion of about 675 housing units. The latter two will be sufficient to ensure a continued five year supply of new housing land - but taking account of the strategy of diverting some of the previous weight of housing completions to the main two settlements.

THE RELEASE OF HOUSING LAND, REST OF DISTRICT

Policy H12 reemphasises the strict limitation that will be placed on housing development outside the two main towns and lists the three main considerations that will be applied within settlement limits.

Firstly, **H12 (i)** refers to those sites where there is already commitment to housing. Most have planning

Policy ***H 13*** *ALLOCATION OF LAND FOR HOUSING, REST OF DISTRICT*

Land is allocated for housing purposes within the area described in Policy H11 above as follows:

REF	SITE	SUBJECT TO	Estimated Capacity(D.P.P.) = Indicative number of dwellings likely to be built during the Plan Period)
i	**Wheatridge Park, Seaton Delaval**	**Proposal SD1, (which includes the provision of Special Design Sites, in accordance with Policy H21 (vi)) and Policy H14**	**150 D.P.P. out of capacity of 230**

permission. Where this lapses, reapplication for permission will normally be considered favourably.

Secondly, **H12 (ii)** refers to new allocations, (see below).

Thirdly, as stated in **H12 (iii)**, infill applications will be treated favourably within other policies and applying local considerations, particularly where it can be demonstrated that a local housing need will be met.

ALLOCATION OF LAND FOR HOUSING PURPOSES AT SEATON DELAVAL

Policy H13 allocates land at the northern end of Seaton Delaval, as referred to above. Once again, it should be stressed that the capacity figure alongside the Policy, taken from Table 4 of Appendix II, is **illustrative only**.

H13 (i), the only new allocation, is the comprehensive development area around Wheatridge Park, where the intention is not just to provide housing land but to create a nodal point for community provision and public transport, as described in detail in Chapter 15. It should be noted here, that an element of specially designed development will also be required, although the land areas for these are not, as yet separately defined. Some of the land, on the road frontage, is not included within the overall total, but does form part of Element 4 above - see Policy H20 (i) below.

Three additional points are important to mention at this point, although they are the subject of the area specific chapter, (Chapter 15):

a In an effort to limit the scale of development and provide an opportunity for local needs to be catered for, small scale projects will be encouraged;

b It is likely to be some years before the land can become genuinely available for development. Nevertheless, it is necessary to guard against all of it being taken up within a short period, causing arguments of housing land shortage at a later date. Therefore, phasing arrangements are included in Chapter 15. Some is now predicted to fall beyond the Plan period.

c Local needs should be catered for on part of the site in accordance with policies in the next Section of this chapter.

In order to allow for a full range of sites within Seaton Delaval, the scope for smaller scale development within the redefined settlement limits will be investigated.

3.4 PARTICULAR HOUSING NEEDS AND DEMANDS

The above section has established the principles to be followed in the release of land for housing and its use for general housing purposes. This section concentrates on particular categories of housing need and demand.

The term "general housing purposes" is not easily defined. It implies any housing which is not specifically intended to meet a defined need. This is fairly accurate although, to a greater or lesser degree, all housing land will contribute towards meeting housing need in an area, however that is defined. In addition, some of the sites allocated within Policies H7, H10 and H13 will include a requirement for special needs provision as explained later in this section.

Regional Planning Guidance for the Counties of Northumberland, Durham and Cleveland, produced by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR), states that all Local Planning Authorities should make an allowance for a range of housing requirements including "high quality housing, special needs housing and affordable housing". In terms of their relative importance in the Blyth Valley area, it is appropriate to deal with the topic of **"Affordable Housing"** first, followed by **special needs**, (there being an overlap between the two). Following that, high quality housing will be covered under the heading of **"Low Density (Executive) Housing"**.. Finally, there is a short Sub-section on another particular accommodation requirement - that of **Gypsies**.

3.4.1 Affordable Housing

Affordable Housing can be defined as housing which is available to those people whose income does not enable them to buy or rent in the locality, at open market prices and appropriate to their needs.

On the basis of this definition of affordability, the Local Planning Authority will undertake and regularly update an assessment of affordable housing need in the Plan area, taking into account local income levels, local housing costs and the existing supply of affordable housing .[43]

Recent years have seen a recognition by Central Government that the relative freedom given to the housing market by a planning system with limited powers has not ensured a supply of housing to meet local needs in all areas. This has been particularly true in rural areas within commuting distance of big cities. Commuters have created a high demand for dwellings in traditional village settings and forced average house prices beyond the reach of many local people wishing to set up home.

The Government advice also recognises that, in more urban areas, in the absence of significant public sector house building, large, uniform areas of relatively high-priced housing can be created with little regard for local needs. The advice, therefore, is that Local Plans can include policies which seek to ensure the provision of affordable housing so long as they can be backed up by a sound assessment of local need.

ASSESSMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEEDS

A brief definition of affordable housing has been given above. In practice, in order to justify levels of affordable housing sought in a particular case, it will be necessary to provide evidence that the need exists in that locality.

Policies in this Local Plan are currently based on an assessment carried out by the Local Housing Authority in 1993, making use of its knowledge of the relationship between the housing stock, the supply of units, housing needs and expressed demands. The method of the assessment and its results are set out in Appendix XV.

The general findings of that assessment will continue to be used as a gauge for negotiating affordable housing in three sub-divisions of the Borough only until the results of a new survey are known. These new figures will then supersede the 1993 findings and form a much more accurate and reliable basis for such negotiations. The main problem with the existing information is that it does not relate the affordability gap found in Blyth Valley with hard information on low income and the availability or otherwise of low cost housing (for sale or rent) on the open market. For this reason, it is proposed that the update of the assessment will incorporate information on local income levels, local housing costs and the existing supply of affordable housing.[44]

As an interim measure, pending the availability of new needs assessment information, the following guidelines, drawn from the overall findings of the 1993 Assessment, (See Appendix XV), will be used as a basis for negotiating affordable housing provision.

- There will be no part of the Borough where affordable housing will not be sought if the opportunity arises;
- There will be a particular effort to secure affordable housing provision for single people below retirement age throughout Blyth Valley and especially in the Seaton Valley area;

43 *Blyth Valley Borough Council, as Local Housing Authority, defines "Affordability" as the ability to afford the accommodation, when in low paid employment, without the need to rely on benefits.*

44 *In the absence of the new assessment, Appendix XVI gives an assessment of local incomes versus local low cost housing supply - using information available. This serves to back up the assumption that underlies policies in this Plan - that there is a need to ensure a continuing supply of new low cost housing units for those on lower income and lacking mobility within the housing market. Although there appears to be a supply of low cost housing on the market, over and above those supplied through subsidy the evidence available is sufficient to demonstrate that its quantity, type and geographical distribution is inadequate to meet all needs.*



Bungalows for the Elderly, Nelson Village, Cramlington



Affordable Housing, The Avenues, Blyth

- Additional provision for elderly people will be sought but especially in the Cramlington area;
- Low cost family housing will be actively sought in Cramlington;
- Means of securing further affordable housing for families in the Seaton Valley area will be investigated.

The above criteria are based on the table in Appendix XV. It will continue to be valid to refer to this table when negotiating affordable housing provision, until such time as the new survey results become available.[45] [46]

HOW A SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING CAN BE ENSURED?

Clearly, given the scale of this shortfall in affordable housing units, as assessed in 1993 and subject to review, it cannot be expected that the full amount will be provided through the creation of new housing units involving the release of land.

So how can affordable housing needs be met - at least in part - through the planning process? As with the general housing figure, the ways in which this Local Plan will seek to ensure this level of provision, are classified into seven separate elements:

ELEMENT A: Units under Construction / Committed etc.

This element includes schemes that are currently in the pipeline or otherwise committed to affordable housing, (as defined by the Local Housing Authority). This is estimated to have accounted for approaching 300 completions between mid-1993, (the start date for the affordable housing analysis) and the adoption date for this Local Plan.

ELEMENT B: Small Allocated Housing Sites

There are a few sites which are allocated for housing and are too small to be included as affordable housing sites or within quota arrangements, (see below), but which nevertheless are likely to contribute in a modest way towards affordable housing, particularly in Blyth.

ELEMENT C: Quota Arrangement, Under Planning Agreements

This is the idea of achieving affordable housing provision by entering Planning Agreements with developers of large areas, so that, if local need is clearly demonstrated, it is possible to facilitate the provision of affordable housing within those areas. Government advice now regards this as an entirely legitimate method of providing for the housing needs of the low income groups. This is backed up in the Northumberland Structure Plan.

This approach, formalised in Policy H14 below, will be applied to development areas, (or phases thereof), where development has yet to begin. It is anticipated that this element, if successfully applied, could create significant units within the Plan period.[47]

ELEMENT D: Conditional Sites

This element is equivalent to Element 4 in the overall housing land analysis in Table 1 of Appendix II, which was an estimate of the amount of housing which may be expected from sites which are part of mixed developments, or where permission for housing will only be granted subject to other development.[48]

"Due to the nature of such sites , it is highly likely that they could make a small but significant contribution towards meeting affordable housing needs, although it is not the intention that this be a rigid policy applied as a quota across the board. The reason is that the success of mixed developments may rely on the permission being granted for some housing in order to make the proposal financially viable. It would be inappropriate to require, in each case, that a proportion be affordable. This type of contribution has already been demonstrated in the Blyth Quayside mixed use area and it would be also be likely to be in Blyth that future examples of this type of provision would fall.

ELEMENT E: Infill / Windfall Sites

This category corresponds to Elements 5 and 6 of the summary table (Table 1) of Appendix II. Such sites can attract local, small scale builders who may be more inclined to tailor their provision for the local housing market. Based on current housing policy and identified needs, (subject to review), there may be some additional encouragement, within the Seaton Valley area, for infill sites which become available to be considered for their potential to add to the affordable housing supply.

ELEMENT F: General Housing Element

Appendix XVI estimates that the prices of housing on the open market in Blyth Valley sit slightly below the regional average. This refers to all housing but there is reason to believe that it also applies to new housing.[49] The "Northumberland Housing Land Study", 1996 estimates that upwards of 30 per cent of new houses are in the lowest price band. However this includes houses up to 52,000 pounds at 1996 prices and it is safe to assume that the vast majority of these are not affordable to those

45 *Please note that these figures have a different base date from the figures in Appendix II*

46 *It is worth noting that the Authority also carries out a Special Housing Needs Assessment.*

47 *See part (i) of Policy H14 and the cross referred proposals for the full list of relevant housing areas and the indicative targets from which this figure has been calculated.*

48 *See also Section 3.5 below.*

49 *This may be due to lower land prices or a deliberate "market subsidy" by builders pitching prices slightly lower because, in a regional context, the price that can be commanded by a given house type may be lower in Cramlington than in more central or recognised locations.*

in genuine need. Nevertheless, for the present it can be assumed that a small proportion (say around 5 per cent) of all new privately built housing units could be classified as affordable, given that the housebuilders are, in effect, subsidising them.

ELEMENT G: Conversions / Renovations

This element would not rely on land allocations and would therefore not form part of the overall housing sites requirement for Blyth Valley (of 5900 units).

Nevertheless, taking account of the policies later in this section and other factors, conversions of existing properties could make a significant contribution towards meeting affordable housing needs. The policy of the Council to adapt existing properties to meet needs of sitting tenants and thus reduce the demand for new affordable units will, in effect, be a hidden contribution within this element.

In Blyth, which has a stock of older, larger properties and where the "living over the shop policy" will be applied,[50] it is reasonable to assume that a few units per year will be achieved in this way. In Cramlington, there is little scope, but in the Seaton Valley settlements, as with infill sites, additional encouragement may be given towards allowing conversions for this purpose.

THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE LOCAL PLAN SEEKS TO MEET IDENTIFIED NEEDS

On the basis of the above "elements", it can be stated that the application of Local Plan Policies, as well as existing commitments etc., could assist the achievement of a significant proportion of affordable housing needs across the Plan area over the Plan period. The level of needs that can be met through the planning process will vary across the Borough and between the different types of need and will not be clearly known until the emergence of a new needs assessment. The 1993 assessment indicated a level of need across the Borough approximately double that which could possibly be provided through the Local Plan.

Prior to the new assessment, the guidelines presented above will assist in decisions on location and type of affordable housing, in situations where it is negotiated or opportunities arise otherwise for its provision.

PLANNING POLICIES TO ENSURE MAXIMUM AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROVISION

Policy H14 is the planning strategy for securing maximum provision of affordable housing to meet the identified needs in Blyth Valley.

H14 (i) covers the approach of seeking provision as part of some larger or longer term developments. Eventually, within the areas concerned, sites will be identified, preferably in a comprehensively planned way, through the agreement of detailed Master Plans or other development guidelines. Detailed planning permission on parts of the land within these areas may be withheld until an affordable housing scheme has been arranged and programmed for implementation on another (specified) part of the land. Again, such details will be the subject of later Master Plans to be drawn up.

Six areas are listed. Within these areas, the sites for affordable housing will normally be defined in detailed master plans or development briefs. Detailed planning permission on certain parts of the land concerned may either be subject to grampian conditions or withheld pending the signing of a Planning Agreement, under Policy G11, such that affordable housing is secured on another part of the land and/or at a later date, detailed arrangements also being set out in a relevant master plan or development brief. The needs identified in Table H-T1, or as updated, will be used as a basis for targets in each area, so as to ensure that a wide section of the community will be provided for.[51] One of the allocations, that at Wheatridge Park at the northern end of Seaton Delaval, will have a higher affordable housing indicative target than the other three.[52] This approach is taken because of the very marked difference between the needs for various types of affordable housing and the opportunities to provide it. Even so, the additional units would only go a small fraction of the way towards closing that gap.[53]

H14 (ii) refers to infill and windfall sites. Efforts will be made to accommodate affordable housing schemes where they are proposed on unallocated sites within the built-up areas, subject to the general criteria set out in Policies H3 and H4 above. The Local Housing Authority and other public bodies own considerable areas of land. Many are the subject of protection policies.[54] Where they are not specifically protected there may be some arguments for keeping them open to the extent that general purpose housing schemes would not normally be permitted. However, the advantages offered through the building of an affordable housing scheme on the land may sway the balance in favour of allowing development. Each such case will be assessed carefully in the context

50 *See Policy B4 in Chapter 9.*

51 *It is virtually certain that, if this strategy is applied successfully in the six areas concerned, the affordable housing will be constructed to a higher density than the average for general needs housing. Therefore the land take will not be as high as the figures suggest. Footnotes within Appendix XVI explain how the figures for each area were arrived at.*

52 *It could account for over 40 per cent of the total housing constructed, although would not take up that proportion of the land.*

53 *The exact purpose and content of the Seaton Delaval land allocations are explained in Chapter 15 of this Written Statement.*

54 *See especially Policy C7.*

Policy **H 14** — *AFFORDABLE HOUSING: METHODS OF PROVISION*

The provision of affordable housing to meet identified needs, will be secured as far as possible through the planning process as follows, with Policy H15 being applied where permission is granted:

i The Local Planning Authority will seek to negotiate with the developers of the following housing areas the provision of affordable housing as indicated in their respective Proposals:

	FORMING AN ELEMENT OF HOUSING ALLOCATION IN	NUMBER OF UNITS SOUGHT GIVEN IN
Land Adjacent to Northburn Glade, North-East Cramlington	Policy H7 (ii)	Proposal NE3
Land at South-West Cramlington	Policy H7 (iii)	Proposal SW2
Southern Development Area, West Blyth	Policy H10 (iii)	Proposal WB12 (f)
Western Development Area, South Beach plus land between South Newsham Road / Back Newcastle Road and the Railway	Policy H10 (iv & vi) respectively	Proposal SB1
Land at South-West Newsham	Policy H10(vii)	Proposal SN1 (e)
Wheatridge Park, Seaton Delaval	Policy H13 (i)	Proposal SD1 (b)

Within these areas the sites for affordable housing purposes will normally be defined in detailed master plans or development briefs.

ii Where schemes for affordable housing are proposed on windfall or infill sites, they will be permitted wherever possible, applying, as appropriate, the provisions of Policies H3 and H4;

iii Schemes to encourage the conversion of existing buildings for affordable housing purposes, will be encouraged wherever possible, (within the constraints of other applicable policies), including the application of Policy B4 in Blyth town centre;

iv Self-build housing schemes as provided for in Policy H21 (vi).

In all cases where sites or areas are indicated as subject to the pursuit by the Local Planning Authority of the provision of affordable housing, the Local Planning Authority will provide the prospective developer with confirmation of the definition of affordable housing and the most up-to-date available assessment of affordable housing need, as this relates to the site in question and the provision sought.

of demonstrated needs, site specific factors and the results of local consultations.

H14 (iii) indicates that there will have to be a reliance on a certain amount of conversion of existing property in order to achieve affordable housing provision.

In this Local Plan it is assumed that that well under ten per cent of affordable units will be provided through conversion. At present, however, in order to obtain a funding, housing associations need to demonstrate that a high proportion of their schemes do not involve greenfield sites. The implication is that a higher proportion of affordable units will have to be provided via conversion - at least in the early part of the Plan period. Encouragement can be given to owners of run down or vacant property to dispose of it or lease it to Housing Associations who can then obtain grant aid and renovate it for affordable housing. One particular approach is being adopted in the area of Blyth town centre in the living over the shop policy, whereby encouragement will be given to proposals to bring back into use, as dwellings, the vacant upper floors of shops and other service premises with the involvement of housing associations. Further details are given in Chapter 9.

Generally speaking, proposals for conversions which involve the provision of affordable housing will be given the same level of encouragement, (within other policies), as is given to affordable housing infill schemes.

If the conversion involves non-residential premises, there will clearly be a housing gain. Even if residential premises are involved, there could be a net increase in the numbers of dwelling units and/or it may be that the building concerned moves from non-affordable to affordable status.

Arrangements whereby housing associations renovate run-down Local Housing Authority stock will continue to contribute affordable housing units.



Affordable Housing close to Blyth Quayside

Where affordable housing is proposed on unallocated land and/or through the conversion of buildings within the settlement limits of Seaton Delaval, Holywell, Seghill, New Hartley or Seaton Sluice/Old Hartley, the consideration of the application will be as positive as possible, within the constraints of parts (ii) and (iii) of Policy H14 and other relevant policies. Advice will be provided on how a submitted scheme may be modified so as to be capable of being accommodated on the site or within the building concerned.

The form and design of housing areas can greatly influence the level of affordability of the new housing. The building of houses at high density, by cutting the cost per housing plot, may have the effect of enabling affordable dwellings to be constructed. There are also advantages to allowing some high density housing in order to increase variety in an area. Within the context of the general aims of this Plan, it will be most beneficial if the high density sites could be concentrated around public transport nodes.[55]

In some cases, it may be possible to keep costs down by using standard designs of house. These factors will be taken into account wherever possible in considering proposals for affordable housing although, it is the case that small sites which lend themselves to affordable housing are often awkwardly shaped or sensitive and may require some sort of special design.

H14 (iv) recognises that another way of lowering the cost of acquiring a dwelling can be for the prospective purchaser to construct their own dwelling, either individually or as part of a "self-build association". Self-build housing schemes have been encouraged in the past in various locations in recognition of the demand that exists. They have been deliberately employed as a way of adding variety to housing. Specifications have to be tight to ensure an orderly and visually acceptable development. However, the cost of self-build is still, usually, significantly lower than buying an equivalent new house "off the shelf".[56]

It will be necessary for the Council to plan carefully how affordable housing is to be achieved within a future housing area from the outset of its being opened up for development. As such, there will have to be a constant dialogue with prospective developers to ensure that they are informed of the current definition of affordable housing and what is expected from them in terms of its provision. Levels of provision sought will depend on needs information being available which is up-to-date and relevant for the locality of the proposed development. (See above for definition of affordability and information on the needs assessment). This information will be provided to developers when appropriate and on request.

55 *This would be in line with Policy M5 (iv).*

56 *Self-build schemes in the past have tended to consist of large detached houses but there is no reason why smaller, more basic housing units should not form part of such schemes. See also Policy H21 (vi), later in this chapter.*

Policy ***H 15*** — *AFFORDABLE HOUSING: CONTROLLING OCCUPANCY*

Where permission is granted for affordable housing, permission will be conditioned such that units can only be occupied by those qualifying as being in need of affordable housing in line with the current housing needs assessment carried out by the Local Planning Authority, when published and available and/or current Local Authority housing needs criteria, where relevant. The incidence of dwelling units within the category of affordable housing subsequently moving out of that category will be minimised, where it is considered appropriate to do so, by entering Planning Agreements under Policy G11 with housing associations or private developers involved in individual schemes to limit initial occupancy to specified groups.

CONTROLLING OCCUPANCY

If a major effort is made to ensure affordable housing is provided through the exercise of planning powers, it is equally important to ensure that this effort is not undermined through affordable housing not providing for those that need it.

Policy H15 recognises that initially it is necessary that the dwellings are occupied by those who qualify as needing them, in the terms defined by the Local Housing Authority. The best way to ensure continued occupancy by these groups is to enter into Agreements with the developers of the affordable housing in order to limit the initial occupancy of the units.[57]

One often used method is for the Housing Authority to have nomination rights for a proportion of the units - for applicants from its waiting list.

In theory, if a house is affordable in the first place, it should remain affordable if sold. However, this assumes that affordable housing will not be artificially subsidised. Some will not be. For instance, where permission is granted for housing on private land to be built at a high density as a way of keeping prices down, then the value of the housing units will probably remain low in relation to other houses. However, parts of Policy H14 effectively seek to subsidise the construction of affordable housing to the extent that the value of the unit, if sold on the open market would exceed significantly the price paid by the occupier. Such housing would then cease to be "affordable housing".

At present, it is not considered that any planning policy or ad hoc controls would be capable of controlling occupancy of affordable housing units or of keeping them "affordable" in the years following completion. The best chance of achieving this goal will be for there to be non-planning agreements between the Housing Authority and bodies such as Housing Associations, to oversee occupancy, maintenance etc.[58]



Council Housing Estate, Holywell

57 *The Housing Authority is committed to entering Social Housing Agreements with Housing Associations on various aspects of the management of their properties and such matters as nomination rights relating to people from the Council 's waiting list.*

58 *Shared ownership schemes are one way of allowing affordable housing to be owned while remaining in the affordable category.*



Sheltered Housing Accommodation, New Hartley



Residential Care Home under Construction in East Cramlington

3.4.2 **Other Special Housing Needs**

Affordable housing policies aim to meet the low cost needs of particular groups who, if it was not for their low incomes, would, in most instances, be able to enter the general housing market.[59]

However, there are certain housing needs which are much more specialised than this and which require a separate policy approach. These are the categories where the Social Services Authority has a key role in overseeing provision, (as well as the Local Housing Authority).[60]

RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES

The main example of a specialised housing need is residential care homes for elderly people.[61] These are, primarily, a means of providing a greater degree of support for those elderly people no longer able to cope with the practicalities of living in their own homes even with the help of domicillary services. While they are under the guidance of local primary healthcare services, residential homes are not health service premises - they are first and foremost residential and are therefore most appropriately located in residential areas.

The accommodation required is normally a single building with scope for a number of bedrooms and communal areas - roughly the size of a large house or a small block of flats. It can either be purpose-built or involve the conversion of an existing building. This type of unit has been increasingly provided by the private sector.

Since the 1980's, there has been an increasing number of applications for private residential care homes. Although the Social Services Authority has a strong set of controls over the form of such development, the potential planning problems of a large number of such applications were foreseen and supplementary planning guidance produced.[62]

Policy H16 accepts the role of private residential care homes in addressing the accommodation needs of an increasing elderly population and seeks to allow for their accommodation, to a reasonable level, in residential areas. Unless circumstances or other policy considerations dictate, the aim will therefore be to grant permission, wherever possible. However, there is an additional set of criteria that applications for residential care homes will need to be assessed against, with refusal of permission if they are not met.

H16 (i), the first of these, is if the proposed rest home is poorly related to local services. Although many of the people for whom this type of home is essential will be housebound, a proportion of residents will be capable of leaving the premises to visit local services provided that they are conveniently placed. Geographical isolation from certain types of service will therefore be a relevant reason for refusal of an application. This should be taken to include instances where services are relatively close at hand but possibly dangerously situated across a main road.

The views of regulating bodies such as Social Services Authority and the Health Authority may have a bearing on whether an application is granted or refused. It may, for instance, be the view of the Health Authority that the cumulative effect of a number of large residential care homes in one of the smaller settlements would be to over stretch local primary healthcare facilities.

H16 (ii) emphasises the importance of locations within residential areas. It is vital that the elderly people residing in these homes continue to regard themselves as part of the community and not be isolated from other people. Also, within residential areas, locations close to noisy or otherwise disturbing uses should be avoided.[63]

H16 (iii) seeks to avoid situations where a large proportion of the habitable have uninteresting views, on the basis that bedrooms, as well as communal rooms, are occupied for a large proportion of daylight hours. Backland locations will therefore normally be avoided as locations for residential care homes. For the same reason, it is important to avoid any habitable room being overlooked by another. This assessment should take into account windows of neighbouring property.

H16 (iv) recognises that vehicular access and car parking can present a problem. For example, this is likely to be the case where the residential care home is created through the conversion of an existing large house within a tight-knit residential area. It will not always be possible (or visually desirable) to create a car park of adequate size within the curtilage and provide a suitable access point, especially if a front garden is involved. In any case, the Highway Authority's parking standards, set out at Appendix XVII, will be applied as relevant. Other factors, such as, access drives too close to habitable rooms, could cause disturbance.

There is also detailed advice available, relating to access for people on foot or in wheelchairs. Applications will be assessed against this. If necessary, conditions will be added or modifications sought.[64]

59 *The general housing market will normally provide units for single people and bungalows for elderly people as well as family housing. It is also true that warden served accommodation blocks for elderly are privately built without subsidy in areas where there are sufficient higher income elderly people.*

60 *The Local Housing Authority, in conjunction with the Social Services Authority, the Health Authority and the voluntary sector makes assessments of various special needs and, in 1996 anticipated the following requirements for new units over a five year period: People with learning disabilities 12 units; people with mental health problems, 22 units; people with physical disabilities, 47 units;. TOTAL, 81 units.*

61 *See also Table H-T1 for the breakdown of affordable housing needs for the elderly*

62 *This is not reproduced within this Written Statement, as much of it is very detailed or of an advisory nature. Instead, the essential elements which will have a bearing on the planning decisions are reproduced as Policy H16.*

63 *It is recognised that outlooks onto busy areas are sometimes preferred by housebound elderly people. If such a location is selected, suitable sound proofing precautions etc. would need to be taken.*

Finally, there may be situations where an applicant would wish to convert an existing building outside the settlement limits to serve as a residential care home. In terms of the Policies set out in an earlier chapter and later in this Chapter,[65] this would be an acceptable use. However in terms of the requirements of this Policy, that there is reasonable proximity to local services and that the application site should be part of a residential area, such applications would not be acceptable. In view of

- the Policy on farm diversification,[66]
- the need to allow maximum possible scope for the reuse of vacant rural buildings and
- the exceptional quality of environment that can be provided for retired people in a rural setting

applications for the conversion of buildings in the countryside to residential care home use will be taken as exceptions, with parts (i) and (ii) of the Policy being waived, so long as the quality of environment provided is considered to outweigh the importance of these criteria and so long as other criteria are met.

ADAPTATIONS AND OTHER SPECIALISED NEEDS

The needs of disabled people and the long term sick have been touched upon above.[67] These groups often generate accommodation needs which are specific to individuals - requiring the construction of specialised dwellings or adaptations of existing units within the housing stock. Examples include the addition of extensions to allow the accommodation of dialysis machines or the obvious one of adding a ramped access to a raised front door.

These kinds of alterations can cause quite marked changes to the external appearance of buildings and need to be handled within general policies on house extensions - see section 3.6 below. However the call for such additions and adaptations is certain to increase as the Plan period progresses.

One reason for this is the Community Care reforms, which came into effect in 1990. These aim to allow certain groups who would previously been hospitalised on a long term basis, to return to live within the general community. This includes mentally and physically handicapped persons and those recovering from a mental illness. The Local Housing Authority is now liaising with the Social Services and Health Authorities in order to ensure a range of flexible responses to the accommodation and care needs of individuals within these groups.[68]

Policy H17 sets out the planning policy for accommodating these groups.

H17 (i) refers to specialised housing schemes. These will be accommodated, as a general rule, within areas intended for general or affordable housing, as long as the units created correspond to the definition of a dwellinghe Use Classes Order defines this, under Class C3, as six or less residents, unless living together as a family. and as long as the size of site, its proposed layout etc. is appropriate to the particular requirements of the special needs residents.

H17 (ii) refers to the extension or addition to a dwellinghouse in order to incorporate the needs of individuals or groups of people falling into the categories mentioned above. Although the policy on house extensions will be applied, the most flexible possible approach will be taken in such cases, taking account of the possibility that an existing occupant of a dwelling may become ill, so requiring special accommodation, and prefer that an adaptation to their existing dwelling be made, rather than to go through the upheaval of moving house. It may be that a temporary building will be required urgently to accommodate specialised medical equipment, the placing of which would require planning permission. Such cases will be treated individually and sympathetically although planning permission would be granted on a temporary basis only.

H17 (iii) looks at proposals for ramps up to front doors. In order to be practical, these often have to protrude forward of the front of a dwelling and thus require a planning application to be submitted. Since they can fundamentally change the external appearance of a residential building, they need to be carefully designed. However it should be possible to accommodate them in the vast majority of cases. The possible exceptions would occur where the building was Listed or in a Conservation Area.[69]

3.4.3 Low Density (Executive) Housing

"Low Density (Executive)" Housing is is considered to be of strategic importance at County level although the County Council refers to it as "high quality housing". The County Council considers that it provides a key to attracting and maintaining the management and professional personnel necessary to secure the development and revitalisation of the regional economy.

64 *See also Policy M2.*
65 *See Policies G8 to G10 in Chapter 2 and H24 and H25 in this Chapter.*
66 *See Policy E8 in Chapter 1.*
67 *See Footnote on previous double page for an assessment of the needs of these individual groups.*
68 *The Children's Act has added further to the burden of responsibility on the Housing Authority.*
69 *See Chapter 1, Policies E13 and E15.*

Policy **H 16** — *RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES*

Planning applications for residential care homes, will be granted subject to other Policies in this Local Plan and site specific considerations, but, unless there are exceptional circumstances, including those at the end of this Policy, will be refused if any of the following apply:

i The proposal is considered to be unacceptably removed from essential local services, which is taken to include situations where a busy road would have to be crossed in order to reach them, with particularly close scrutiny being given to the proposed location in relation to existing health care, public transport, shopping and post office facilities;

ii The proposal is not part of a predominantly residential area and/or is close to uses which are considered to detract from the amenity of residents;

iii The number or configuration of bedrooms and other habitable rooms within the building is considered to be unsatisfactory, including situations where:

a windows of habitable rooms face blank walls less than 14 metres away;

b windows of habitable rooms facing eachother are less than 21 metres apart;

iv Vehicular access arrangements, in terms of the positioning of access driveways and the positioning and number of parking spaces are considered to be inadequate or likely to cause disturbance, applying also the car parking standards set out at Appendix XVII.

In addition, access arrangements for people in wheelchairs and others with limited mobility on foot will be assessed, applying the requirements of the British Institutions Code of Practice: "Access for the Disabled to Buildings"; as a result, modifications may be sought or appropriate conditions applied.

Planning permission may be granted even if (i) and (ii) above are not complied with, if the application involves the conversion of an existing building in a countryside area and:

- **the proposal meets all relevant criteria in Policies G8 to G10;**
- **it is considered that the advantages, in terms of the quality of residential environment so provided, would outweigh the disadvantages, in terms of the removal from local services and other residential properties.**

In such circumstances, the proximity to public transport routes will be given additional weight.

The Northumberland County Structure Plan defines "high quality housing" as follows:

> "Such development should be of a high quality of design which should be distinguishable from that of general housing estates. They should be in a high quality landscaped setting and sites should allow for the construction of large dwellings, in their own grounds, at a low density."

The necessity for a separate allocation within Blyth Valley has been given consideration. So far, Blyth Valley has not proved to be an attraction for this type of housing project. While there have been examples of individually designed houses, (e.g. in self-build developments), the densities have been well above those associated with the sort of housing scheme referred to in the Structure Plan - i.e. the plot of 0.1 hectare or more - typical of places such as Darras Hall.[70]

70 *Furthermore, where it has been sought to secure low density construction on sites which offer a better than average landscaped setting, the building industry has chosen to default to higher densities, presumably based upon their assessment of the local housing market.*

In spite of this, it is acknowledged that the attraction of the area for developers catering for the upper tiers of the housing market and the chances of securing some genuine "executive housing" within Blyth Valley during the forthcoming Plan period are likely to be higher than has previously been the case. Reasons include:

- the improvements to the environment of the Plan area that have taken place over the years;
- the exhaustion of some sources of land supply for high quality housing outside Blyth Valley;
- the opening up, during the Plan period, of the South-West Sector of Cramlington which both offers a mature landscape setting and is relatively close to Newcastle to the benefit of the potential commuter market.

There is no simple way of ensuring that high quality housing is built during the Plan period. The closest surrogate is to define, as closely as possible, a density and house type that corresponds with what is being sought. Accordingly, a density range of five to fifteen dwellings per hectare has been defined. Traditionally, "executive" housing has been associated with the four (plus) bedroom detached dwellings. This will continue to be taken as the definition, with the exception that it should be acknowledged that some dwellings within a particular low density development could be more modest - so long as the density definition is retained.

Policy H18 takes the above definition and allows for the accommodation of low density (executive) housing in any location so long as there is no conflict with other policies and the site can be served by public transport. In particular, it looks to the South West Cramlington Community Development Area to provide for this purpose. Certain blocks or linear sections of land within the defined housing areas, allocated in Policy H7 above, are earmarked for low density housing, with detailed guidance given more detailed reference in the chapter on the South-West Sector Community Development Area, (Chapter 11).

3.4.4 **Accommodation for Gypsies**

No site has been specifically identified for the accommodation of Gypsies. However, given that there is a possibility that the need for such accommodation will arise during the Plan period, it is necessary to set out some criteria which will assist the identification of a suitable site.

Such a site, by its nature, can be seen as introducing a new small settlement from a physical point of view; and as a new or additional community, from a functional point of view. In addition, it has temporary and transient characteristics, which mean that the planning issues that need to be addressed are somewhat different from those that are considered for the more frequently encountered forms of residential development. Therefore the general development control policy in Chapter 2, (Policy G12), while forming a starting point for the assessment of any site, needs to be supplemented by additional criteria. This is the purpose of **Policy H19**.

The caravan policy in the later chapter on Leisure and Visitor Activities rules out coastal and other exposed, countryside locations for caravans **H19 (i)** applies this to Gypsy accommodation too.

As stated above, the introduction of a Gypsy site is effectively superimposing an additional community onto the existing structure. Full family units will be involved. **H19 (ii)** therefore makes it a priority that school and medical facilities should be easily accessible from any site, although, clearly, the availability of other community facilities will also be vital. Public transport will play its part in this. Consultation with relevant authorities will be part of the process.

As it is likely that such a site would be peripheral to built up areas, the chances are that the location would be adjacent to agricultural land. **H19 (iii)** will be implemented by negotiating with farming interests to minimise any potential conflict with existing agricultural operations.[71] There is also a likelihood that gypsy activity will impinge directly on wildlife-rich habitats such as woods and meadows and other unmanaged wild areas.

Sites accessed only via narrow country lanes or with poor access from a main road will be unsuitable. **H19 (iv)** takes this into account.

Returning to community related considerations, **H19 (v)** seeks to avoid a situation in which any introduced community, such as this, would overshadow an existing community in terms of its day-to-day functioning. So, the situation of a Gypsy site, with the potential to accommodate a large number of travelling homes, will be avoided in locations adjacent to the smaller villages with their limited services.

Finally, **H19 (vi)** ensures that any site can be adequately serviced.

71 *See also Chapter 1, Section 1.4.*

Policy ***H 17*** — *ADAPTATIONS AND OTHER SPECIALISED NEEDS*

The accommodation needs of disabled people, those with long term sickness, those returning to the general community, following an extended period in a healthcare institution, and other similar groups will be met so far as is possible through planning decisions by:

i Granting permission for schemes involving the construction of specialised dwellings within Class C3 of the Use Classes Order;

ii Taking a flexible approach to proposals for the adaptation of or extension to dwellings where the occupants are from the aforementioned groups or are entering long term sickness or becoming disabled applying, as appropriate Policy H22 on house extensions and Policy E15 on Conservation Areas;

iii Granting planning permission for ramped access to the front doors of dwellinghouses or other residential units, where it can be physically accommodated, safely, unless the building concerned is a Listed Building or in a Conservation Area, (in which case each such application will be assessed against the appropriate policies) or is otherwise considered to have an unacceptably detrimental effect on the external appearance of the building.

Policy ***H 18*** — *LOW DENSITY (EXECUTIVE) HOUSING*

Proposals for low density housing, which will normally be taken as:

- **having a density of five to fifteen dwellings per hectare;**
- **consisting of detached houses with a high proportion having at least four bedrooms,**

will be granted permission within the areas allocated for housing purposes in Policies H7, H10 and H13, or otherwise suitable for housing, applying policies H3 or H4, and capable of being served by public transport, providing that they do not conflict with any other proposal or policy on the form or density of development of the site concerned.

Parts of the land allocated for housing development within South-West Cramlington in Policy H7 (iii) will be set aside for low density housing in accordance with Proposal SW2.

3.5 Housing in Combination with Other Uses or Assisting Another Objective

This section looks at situations where the proposal of housing is somehow dependent on some other land use either:

- through being included in **mixed development** areas; or
- by being inserted **adjacent to a local (shopping) facility** to assist its environmental enhancement; or
- by **replacing another use**.

Policy H20 formalises these additional ways in which the total supply of housing can be augmented.

MIXED DEVELOPMENT

H20 (i), identifies sites where housing will be granted permission in combination with a specified other use or uses.

Various mixed use developments are proposed in this Local Plan, with the aim of finding solutions to local problems, through the creation of, sometimes unique, development opportunities. Some of these will combine housing with other proposed uses.

Crofton Mill (part)

The first such area that involves housing, is Crofton Mill, (the subject of Chapter 17). In this case, it is intended to replace dereliction and industrial use, within the residential heart of Blyth, with more compatible residential development. However, blanket residential use is considered undesirable. It would be better if the current role of Crofton Mill as a base for local employment were to be given recognition and some compatible work activity use encouraged to locate in the area.

Land will be released for housing development in combination with workshop, office or related uses.

The basic principles are set out in Proposal CM2 within Chapter 17. Housing development will only be permitted in association with some sort of work activity development.

Blyth Links Area - Central Area

Another mixed use area involving housing, although just as one alternative, is at Blyth Links, (the subject of Chapter 18). Here, some housing development may be permitted in association with leisure related development within a defined central area.[72]

Fifteenth Avenue Shopping Centre

Another area specifically proposed for mixed uses involving housing is actually a redevelopment site, where there is an existing but very run down local shopping facility. It is proposed that the whole site be redeveloped for a combination of housing and shops. Details of this approach are explained in Chapter 4.[73]

Part of Wheatridge Park, Seaton Delaval

The road frontage land at Seaton Delaval, Wheatridge Park, may come forward for housing in whole or in part. This is explained further in Chapter 15.

WITHIN WINDFALL SITES

There may be other instances where a housing proposal could legitimately include a minor element of some other use. **H20 (ii)** accepts that windfall housing sites may be replacing work activity or some other valuable land use which could be reinstated in part within the development area, so long as full account is taken of the newly created residential status of the area.

SMALL ALLOCATIONS ADJOINING LOCAL SHOPPING CENTRES IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT

H20 (iii) continues the theme of local shopping centres. It allocates, for housing, land adjacent to three other local centres. It will be sought, through the building of housing, to achieve some improvement to the environment of the adjacent centres.[74] Once again, it should be stressed that the capacity figures alongside the Policy, taken from Appendix II, are for illustrative purposes only.

HOUSING INSTEAD OF ANOTHER PROPOSED USE

Element 4 in the analysis of housing land supply, (earlier in this chapter), included a third way in which house building can be dependent on some other land use. This is the situation where it becomes clear, during the course of the Plan period, that a proposed land use on a particular site is impracticable or is unlikely to be implemented as a result of changed circumstances. It may be the case that the land in question is becoming blighted as a result of not being developed. In these circumstances it may be advantageous for the site to be developed for housing. No such sites are proposed in this Plan, although, some of the area specific chapters point to situations where this may occur.

H20 (iv) is a general statement on this topic. The criteria on windfall sites will be applied if it is considered appropriate to allow any housing.

72 *In this case, housing will be allowed to a limited extent if it would enable a facility, which is thought desirable under the proposals, to become financially viable. See Chapter 18.*

73 *See Policy C17.*

74 *This aim is set out in Policy C17 (iii), which also includes two other shopping centres which could benefit from improvement in this way but where the adjoining housing sites already have planning permission.*

Policy ***H 19*** — *ACCOMMODATION FOR GYPSIES*

Where there is an application to provide a site for gypsies within the Plan area, it will be assessed against criteria in Policy G12 but, in particular, it will be ensured that the proposed site:

i **Falls within the provisions of Policy L1 (iii) on caravans;**

ii **Is conveniently located for schools, medical facilities, public transport and other local services;**

iii **Will have no harmful effect on local agriculture and important wildlife sites;**

iv **Will not have a major impact on the road network;**

v **Will not be of such a size as to dominate or have an adverse impact on any existing community;**

vi **Can be provided satisfactorily with water supply, sewerage and refuse disposal.**

Policy ***H 20*** — *HOUSING IN COMBINATION WITH OTHER USES ETC.*

Housing development will be encouraged or permitted in addition to land allocations, at Policies H7, 10, 13, and in addition to infill and windfall sites (Policies H4 and H3 respectively), in the following ways:

i **Housing use will be permitted as part of mixed / alternative development proposals as follows:**

LOCATION	PROPOSAL
Land at Crofton Mill	Mixed uses in accordance with Proposal CM2 & in line with Policy W8 & one alternative use on site of Proposal CM3 (b)
Land including the existing shopping centre at Fifteenth Avenue, Blyth	Mixed Retail and Housing use in line with Policy C17 (iii)
Land at the Caravan Site in the vicinity of Blyth Links	Mixed Leisure and Housing Use, as one of various alternative proposals, in accordance with Proposal BL4;
Land at Road Frontage, Wheatridge Park, Seaton Delaval	Housing and / or continued recreational and related uses, in accordance with Proposal SD1 (c)

ii **By permitting a small element of appropriate non-residential use within allocated or windfall housing sites, subject to other Policies in this Plan and local amenity considerations, where work activity would be displaced or replaced by the residential use or where the additional use would contribute positively to another objective in this Plan.**

iii **Land is allocated for housing with a view to achieving improvements to local shopping centres in line with Policy C17 (iii) at these locations, as indicated on the Proposals Map:**

REF.	LOCATION	Estimated Capacity
a	Swaledale Avenue, Cowpen, Blyth;	6
b	Druridge Drive, Newsham Farm, Blyth;	6
c	Dewley Place, Hall Close Grange, Cramlington;	10

iv **Where the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that another proposed use is unlikely to be implemented for practical reasons or because of changed circumstances, then housing may be permitted on all or part of the land, particularly if it is considered that a net environmental loss would be experienced by leaving the land undeveloped over an extended period; the criteria in Policy H3 will be applied.**

3.6 THE ENVIRONMENT OF HOUSING AREAS

This chapter has, so far, set out policies on the supply of housing, based upon examinations of need and demand.

The other main task of the planning system, in relation to housing, is to plan and control the environment of housing areas to the maximum benefit of residents.

The aim will be to achieve this by:

- In relation to **new** development:
  - Ensuring adequate **facilities, safeguards and other measures**;
  - Applying various principles in relation to the **layout** and **design**;

- In relation to **existing** housing areas:
  - Applying various **controls**;
  - Seeking **improvements**.

3.6.1 Facilities, Safeguards etc. in Relation to New Housing Development

Part of the role of the Planning Authority in relation to new housing development is to make sure that applicants provide all facilities, features and safeguards necessary for the development to go ahead. In order to decide what is or is not necessary, it is vital that each scheme is looked at in the context of wider assessments on levels of provision. Such assessments are contained in the relevant chapters elsewhere in this Written Statement. The main ones relate to levels of community provision, the landscape, nature conservation and the movement of people.[75]

In addition, however, site specific factors must be taken into account at all times and, in certain cases, will override the more general approach.

The exact list of measures sought in relation to a given site will depend on the scale and nature of the proposal and site specific factors. Their achievement will largely depend on the successful use of planning conditions and/or Planning Obligations. Panel H-P1 lists how other Policies will be used to achieve a full range of facilities and safeguards within housing developments.

COMMUNITY PROVISION IN NEW HOUSING AREAS

Most housing developments will be too small-scale for certain types of community facility to form an integral part of the development. Nevertheless, the policy on Planning Obligations and commuted payments in the General Development Chapter allow for justifiable provision to be made on a partial and/or off-site basis.[76]

The safeguarding of particular sites may be involved in certain instances.

ENVIRONMENTAL MEASURES IN NEW HOUSING AREAS

Most house building within the Plan area occurs (and will continue to take place) on formerly open land. This implies that there will be a net environmental loss - at least visually. In overall terms, however, there need not always be a net environmental loss.

The aim will be to minimise any environmental problems created by the development of housing by requiring the retention of as much as possible of the existing tree and shrub cover and to enhance this by making the approval of detailed consent dependent on the provision of a good standard of introduced landscaping.[77]

The Work Activity chapter includes measures to minimise the conflict between work activities and sensitive types of development, of which housing is the main one.[78] Other forms of potentially intrusive activity may also lie alongside proposed housing development sites. The most obvious and frequently occurring example of this phenomenon is the existence of a road proposal (main or estate distributor) alongside a housing area. In such instances, a buffer zone of planting may be required, in line with the landscape strategy.[79]

In most cases, landscaping schemes will necessitate the retention of small strips or pockets of land outside gardens.[80] These should not be allowed to form backland areas of public open space but, instead, should be heavily planted to make them inaccessible. On the

75 *See Chapter 4, Chapter 1, (sections 1.3 and 1.2), and Chapter 7 respectively.*

76 *See also the Introduction to the Community Facilities Chapter, (Section 4.1).*

77 *Policy E6, (see Chapter 1, Sub-section 1.3.2), seeks to ensure that the submission of landscaping schemes occurs at the same time as detailed planning applications. It also refers to the need for Planning Agreements to be signed to secure the proper implementation of landscaping schemes.*

78 *See Policy W1*

79 *See Chapter 1, Section 1.3.*

80 *It is not normally possible to incorporate landscape schemes within the curtilage of new dwellinghouses. This is because it can quickly lead to problems regarding retention and maintenance of the landscaping. Any conditions and covenants seeking to ensure their retention are likely, in practice, to be difficult to enforce.*

whole, areas of accessible open space should be in large, manageable areas and not be on backland sites.

In cases where a housing development is larger, possibly the subject of different land ownerships and gradual development by different builders, then a separate Agreement on structure planting between individual housing areas will be required.

The protection of water courses from possible adverse effects of run-off from sites will also be a consideration. The retention and/or replacement and/or enhancement of features of nature conservation interest will be a requirement in appropriate cases. Details of possible measures are given in the Environmental Protection chapter but will include the retention and enhancement of hedgerows for their wildlife corridor potential and the preservation or relocation of ponded areas.

Since housing development consumes land on edge of town greenfield sites, it is important to ensure that safeguards are taken to protect the interests of agriculture. A further concern is archaeology. There are sections on each of these in Chapter 1.

MOVEMENT AND ACCESS PROVISION IN NEW HOUSING AREAS

The final area of provision which is sought in housing areas relates to the movement of people within and through those areas.

Many policies in the Movement chapter cover these aspects. Essentially, within any residential area the priority will be for the safe movement of residents and visitors within that area on foot. This prioritisation includes the needs of children, playing in the street, being pushed in prams etc. It also, by implication, allows for the movement of people in wheelchairs. Secondary to this but also a requirement, will be sufficient allowance for vehicular access for residents plus visitor parking.

Developers of new housing areas will be expected to introduce layouts and all of the features necessary, (in the opinion of the Local Planning and Highways Authorities), to meet these requirements. This will include a suitable configuration of street, pavement and shared surface areas, one of the aims of this being traffic calming.[81] Other features that will be required of developers, if appropriate, will include other traffic calming measures, dropped curbs, safe footpath links between estates and visitors' parking bays.

Also part of the general approach of the Movement chapter is the promotion of bus and cycle use. Within larger housing developments, features assisting these modes of transport will be an additional provision sought. These larger areas will also be expected to include the provision of access roads and visitor parking to serve the various estates and housing plots within them.

3.6.2 Design and Layout Principles for New Housing Areas

The application of certain principles of design and layout will also be required in all new housing schemes and, in some cases, in relation to proposals for individual dwellings. **Policy H21** covers these.

HOUSING IN RELATION TO MAIN ROADS

H21 (i) deals with the situation where new housing abuts a main road. Many older residential properties have their entrances allowing direct vehicular access from main roads. Nowadays, standards imposed by the Highway Authority do not permit this or at least seek to avoid it in all but the most exceptional circumstances. This means that it is often the rear elevations of houses that face main and distributor roads. This can mean that estates present a blank face (of back garden fences etc.) to the main thoroughfares through a town. Layouts will therefore be planned from the outset or assessed so as to minimise any visual adverse effects of the absence of direct access from main and distributor roads.[82]

ROAD LAYOUTS WITHIN NEW HOUSING AREAS

H21 (ii) states the factors that will need to be balanced when assessing the proposed layout of routes within new housing estates which are large enough to require their own internal route system. Such a system will include:

- vehicle access routes, where a decision will be required on the level, if any of through traffic;[83]
- pedestrian routes which, as well as serving the fronts of houses, may also be required to provide side or rear access or link different parts of the area;[84]
- the interface between these two forms of access; there may be a degree of conflict between the two, which raises issues such as the positioning of crossing points and the use of shared surfaces.[85]

In assessing the route pattern within and between housing estates, issues of accessibility need to be balanced against considerations of road safety, privacy, security and crime prevention, (see part iii of this Policy), as well as visual considerations.

81 *Layout principles for housing are the subject of the next policy. Traffic calming, pedestrian safety etc. form part of the rationale of the layout principles.*

82 *It may be sought that houses face onto these roads with their access provided from the rear or via a secondary front road (taking the form of a shared surface). However, depending on the shape and situation of the site, this will not always be the best solution.*

83 *At present, culs-de-sac are generally accepted as the best solution for new residential areas. This arrangement typically features a single access point off the main road system onto a network of roads leading to culs-de-sac, rather than including through routes between main roads. This form of development has several advantages including improved road safety, (due to the exclusion of extraneous road traffic), additional privacy, (due to the containment of each individual development), and the discouragement of crime, (through the minimisation of through routes - i.e. for non-residents or as "get away routes"). It could be that, during the course of the Plan period, other types of layout come to be accepted as preferable.*

CRIME PREVENTION

H21 (iii) is a specific statement of intent on crime prevention. It has already been referred to above in relation to road layouts. However a whole range of measures can be taken in planning new housing areas in order to keep the potential for crime to a minimum.

Routes within New Housing Areas

The arrangement of routes through the area will be particularly important. This does not just refer to vehicle movements but also to pedestrian routes.[86]

Overlooking within New Housing Areas

Another important principle in the endeavour to minimise crime is that of overlooking. Generally speaking, places where people are likely to congregate should be overlooked from houses in the area.[87] The best solutions from landscaping[88] or energy conservation[89] points of view may conflict with this particular principle and a balance will need to be struck.

Side / Rear Access within New Housing Areas

Generally, the need for residents to have side or rear access to dwellings and the advantages, from a crime prevention point of view, of minimising opportunities for strangers to pass along the side / rear of dwellings, will need to be carefully balanced in planning the layouts of areas.

Potential for Trespass onto Agricultural Land

Trespass onto agricultural land is regarded as a major problem by farming interests operating in areas that abut built-up residential areas. Therefore, where a new housing estate adjoins existing agricultural land, it will be sought, in determining the layout, to minimise the opportunity for trespass onto the land.[90]

ENERGY CONSERVATION IN THE DESIGN OF NEW HOUSING AREAS

The need for energy conservation is one of the main aims behind the full array of policies in this Local Plan. The design of new housing provides one of the principal opportunities for putting this aim into practice in a direct way.

The method of energy conservation in house design which most readily comes to mind is the insulation of dwellings against heat loss. This, however, is largely outside planning control and, on its own, cannot be made the norm through any planning policy.

On the other hand, there are many ways in which planning can promote energy conservation, not just by minimising the loss of heat energy from houses but also by maximising opportunities for energy gain. The careful planning of the layout of new housing areas can go a long way towards achieving the possible energy savings that are possible in any given area. Additionally, planning conditions can be employed to ensure that certain energy saving (or gaining) features are included in the design of the dwellings themselves.

H21 (iv) makes clear the intent that energy efficiency and energy conservation considerations will be taken into account when assessing all the different planning aspects of a housing development proposal.

The South-West Cramlington Community Development Area will act as a pilot area for the testing out of a full array of energy conservation controls in relation to new housing. The Chapter on that area contains a comprehensive set of measures.[91] These relate to the orientation of and relationship between the buildings within the area and also take account of the form of the existing and proposed landscape. They will be applied there as rigidly as possible, based upon agreement with developers, as the area is opened up for development. It will then be possible to assess whether a strong set of controls can be reasonably applied as a matter of course throughout the Plan area. It may be that, as the Plan period progresses, the full set of criteria can be applied selectively to other housing areas.

84 *For example, in planning pedestrian shortcuts between culs-de-sac, while providing for the convenient movement of residents within their own area, it is necessary to prevent paths from being too narrow, tortuous or concealed from general view, especially since they are likely to run between houses. Otherwise they may provide concealment for burglars entering or leaving properties.*

85 *These are areas of road which are shared between traffic and pedestrians. They are widely used at present as a traffic calming measure. Standards set out by the Highways Authority allow for a certain number of dwellings at the end of a cul-de-sac to be accessed by means of shared surfaces. With the correct use of surface materials, it can be made obvious that within these areas, priority should be given to pedestrians, cyclists, children playing etc. See also Section 7.5.3 on Traffic Calming, within the Movement Chapter and Section 4.3.3 on Children's Playing Space within the Community Facilities Chapter. As with culs de sac, it may be that, during the course of the Plan period, the level of use of shared surfaces may reduce in favour of some other solution.*

86 *See earlier footnote on pedestrian short cuts between culs-de-sac.*

87 *It can also be advantageous if the comings and goings from dwellings can be viewed from other dwellings, although, of course, there is a need to balance this with the desire for privacy to be maintained.*

88 *See Policy E6 (ii & iii).*

89 *See Part (iv) of this Policy*

90 *This could be achieved by avoiding roads and footpaths abutting the land or through a requirement for suitable fencing or buffer planting as a condition.*

91 *See Chapter 11, Policy SW1.*

Panel H-T1: Facilities, Safeguards and other Measures to be Included, as Necessary, in Association with the Granting of Planning Permission for New Housing Development

(N.B. Implementation at the required time will be ensured either through the imposition of planning conditions or by seeking Planning Agreements to be entered into prior to the granting of planning permission in line with Policy G11. The requirement (if any) for facilities of different types will be related to the scale of the proposed development and individual proposals. Site specific factors will be given due consideration in deciding the measures to be taken).

Community facilities will be provided as relevant, in whole or in part, as follows:

	IN LINE WITH POLICIES:
Outdoor playing space for sport	*C2 (i),(ii),(iii) & (vi)*
Children's playing space	*C3 (i), C4 (i) & (ii), C5 (i)*
General public open space / parkland provision	*C7 (i)*
Indoor sport, in relation to specified developments only	*C9 (ii)*
Educational facilities, in relation to specified developments only	*C10 (ii)*
Local shopping facilities, in relation to specified developments only	*C17 (v)*
Local healthcare facilities, in relation to specified developments only	*C18 (iv)*
Cultural facilities	*C19 (i) & (ii)*

Any environmental loss will be minimised and opportunities for positive environmental measures will be take wherever possible, including:

	IN LINE WITH POLICY
The protection of existing tree and shrub cover	*E5 (vi)*
The provision of high standards of introduced landscaping, including:	*E6 (ii & iii)*
• *where appropriate, "buffer zones" against sources of pollution arising from transport routes or industrial areas*	
• *the avoidance of small, left-over pieces of open space without tree or shrub cover*	
• *in larger housing areas, structure planting as appropriate*	
The protection of the best and most versatile agricultural land	*E7*
The protection of the water environment	*E9 (i)*
The protection and enhancement of nature conservation interest	*E2 (i to iv)*
The protection of archaeological interest	*E12*

Access and general movement within housing areas will be made as safe and convenient as possible for the residents through:

	IN LINE WITH POLICY
The provision of access links and features for pedestrians, people in wheelchairs, push chairs and prams	*M2 (i & ii) & M3 (i & v)*
The provision of cycle links serving certain housing developments as appropriate	*M2 (ii)*
Bus facilities in larger developments	*M5 (iii)*
Traffic calming measures which will include the application of layout principles set out below	*M6 & H21*
Visitor parking as required by adopted standards	*M8*
Access roads in relation to specified developments	*M9*

In the meantime, where it is considered that a layout unduly promotes energy loss or does not appear to make any concessions, (through orientation, configuration etc.), towards promoting energy gain, then this may be quoted as one reason behind the refusing an application, (although, in practice, it will probably be a topic within negotiations on a modified layout with the applicant).

AMENITY CONSIDERATIONS IN NEW HOUSING AREAS

H21 (v) recognises that a range of considerations not covered in any of the above. When considering layouts of housing areas, a number of standards are applied relating to the spacing of dwellings, with a view to maximising privacy, daylight to houses etc. Since these standards are strictly applied, it is not necessary to have a policy on them. On the other hand, there are related, but qualitative, decisions which need to be taken. It may be that all standards of spacing, daylighting etc. are being met but that the specific characteristics of the proposed layout of a group of properties is such that amenity could be adversely affected. For instance a future extension of a particular property may be impossible without taking the spacing below acceptable standards. Allowances therefore have to be made and, in certain cases, minimum standards have to be exceeded for reasons of the future amenity of the residents. These considerations will take account of criteria applied in Policy H22 below, (relating to existing housing areas).

SPECIAL DESIGN SITES

H21 (vi) concentrates on "special design sites". These are identified in north-east Cramlington and South Beach.[92] Others are likely to be identified as the Plan period progresses, especially within the larger, longer term housing allocations. They will typically be relatively small sites at prominent locations within extensive areas of otherwise relatively uniform housing. The main test in relation to these sites, will be that their design must be sufficiently different from that of surrounding area to add variety at (usually) prominent locations, taking account of site specific factors and any design guidance produced. Layout, density, building heights, building materials and fenestration could all be subjects on which negotiations with builders would be appropriate.

Self-Build Housing

There has been considerable interest, in recent years, in self-build housing development.[93] One way in which this demand can be catered for, while also achieving some variation within housing areas of relative uniformity, is generally to favour self-build development as a way of introducing additional design variety at key locations.[94]

3.6.3 Controls to be Applied in Existing Housing Areas

Many controls are applied to proposals which affect existing housing areas. Some are not specific to housing, (such as the controls applied to satellite dish aerials.[95]) Others are area specific - most notably controls applied within Conservation Areas.[96]

The more general controls that need to be applied in residential areas relate to:

- The building of new houses or house extensions within existing housing areas; and
- The demolition of existing dwellings.

These will now be dealt with in turn.

NEW HOUSES AND HOUSE EXTENSIONS IN EXISTING HOUSING AREAS

The most common form of planning application received by the Local Planning Authority consists of a proposal to extend a dwellinghouse. The extension of an existing property provides residents with an alternative to moving house as a way of increasing their accommodation space.[97]

A dwellinghouse can be extended by a certain amount, as "permitted development" - i.e. without the need for an application for planning permission.[98] Extensions beyond these limits are subject to an application. Once a dwelling has been extended to the limit of its permitted development rights, any proposal for its further extension must be given very careful consideration. This is partly because housing areas are designed to a certain density and, were a large proportion of dwellings in a particular locality to be extended substantially beyond that which would be permitted in any case under the permitted development rights, the cumulative effect would be one of overdevelopment. The other main reason for limiting the degree to which houses can be added to, concerns

92 *See Policy H7 and Chapter 10 and Chapter 13.*

93 *This has already been mentioned in relation to affordable housing - see Section 3.4 above.*

94 *Self-build schemes might involve a number of individuals developing their own plots, or their may be a pooling of resources, in terms of building skills and finances, with the formation of self-build associations. Either way, (and in spite of the fact that development briefs are normally a requirement) schemes of considerable variety of design can be the end result.*

95 *See Policy E27 in Chapter 1.*

96 *See Policy E15 in Chapter 1.*

97 *The volume of planning applications for house extensions does not show the cyclical variation of new build housing because, during a recession, there may be a greater inclination for those who are "upwardly mobile" within the housing market to remain - and possibly expand - in situ rather than move to a larger property.*

98 *The Town and Country Planning Act General Development Order 1988, allows a dwellinghouse to be extended by up to seventy cubic metres in the case of detached and semi-detached dwellings and fifty cubic metres in the case of terraced houses; provided that these would not be closer to a road or public footpath than part of the original dwelling closest to the road or footpath (unless the highway is more than 20 metres away from the proposed extension); that the extension would not exceed the height of the highest part of the original dwelling or be over 4 metres in height within 2 metres of a boundary of the property; and that the extension would not take up more than 50 per cent of the curtilage of the property (excluding the original dwellinghouse).*

Policy **H 21** *DESIGN AND LAYOUT PRINCIPLES FOR NEW HOUSING AREAS*

The following principles on design and layout will be applied when determining an application for new housing:

i **Where a proposal for a new housing scheme or an individual dwelling abuts a main, local distributor or estate distributor road, as defined on Map M-M1 on page 215 or proposed in this Local Plan, direct vehicular access to dwellings from those roads will normally be refused.**

ii **The proposed layout of vehicle and pedestrian access routes within any new proposed housing area, including:**

- **the degree of pedestrian vehicle separation**
- **the pattern of vehicular through routes and culs de sac**
- **the patterns of pedestrian and cycle routes**

will be assessed and development will only be granted permission if insufficient account has been taken of:

a **the various requirements of road safety, security and crime prevention;**

b **accessibility, including access for disabled people;**

c **the criteria on visual appearance and character, set out in Policy E17;**

iii **Layouts will be considered with a view to crime prevention, through close consultation with the Police Authority and, in particular, by:**

a **taking into account the arrangements of routes through the area;**

b **endeavouring to maximise the degree to which publicly accessible open space areas are overlooked, taking into account other policies and proposals, (particularly on landscaping and energy conservation);**

c **where possible, endeavouring to minimise the occurrence of secluded public footpaths or other publicly accessible areas along the sides or rear of dwellings;**

d **taking account of the need to protect nearby agricultural land from unauthorised access;**

iv **Energy efficiency and energy conservation considerations will be taken into account when determining applications for new housing development, as follows:**

a **where it is the opinion of the Local Planning Authority that the layout would encourage an excessive net energy loss and/or take insufficient account of opportunities for energy gain, then this may be used as a reason for refusing detailed planning permission;**

b **within South-West Cramlington Community Development Area, more precise criteria will be applied on energy efficiency and energy conservation matters, as set out at Policy SW1;**

v **The overall amenity for potential residents will be taken into account when considering the layout of proposed housing areas;**

vi **In locations identified on the Proposals Map as Special Design Sites, the Local Planning Authority will seek developments which are distinct from surrounding housing areas. Securing agreement on the form of design will be dependent on negotiations with developers on matters such as layout, density, building heights, materials and fenestration.**

the relationship between neighbouring properties. Most housing layouts are such that, extension of a dwelling beyond a certain point can have an adverse effect on neighbouring properties.

The Local Planning Authority has a development control policy on extensions to dwellinghouses. The intention is to give residents some guidance as to what may or may not be permitted, while not being too prescriptive. The policy is based on general principles which evolved over a number of years, in dealing with such applications and which were generally accepted by the public as fair and reasonable. Unless carefully planned, the relationship between existing dwellings and new housing can cause problems. The new housing within an existing housing area can range from a single dwelling on an infill site to a whole estate of new houses abutting existing dwellings.

Another type of proposal, which needs to be handled in a similar way to house extensions, is the situation where an entirely new dwelling is being built alongside existing houses. This could involve:

- the building of a new estate along the edge of an existing estate; or
- the infilling of a "gap site"; or
- the subdivision of the garden area of an existing house.

Where an area of housing is entirely new, the incoming residents are, as it were, equals, insofar as they are all new to the area. As such, they can make a rational decision as to whether they like the orientation and position of their dwelling in relation to the others being built on the estate. However where existing residents are affected by the introduction of a new dwelling or a large house extension adjoining their property, they do not really have such a choice. It is therefore appropriate to give a degree of protection to existing residents against the effects of a nearby new building on their own property.

Policy H22 is partly intended to provide this protection, while allowing the flexibility necessary for the existing housing stock to continue to provide for an evolving community

Benchmarks in Assessing a Proposal to Extend a Dwellinghouse

There are certain benchmarks which any proposal to add to the built element of a housing area will normally need to pass before planning permission can be contemplated. These are set out in **H22 (i)**.[99]

- Firstly, a **minimum separation distance** is set out. Whether the proposal is for a new dwelling or the extension of an existing dwelling, it will not normally be permitted that the distance between the main (longer) elevations of any two dwellings, (which usually contain the living accommodation), fall below a minimum of 21 metres. This is considered to be the lowest acceptable separation in terms of visibility between living accommodation from the point of view of privacy. These guidelines will be applied most vigorously where a new house or an extension is more than one storey high. Of course, it may be that these separation distances will not have been observed in the original building of the estate, in which case, beyond permitted development levels, the options for extending a dwelling will be much more limited and new dwellings will probably not be a possibility.

- Secondly, account must be taken of **building lines**. In the case of front elevations, there needs to be a certain uniformity in recognition that the front elevation is the most prominent. Most dwellings do not have extensive areas to the front. The extension of an existing house or a new house in a gap site will not normally be granted if it projects more than 1.5 metres forward of any front building line that can be defined. Where a householder wishes to extend the property into the back garden area, it is less easy to apply a firm rule - although a figure of 3 metres maximum is often used. The reasons are the limited space available.[100]

- The third benchmark which will be observed in assessing such proposals is **the length of the front drive** (if any) of the property. Extensions of properties often involve the building of a garage, or the moving forward of the position of the garage, (e.g. to allow a utility room to be built behind). Where this is the case, it is important to avoid the situation where a motor vehicle, parked on the drive in front of the garage door, projects out over the public footpath in front of the house. For this reason the length of a driveway will not be permitted to fall below 5 metres. A similar danger exists if a new dwelling is being introduced on too tight a site.

- The fourth consideration which may constitute a reason for refusing permission for an extension to a dwellinghouse is that of "**overdevelopment**". An extension proposal may meet all the requirements regarding projection from the dwelling, separation distance etc., (as outlined above), but still constitute overdevelopment simply due to the overall loss of open space around the dwelling.[101]

99 *Normally, where a proposal for a house extension does not meet these, it will be endeavoured to persuade the applicant to modify the proposal prior to determination of the application.*

100 *The limitation for rear extensions is often 3 metres from the main elevation because the average rear garden of a property is in the region of 10 metres long and a reduction of this by 3 metres at ground level allows a reasonable sized extension to be built while retaining an adequately sized rear garden. Where a house has an exceptionally large or long back garden, an exception may be made.*

101 *An extreme example would be where a two storey, three metre back extension is proposed in addition to a side extension over the garage and the dwelling has an unusually small garden space.*

Policy ***H 22*** *ADDITIONS WITHIN EXISTING HOUSING AREAS*

In existing housing areas within the settlement limits defined at Policy G6. applications to extend or improve a dwellinghouse, or to introduce a new dwellinghouse will be assessed as follows:

i Unless site specific circumstances are such that additional allowances can be made, permission will not normally be granted if the proposed development would lead to:

- **a a reduction in the minimum spacing between main elevations of any two dwellings to below 21 metres, (with the main elevation normally defined as being one of the longer two elevations containing the main habitable rooms);**
- **b the projection of any dwelling to more than 1.5 metres beyond the main front elevation building line of existing properties;**
- **c a new garage or existing garage having a driveway of less than 5 metres in length;**
- **d a reduction in the amount of open space within the curtilage of any existing dwellinghouse or an increase in floor area to the extent that there would be overdevelopment of the site;**

ii The following may also be reasons for refusing planning permission:

- **a it is considered that the proposal would cause an unacceptable loss of light to habitable rooms of an existing neighbouring property;**
- **b it is considered that the proposal would cause an unacceptable loss of privacy to a neighbouring property, with the following types of extensions being particularly closely scrutinised:**
  - **conservatories and balconies at first floor level;**
  - **extensions which include windows at first floor level that face sideways towards the curtilage of a neighbouring property.**
- **c it is considered that the exact scale and location of the new development proposed, would lead to an unacceptable loss of amenity for current or future occupiers of an existing dwelling.**
- **d it is considered that the proposal is inconsistent with the existing character of surrounding properties, having regard to the provisions of Policy E17, with particularly close attention being paid to:**
  - **the relationship of the proposed roof profile to that of the property being extended or surrounding properties**
  - **the need to retain the traditional character of any older, terraced housing areas, if appropriate**
  - **consistency with Conservation Area policy, (Policy E15), if applicable;**

iii Extensions and alterations to dwellinghouses to accommodate the needs of a disabled person or to facilitate access for that person, which do not conform to (i) or (ii) above, will be treated as exceptional circumstances but may be granted if they are supported by a letter from an independent occupational therapist or other suitably qualified person, stating that it has been designed in consultation with them and that, in order to meet the needs of the disabled person, it needs to take the form proposed;

Where a proposed extension affects a dwellinghouse outside the settlement limits defined in Policy G6, it will be assessed against criteria in Policy G10 (i) in the first instance; if it meets criteria therein, then the proposal shall be assessed against criteria in this policy.

Other Considerations in Assessing a Proposal to Build a House or Extend a Dwellinghouse in an Existing Housing Area

H22 (ii) lists matters examined when determining planning applications for extensions to houses or new housing among existing. These are more qualitative aspects of the proposal which may not, alone, give sufficient grounds to refuse the application, but which may be quoted as reasons for refusal in certain cases.

- The first of these qualitative considerations is the amount of **daylight** reaching a room. There are no absolute standards on this and the test will be the change between the situation before and the situation after - i.e. has there been an unacceptable loss of amenity for a neighbouring resident?[102]

- The second qualitative assessment that will be made concerns **loss of privacy**. The more quantitative benchmarks explained earlier are, in part, designed to avert situations where there would be an unacceptable loss of privacy but there may be circumstances where, in spite of all separation and other criteria being met, this conclusion is still reached. The most common such circumstance is where an extension brings a dwelling closer to the dwelling next door at first floor level and includes some kind of sideways aspect over the curtilage of the adjoining property. First floor level conservatories are becoming increasingly popular and commonly have this problem.

- Thirdly, apart from loss of daylight or privacy, there may be other ways in which there would be a **loss of residential amenity** for a third party.[103]

- Fourthly, **the design** will influence the decision made. Principles, set out in the Environmental Protection Chapter, will be applied.[104]
  - One aspect of the design is the roof profile. It will be especially important in the case of a house extension that the roof lines and gradients match. Flat roofs will, as a rule, be avoided on two storey extensions, although there may be exceptions to this. On any two storey extension, there will be a relationship between the projection of the extension from the original dwellinghouse and the angle of slope of the roof that can be achieved or is satisfactory. In some cases, therefore, changes in one of these elements may be sought in order to bring the other within acceptable limits.
  - In areas of terraced housing, the permitted development rights for house extensions allow for a smaller increase than elsewhere. This recognises the more tight-knit and uniform nature of these areas which can easily be spoiled by out-of-scale development. Similarly, where an application for planning permission is required to extend a terraced house, it will be given particular scrutiny with a view to retaining the traditional character of the streetscape.
  - In Conservation Areas, additional controls exist.[105]

Relaxation of Criteria to meet a Special Need, (House Extensions)

H22 (iii) takes account of the reality that, in order to cater for the needs of a disabled person and enable them to remain in their own home, a specialised extension may be required which can only be accommodated by going beyond the normally applied standards.[106] Where the need can be demonstrated, (with a requirement that this should be in writing from an occupational therapist or other suitably qualified person), the application will be treated as an exception to the above (normally applied) criteria consideration.

H22 (iv) explains the approach that will be taken to applications to extend a dwellinghouse situated beyond the settlement limits. In the first instance, the proposal will be assessed against the specific policy on building in countryside areas. If it meets those satisfactorily, then the above criteria will be applied.

THE DEMOLITION OF DWELLINGHOUSES

Recent legislation has clarified that demolition of buildings counts as development but a direction of the Secretary of State[107] has the effect of limiting the need for planning permission to demolition of buildings of over 50 cubic metres which are either in residential use or adjoin such a use.[108] Furthermore, the General Development Order grants deemed planning permission for demolition, even of these categories.

Policy H23 explains how control will be exercised over proposals to demolish a dwellinghouse. There is a requirement that where the demolition is proposed, the applicant must seek a determination from the Local Authority as to whether details of their method of working or the restoration of the site. This will be required as a matter of course in the case of demolition involving a dwellinghouse.

It may be appropriate for a full planning application to be considered, in which case an "Article 4 Direction" will be pursued to remove permitted development rights.

102 *An example would be, where a two storey backward extension from a house projects to the extent that it reduces the amount of open sky visible from the window of the downstairs living room of a neighbour's property by an appreciable amount - say a quarter to a third. There is no definable cut-off point in terms of this percentage as it will depend on other factors such as orientation, the presence of trees, other aspects of openness etc.*

103 *Overshadowing would be an example.*

104 *See Policy E17.*

105 *See Policy E15*

106 *This may, for example, involve taking the rearmost point of the building more than the normal maximum of three metres beyond the main rear elevation.*

107 *Town and Country Planning (Demolition (Description of Buildings) Direction 1992).*

108 *Within Conservation Areas and in relation to Listed Buildings, the particular controls explained in Chapter 1 would override.*

Policy ***H 23*** *DEMOLITION OF DWELLINGHOUSES*

Where demolition of a dwellinghouse or an adjacent building is proposed, prior approval as to the method of working and/or restoration will normally be required. Where there is strong justification, in terms of a significant conflict with any policy or proposal in this Local Plan and/or a significant detrimental effect on the environment, then a Direction under Article 4 of the General Development Order may be sought to remove the Permitted Development Rights relating to demolition. Where the demolition of a dwelling has been carried out and permission for rebuilding has not been granted within ten years of the date of demolition, the residential use will be deemed to have been abandoned.

Finally, if a dwellinghouse is demolished and ten years later a replacement building has not been constructed, the residential use will be deemed to have been abandoned. This control will be applied throughout the Plan area. However, it will be a particularly important control to have in areas beyond the settlement limits[109] because, over time, the pattern of buildings, vegetation and openness will evolve and it may no longer be appropriate to have a building in that location.

3.6.4 **Renewal / Improvements**

The above sub-section has comprehensively covered a range of controls that can and will be applied in existing housing areas in order to maximise the quality of their environment. Positive environmental action can also be taken in existing housing areas.

In the past, in Blyth Valley, this has taken the form of General Improvement Areas. These were declared at intervals during the 1970's and 1980's, and covered defined zones of older housing, where a significant proportion of the stock was in need of improvement.[110] Grant aid for the improvement of individual properties was then provided by the Housing Authority more readily than elsewhere. In tandem with this, resources were made available to implement a programme of environmental improvements to the streetscape etc..[111]

1989 legislation removed the possibility of Local Authorities declaring General Improvement Areas (and related designations).[112]

More recently, the introduction of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act has made the provision of Home Renovation Grants by local authorities discretionary. The Council responded to this legislation by examining how it could maximise the effect of increasingly limited resources by making a decision to concentrate resources in the worst properties in Blyth Valley.[113] So far, the approach has been to concentrate on particular properties rather than defined areas of poor housing. Even so, the option remains of declaring more comprehensive 'Renewal Areas' in the future.[114] Such initiatives, should they occur, would include environmental as well as housing improvements.

109 *See Section 3.7, below.*

110 *The concept of the G.I.A. came about in the late 1960's and early 1970's, as a reaction to the large scale slum clearance that had been the norm prior to that. The intention was to avoid the situation where a whole area entered a phase of general decay, due to the condition of a limited number of properties. In some Housing Authority areas which had concentrations of stock in a particularly poor condition, Housing Action Areas, (with additional powers and grants), were declared.*

111 *Within Blyth Valley, last G.I.A. to be declared was in an area of mainly private Victorian housing at Cowpen Road North, in Blyth. The one prior to that was, by contrast, a block of inter-war, mainly public sector housing at Nelson Village, Cramlington.*

112 *This includes the removal of the power to declare Housing Action Areas, (see note above) and Industrial Improvement Areas, (of which the most recent within Blyth Valley has been at Double Row - see Work Activity Chapter). The cessation of these concepts was partly due to evidence that the worst problems of decaying building stock were not necessarily being addressed.*

113 *So far these resources have been directed only to pre-Second World War properties in the lowest Council tax band. Even this has generated a substantial waiting list.*

114 *This would rely on Neighbourhood Renewal Assessments following completion of work on stock conditions throughout the Plan.*

3.7 HOUSING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

This section sets criteria for the assessment of proposals for new dwellings, house extensions or the conversion of existing buildings to housing use beyond settlement limits.

3.7.1 General Restrictions on Housing Development in the Countryside

Policies H24 and **H25** relate directly to Policies G8 to G10 in the General Development Chapter and set out general criteria against which applications for the development of housing in the countryside can be assessed.

The Local Planning Authority is regularly faced with proposals for dwellings in open countryside areas. The fact that, nowadays, strict policies exist against the haphazard building of dwellings in the urban fringe countryside, still goes against the wishes of many people who value their freedoms and may wish to have a home in the countryside, while being within easy reach of urban services.

The reasons why it is vital that further building in the open countryside is checked have been clearly set out in the General Development chapter. They apply equally to housing.

The approach taken in this section, (in line with Policies G8 to G10), can crudely be summarised as follows. When faced with an application for a dwelling, within the Green Belt, there needs to be a very strong arguments in favour of having that dwelling in that particular location. If these are met, it then has to pass very strict visual tests. In non-Green Belt areas beyond settlement limits, if visual tests can be met, (and these are almost as strict as those applied in the Green Belt), it is not always so necessary to have strong arguments for having the dwelling in that location.

GREEN BELT

Policy H24 firstly states the general presumption against residential development in the Green Belt

H24 (i) concentrates on new residential building. This may take the form of a replacement dwelling [115] or entirely new dwelling.

Agricultural use is one of the accepted exceptions to Green Belt policy because it is clearly an essential part of the rural economy. In the case of new agricultural dwellings, the onus will be on the applicant to demonstrate that the dwelling has to be in that location from the point of view of the operation of the farm concerned. This may require the commissioning of an independent study to be carried out by an expert agency. In practice, it is considered that the density of settlements in the Plan area is such that agricultural workers could conveniently live within one of the nearby settlements. However, if an additional agricultural dwelling in an open land area does prove to be justified, occupancy conditions will be applied. Once applied, such occupancy conditions will be seen as long term. Although an application for their removal could then be made, this would not be acceptable where the dwelling had only relatively recently been given permission in the first place.

H24 (ii) refers to circumstances in which conversion of existing buildings for residential use is permissible within the Green Belt. The Policy on development within the Green Belt in the General Development Chapter sets out criteria for assessing the acceptability of the the conversion of a building for another use. In general, so long as these are met, residential use will be permitted.

The penultimate part of the Policy cross refers to the Policy within the General Development Chapter, which looks at the relationships between new uses, introduced into the countryside, and their surroundings. New housing in existing countryside can be a sensitive issue. For example, situations where new residents in converted farm buildings subsequently complain about surrounding farming activity are not unknown. The careful application of the criteria in Policy G10 (i) can prevent such situations arising in the first place.

With some collections of farm buildings offering substantial floor area for other uses, the potential for quite large new groupings of dwellings exists. This will increase the potential for such conflict and special regard will be had to the criteria in Policy G10 (i) in assessing such applications. It is not possible to place an upper limit on the number of additional dwellings that can be allowed in any particular grouping.[116] However, in normal circumstances, it will be sought to avoid several fold increases in the number of individual dwellings in a particular grouping of buildings in the Green Belt.

Where a new dwelling is permissible, it may nevertheless be necessary to remove permitted development rights.[117]

115 *In the case of replacement dwellings, Policy H26 below will apply.*

116 *It may be, for example, that a large, coherent block of redundant farm buildings proves worthy of retention in its entirety from an architectural / landscape point of view, with conversion to residential use offering the best hope of achieving this. If the buildings have the capacity for several dwellings, then the conversion would entail a several fold increase in the number of dwellings in that location. While it is undesirable to allow all isolated groupings to become sizeable settlements, it would be justifiable in this case.*

117 *This will be the case where, for example, a stone building has been permitted to fit in with surrounding buildings and countryside or where old stone farm buildings have been converted.*

Policy **H 24** — *HOUSING WITHIN THE GREEN BELT*

Within the Green Belt defined in Policy G7, proposals for new residential use will not be permitted except in the following very limited circumstances:

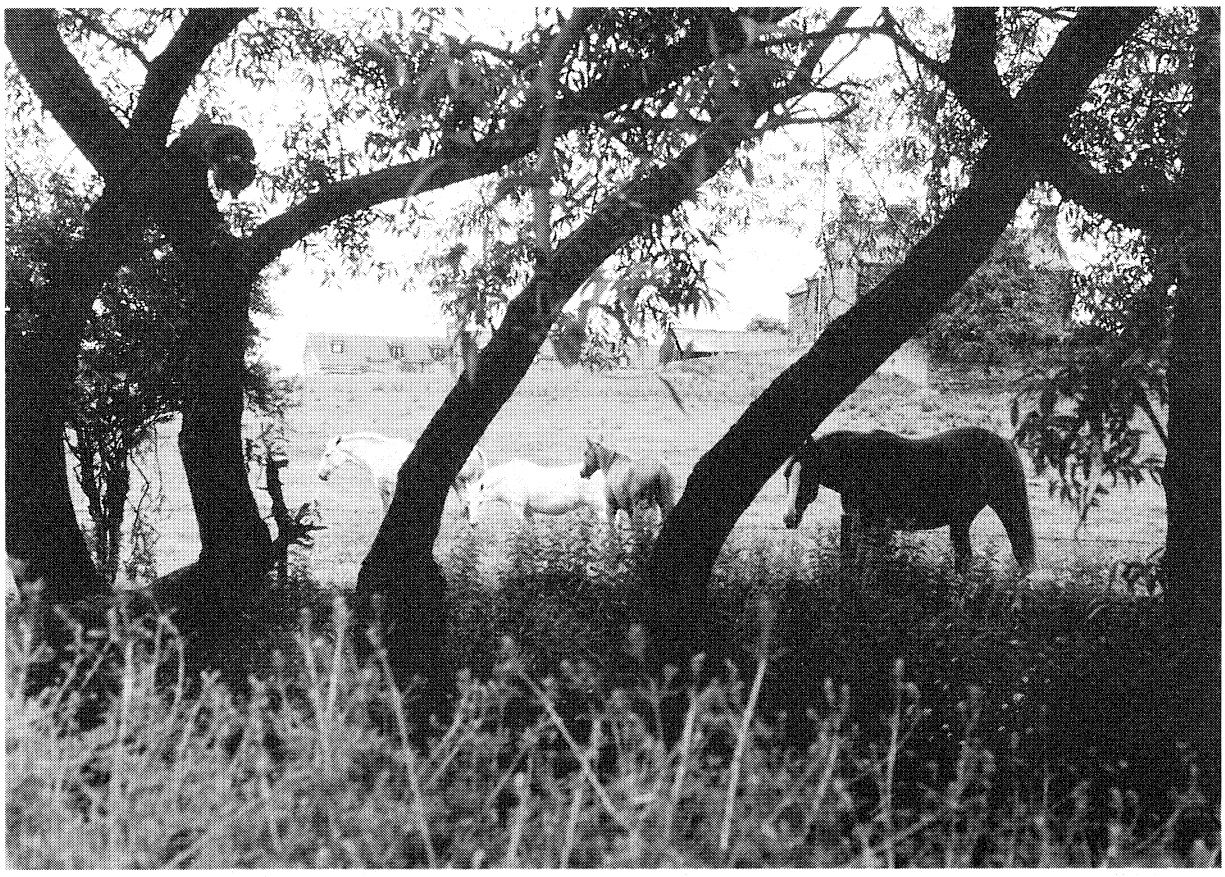
i **Individual new dwellings where they are required in connection with the day-to-day operation of an agricultural enterprise and the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it is essential that the proposed occupier lives adjacent or in close proximity to the place of work, in which case occupancy conditions will be applied;**

Such new dwellings may replace existing, in accordance with Policy H26. Where they are an entirely new building, the positioning shall be assessed against Policy G10 (ii);

ii **Conversions of existing buildings to residential use, if in accordance with Policy G8 (ii);**

Where acceptable in terms of (i) and (ii) above, permission shall only be granted if there is no conflict with the criteria in Policy G10 (i), with significant increases in the number of dwellings in an existing grouping of buildings being particularly closely examined.

Where permission is granted, under (i) or (ii) above, consideration may be given to the removal of permitted development rights if it is considered that future extensions and/or free-standing structures adjacent to the new or converted property could have an adverse impact on the Green Belt in terms of its objectives, or on the setting of the building within the open countryside or landscape.



Housing in the Open Countryside: Mares Close, Seghill

Policy ***H 25*** *HOUSING IN COUNTRYSIDE BEYOND GREEN BELT*

In areas beyond the settlement limits defined in Policy G6, which are not part of the Green Belt defined in Policy G7, proposals for new residential use will only be permitted in the following circumstances:

i Individual new dwellings where they are required in connection with the day-to-day operation of an agricultural enterprise and the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it is essential that the proposed occupier lives adjacent or in close proximity to the place of work, in which case occupancy conditions may be applied;

Such new dwellings may replace existing, in accordance with Policy H26. Where they are an entirely new building, the positioning shall be assessed against Policy G10 (ii);

ii Conversions of existing buildings to residential use, in line with Policy G9 (ii)

Where acceptable in terms of (i) and (ii) above, permission shall only be granted if there is no conflict with the criteria in Policy G10 (i), with significant increases in the number of dwellings in an existing grouping of buildings being particularly closely examined.

Where permission is granted, under (i) or (ii) above, consideration may be given to the removal of permitted development rights if it is considered that future extensions and/or free-standing structures adjacent to the new or converted property could have an adverse impact on its setting within the open countryside or the landscape.

COUNTRYSIDE BEYOND GREEN BELT

Policy H25 deals with housing proposals beyond the settlement limits and which are not part of the Green Belt.

H25 (i) makes clear that, in the case of new build dwellings, the approach in countryside beyond the Green Belt will essentially be the same as that within the Green Belt.

H25 (ii), by cross referring to the fairly open policy on conversions in the countryside beyond the Green Belt, makes clear that residential use will usually be acceptable in principle, where conversions are involved."

The final two parts of the policy look at the relationship between any new dwelling(s) and the surrounding countryside. A similar approach will be taken as with the Green Belt - i.e. to apply the criteria in the general countryside Policy (G10 (i)). The main difference will be that, in deciding whether to remove permitted development rights, Green Belt factors will not be considered.

As far as substantial increases in dwellings are concerned, a slightly more relaxed approach may be taken in non-Green Belt areas, although many of the considerations set out in the Green Belt Policy are of relevance. It would not be acceptable, anywhere in the open countryside to create what are in effect new hamlets in the middle of the countryside. There are many reasons - not least the inevitable changes that occur in the character of the particular locality. It is contrary to the aims of this Local Plan to introduce into a rural area, away from even the most basic local services, significant numbers of people who would have to make trips to settlements for all their requirements.

Policy ***H 26*** *DEMOLITION & REPLACEMENT OF DWELLINGS IN COUNTRYSIDE*

Applications for the demolition of existing dwellings and their replacement with entirely new dwellings, outside the defined settlements will be considered as follows:

i Within the Green Belt defined in Policy G7 they will normally be refused but may be considered in exceptional circumstances where all of the following criteria are met:

a the total cubic volume of the dwelling is not greater than the dwelling being replaced;

b the massing, positioning and design are considered to be appropriate to the setting;

c the entire footprint of the new dwelling is within the residential curtilage of the dwelling being replaced;

d relevant criteria in Policies G8 and G10;

ii In other areas beyond the Settlement Limits defined in Policy G6 they will be considered on their merits and should meet criteria (i) (b) and (c) and relevant criteria in Policies G9 and G10;

Where permission is granted, consideration will be given as to whether or not to impose occupancy conditions and/or remove permitted development rights in accordance with the various provisions of Policies H24 or H25.

Policy H23 on demolition and abandonment will be applied as appropriate.

3.7.2 **Rebuilding**

There are a number of locations within Blyth Valley where dwellings were situated at one time but which are now part of the open countryside.[118] There are also derelict buildings which were once farm related dwellings. Such sites do not have any residential status and the building of new dwellings on them will not be permitted unless they meet criteria in other Policies in this section of the Plan.

Policy H26 relates to the above but deals with situations where an applicant wishes to demolish an existing dwelling and build a totally new one in its place.

H26 (i) clarifies that, within the Green Belt, this would normally be refused if it represented any increase whatsoever in the residential use. Assuming that the demolition is considered acceptable in its own right - i.e. the building concerned is not considered important to keep in terms of its intrinsic value or its contribution to the landscape - the policy seeks to make sure that the replacement dwelling does not exceed the former dwelling in terms of its mass. Also of importance are its shape and its position in relation to its surroundings and it must not stray outside the curtilage of the earlier dwelling. The normal criteria on buildings in the countryside will also apply if relevant.

H26 (ii) refers to the same situation in open countryside areas which are not part of the Green Belt. Here the same strong presumption against would not be applied, although full account would be taken of factors such as massing, position and curtilage, and the criteria on grouping of buildings would be applied as appropriate.

In all cases, consideration will be given as to whether to remove permitted development rights or introduce occupancy conditions, as with other new residential building in countryside areas. Criteria for demolition and abandonment, as set out in Policy H23 above, will be applied.

118 One example is the site of former colliery rows to the north of Seaton Delaval.

4. Community Facilities

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Community facilities are given a specific definition for the purposes of this Local Plan. They are defined as any land uses which provide services to the public, so long as:

1 they are services which are needed locally on a street-by-street, neighbourhood or, at most, townwide basis; and

2 they are services that, either need to be used on a regular basis by at least part of the local population or meet a concentrated local demand.

Community facilities are not necessarily confined to facilities in public ownership. They may equally be privately owned. The test is whether they provide a service for the local public, (possibly among others), as described in (1) and (2) above.

The chapter deals with the provision and retention of:

	Policy
• **Outdoor Playing Space**, (including provision for sport and children's play);	**C2 - C6**
• **Public Open Space** generally	**C7**
• **Allotments**	**C8**
• **Indoor Sport**	**C9**
• **Education Facilities**	**C10 - C12**
• **Shopping Facilities**	**C13 - C17**
• **Community Health Facilities**	**C18**
• **Cultural Facilities,** (including meeting places etc.)	**C19**
• **Emergency Services**	**C20**
• **Childcare away from the Home**	**C21**
• **Other Community Facilities**	**C22**

The chapter tries to identify the needs for the above community facilities throughout the Plan area, where necessary defining realistic levels of provision. In meeting identified needs, it is just as important to retain and improve existing provision as it is to provide new facilities to meet any shortfall.

In most cases planning has never been the main mechanism by which community facilities are provided. However, it has an increasing role in securing their provision.

4.1.1 Provision and Finance of Community Facilities

Sources of finance for these facilities have always been varied but recent years have seen a move away from the traditional pattern of funding.

INDEPENDENT (PRIVATE) PROVISION

Some services have always been provided by the private sector.

Shopping

A major example would be shops. In this case, while the operation of market forces at one time provided small, community level facilities such as corner shops, the same forces can now have the effect of draining communities of their local provision by centralising services for the motor car rather than for communities.

Here, planning has a "facilitating" role. It guides and controls market forces, through land use decisions, to maximise the benefit to, and minimise the inconvenience for the local community.

SEMI-INDEPENDENT PROVISION

Other facilities are moving towards less reliance on the public sector to meet needs.

Healthcare Facilities

The provision of health facilities was taken completely out of the direct influence of local government many years ago. Recent changes in the organisation of the health service have taken the pattern of health facilities one step further away from direct public influence. This is an example of an important community facility where planning can do little more than react to events and make sure that there is a framework for land use decisions on additional healthcare facilities to be as positive as possible.

Educational Facilities

Another major community based service is education. Following local government reorganisation in 1974, it became the realm of the upper tier of local government, (in a shire county such as Northumberland), but the degree of co-operation in the planning of schools remained high. For instance, in new development areas, it has been possible to incorporate, from the outset, the land requirements for new schools to serve the anticipated local child population. Recent changes in the organisation of education mean an increase in the occurrence of the situation where the school attended is not the closest to home. Nevertheless, on the whole, schools will continue to be an essentially local facility over which planning will need to exert an influence in maintaining existing and planning new provision.

PUBLIC PROVISION

Some facilities have continued, traditionally, to be directly provided (and funded) by Local Government at

Policy ***C1*** *COMMUNITY FACILITIES GENERAL*

Planning decisions on proposals for development which

- **would have the effect of increasing the demand on community services and facilities in a particular location or**
- **would add to the provision of community services and facilities**

will have regard to existing levels of accessible community services and facilities and their locations.

the same (lower tier) level as the Local Planning Authority operates.

Recreation Facilities

One area in the traditional sphere of Local Authority Recreation Departments. The main examples are new public open space, playing space and indoor sports facilities but there are others such as community buildings and allotments. Some years ago, the Local Planning Authority could be fairly certain that additions to these would be provided, as a matter of course, by the leisure services function of the same Authority. Its own role would simply have been to make sure that land was available in the overall layouts of new areas for relevant recreational facilities to be provided. More recent developments in local government finance and the operation of the market have had the effect of bringing to a virtual halt the direct provision of these facilities by local recreation departments. This has, conversely, increased the role which the planning function has to play in achieving an appropriate supply of these facilities. As the General Development chapter has described,[1] in order to ensure necessary provision for new housing areas, Planning Agreements will increasingly need to be sought.[2]

THE ROLE OF PLANNING IN SECURING PROVISION

The above shows that planning is having to play an increasingly strong role in securing and overseeing the provision of community facilities. Each main type of community facility is examined in turn, (not in any particular priority order).

4.2 ACCESSIBILITY - EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

In terms of the overall aims of the Local Plan, (the four "E's"), perhaps the most relevant in terms of the provision of community facilities is Equality of Opportunity. The best way in which Planning can ensure an equality in the provision of community facilities, is to try, through the cumulative effect of individual planning decisions, to achieve a geographical pattern which ensures maximum accessibility to members of the public who need or wish to use them.

Policy C1 makes clear that, along with the numerous other material considerations, planning applications which will lead to an an increase in the number of people likely to need to make use of community facilities will be considered in the light of the existing distribution of community facilities in the locality. There may be cases where an application is considered to be too isolated from a needed community facility. If an application itself would directly increase or decrease in the level of some community facility, the existing distribution of similar facilities will also be relevant.

1 *See Section 2.6 of Chapter 2.*

2 *The policy on Planning Obligations seeks to formalise this. See Policy G11 in Chapter 2.*

4.3 OUTDOOR PLAYING SPACE

Outdoor playing space can be defined as land which is devoted to outdoor sport or children's play.

It is a community facility which requires a substantial amount of land and, since it is required to serve people in a convenient manner, has to be located within built up areas. It is a land use which does not have a great financial value attached to it compared with other land uses in a built-up area. Indeed it can seem very demanding on land in relation to the proportion of the time over which it is in use.

As explained above, it has traditionally been provided and maintained by the public sector - in this case, Blyth Valley Borough Council. For the reasons just described, were it to be left to the market to provide it, the inclination would be not to do so but, instead, to realise the full financial value of land for a use with a better return. The fact that the public sector can no longer guarantee a supply of playing space, means that one role of this Local Plan will be to provide the mechanism to intervene

a to find ways to keep valuable urban land in playing space use; and

b to ensure a continuing supply as new areas are built.

Adding to this task is the fact that levels of provision are significantly below levels that are advised by expert agencies. These advisory levels are something to be aimed towards, based upon factors such as the steadily increasing level of leisure time and participation in leisure activity or the aim to improve the quality of the environment.

4.3.1 Outdoor Playing Space Standards / Targets

It is necessary to emphasise that no national standards are set on outdoor playing space. Nevertheless the Government recommends that local authorities should set standards appropriate to their areas, having regard to available national guidance.

The National Playing Fields Association (N.P.F.A.) is a charitable organisation with several decades of experience in advising the providers of playing space on levels and standards of provision. In 1989, the Association issued a paper which recommended that 2.4 hectares of playing space should be provided per 1000 head of the population.[3] This is divided into **outdoor sport** and **children's playing space**, each of which has further sub-divisions, (see first part of Appendix XVIII).

The policies in this section on playing space are based on assessments of existing levels of playing space provision in the Plan area. These look at the relationship between actual (plus already proposed / committed) provision and the component parts of the 2.4 hectare standard. The conclusion in each case is that the N.P.F.A. recommended levels are unlikely to be achievable within the Plan period but that the Plan should set more realistic standards to be aimed towards in the Plan period.

4.3.2 Outdoor Playing Space for Sport

The larger of the two sub-divisions of the N.P.F.A. 2.4 hectare standard refers to outdoor provision of adult playing space. This, in turn splits into sports **pitches**, (primarily for soccer, rugby, hockey and cricket) and **other facilities** such as tennis courts, bowling greens, athletic tracks, golf courses etc.

CURRENT PROVISION

Currently within Blyth Valley, some between 55 and 60 hectares of this type of provision are directly available to the general public. School facilities in dual use and the relatively few private sports grounds can be added to the total but only increase it slightly.[4] If the National Playing Fields Association recommendation were applied literally to the current population, (i.e. around 80,000 people requiring 1.6 to 1.8 hectares per thousand), between about 130 and 150 hectares of pitches, courts, greens and tracks would be needed all together within the Plan area - a doubling of current provision, even taking into account accessible private and school facilities.

This District-wide appraisal of outdoor sports provision, is made on the basis that sports grounds in Blyth provide for the residents of Blyth, those in Cramlington serve participants in the new town and those in Seaton Delaval, Seghill etc. cater for the Seaton Valley villages. This is a fairly crude way of assessing the situation (and there is clearly going to be an element of movement between three sub-areas so defined). However, it enables an assessment to be made which, in turn, allows for meaningful area-by-area targets to be set.[5]

SHORTFALL

The second part of Appendix XVIII shows the level of provision for the three "sports provision sub-areas" and identifies the shortfall for each area.[6]

In general terms, this tabulation shows that Blyth and Cramlington are both well below ideal levels of provision, while the Seaton Valley villages are relatively well catered

3 *The "six acre standard" had originally been introduced as far back as the 1930's. The 1989 recommendation refined it.*

4 *Private sports fields can be counted towards overall provision so long as they are used by people living within the community within which they are located.*

5 *In a sense, this ignores the fact that different sports facilities have different catchment areas. However, generally speaking, for this type of provision, (which typically would provide for the weekly or twice weekly activity of an individual), people are willing to travel across town to reach the appropriate facility.*

6 *As well as looking at the N.P.F.A. recommendation, the table isolates the sports pitch provision from the generality of outdoor adult playing space and compares this with a Sports Council recommendation of 1.2 hectares of sports pitches per 1000 head of the population. This Sports Council recommendation does not incorporate such facilities such as bowling greens.*

for. This may appear surprising, given that Cramlington has been planned with a complete network of parks and Blyth also possesses large wedges of open space within the built-up area.[7] However, within both towns, there are large areas of open space where sports facilities are not offered.

The bottom part of the second part of Appendix XVIII sets out, in approximate terms, provision which is already committed or which will be looked for in association with new development. Provision which is likely to be made during the Plan period would go some way towards narrowing the gap but would still leave an appreciable shortfall whichever standards are applied.

DEMAND VERSUS RECOMMENDED PROVISION

As recreation provider and manager, the Local Authority continually reviews the demand for facilities. In doing so, it is only possible to measure "expressed demand". There is a further element which can be termed "latent demand" - that is the demand which would only manifest itself if the supply of pitches, courts etc. was greater.[8]

Over the Plan period an increase in the level of provision will be pursued, to a position between the marginal additions suggested by the expressed demand and the full level of the N.P.F.A.'s recommendation.[9]

One way of meeting shortfalls in pitch provision is to increase the intensity of use of existing pitches.[10] However most pitches in existence are used to their full capacity, in terms of drainage etc..[11] [12] A much higher capacity can be achieved on an all weather pitch but opportunities for such provision are few, mainly due to the expense.[13]

Therefore, in order to move the level of outdoor sports provision in Blyth Valley towards nationally recommended targets, it will be necessary for significant additional land to be devoted to these activities.

A STANDARD FOR BLYTH VALLEY

Policy C2 begins by stating the long term objective of (eventually) meeting the National Playing Fields Association recommended level of outdoor "adult" playing space provision. However it recognises that it is not likely to be achievable within the Plan period.[14]

1.2 hectares per 1000 head of the population, provided by 2006, is adopted as a reasonable compromise between the large apparent shortfalls and the relatively low level of expressed demand over supply. This would include courts, greens and tracks, as well as pitches.

This gives the following shortfalls to make up during the Plan period, (which are clearly less than those set out in Appendix XVIII):

- Blyth 15 hectares
- Cramlington 23 hectares
- Seaton Valley 2 hectares

In Blyth, a high proportion of the above is planned in any case at West Blyth and South Beach.[15]

In the Seaton Valley area, one additional pitch would go all or most of the way towards meeting shortfalls.

At Cramlington, committed provision falls a long way short of meeting the proposed target. The South-West Sector could account for a significant additional amount eventually, although all or most of this is likely to be beyond the Plan period.[16]

C2 (i) states the intention to continue to secure the provision of outdoor sports facilities wherever possible, either directly, or in connection with planning applications, through negotiation of Planning Agreements with developers.

Within the main development areas proposed in the Local Plan, the full 1.6 to 1.8 hectares per 1000 head of the population, as recommended by the N.P.F.A., will be sought. The developments where there are firm proposals for outdoor playing pitches etc. are listed, cross-referring to the relevant proposals.

It must be made absolutely clear that, although these levels are higher than the present levels of provision in the Plan area, the advice of expert organisations is that they are what ought reasonably to be provided to serve new developments. They will therefore be sought for new residential development from now on and will be considered necessary for those developments. The resulting increase in the average levels within the Plan area will be incidental to this.

There will be situations where a new development of housing is reasonably substantial but there is no area of land large enough to contain a playing pitch; or where

7 *See Policy C7 on community open space provision.*

8 *It is considered likely that teams do not emerge simply because the pitches are not there for them to use.*

9 *This is considered reasonable, making assumptions for hidden demand, plus growth in demand resulting from trends such as increasing leisure time.*

10 *This is suggested by the Sports Council, in their document "The Playing Pitch Strategy".*

11 *Only in certain cases could additional field drainage be employed to increase the existing capacity of pitches to absorb matches.*

12 *Full capacity often results from very limited usage. In the case of soccer pitches, for example, this normally means no more than three matches a fortnight (or even fewer).*

13 *All weather pitches are the subject of a separate part of the policy - see C2 (v) below.*

14 *It is proposed to undertake a detailed local assessment of playing pitch provision and demand for the Borough, based on themethodology developed by the English Sports Council in the 'Playing Pitch Strategy'. This local assessment will feed into the first review of the Plan. In the absence of this local assessment, the Council will aim to move towards meeting the NPFA recommended level of outdoor 'adult' playing space provision.*

15 *See Proposals WB6, WB9, WB12, SB5.*

16 *It is hoped that a methodology for developing a playing pitch strategy, published by the Sports Council, can be used to refine the specifications for the provision needed within the Plan area - e.g. particular types and standards of pitch.*

the provision of a new pitch would not be justified by the scale of the development. In such cases, some contribution towards outdoor sports facilities will nevertheless be appropriate and will be sought through the signing of a Planning Agreement under Policy G11, possibly requiring a financial contribution. The level of contribution sought in this way will be equivalent to the cost of laying out one hectare per 250 dwellings and will apply to developments of ten dwellings or more. The location of the outdoor sports facility, the laying out of which will be part-funded by the developer, should be mutually agreed as serving the development concerned before any Planning Agreement is signed. The specification at Appendix XX shall be used where necessary to determine the provision to be made.

The derivation of the 1 hectare per 250 new dwellings is as follows: It has been stated that the National Playing Fields Association recommended standard for outdoor adult playing space will be applied for new housing areas. This is given, (see Appendix XVIII), as a range - 1.6 to 1.8 hectares per 1000 head of population. The bottom of this range, (1.6), is equivalent to one hectare per 625 people. Assuming an occupancy of 2.5 people per house, this is equivalent to one hectare per 250 new dwellings.

C2 (ii) recognises that there is scope for improving existing facilities. This may be an alternative way in which the contributions, sought under C2 (i)(b), could be used, so long as the upgrading of an existing pitch, (for instance to allow for an increased level of usage), is necessary for the development proposed.

C2 (iii) acknowledges the contribution of the dual use of otherwise inaccessible playing fields towards overall provision, and seeks to secure additional dual use where appropriate.

C2 (iv) takes account of the fact that private sports grounds or other fields with restricted access for the public contribute towards total public provision if they provide for the recreational needs of members the community in which they are situated, albeit on a selective basis. It also recognises that such facilities may later become available to the public on a more general basis and therefore seeks that they are well placed and accessible.

C2 (v) looks for the provision of all weather surfaces, preferably floodlit. These facilities are intensively used and can more than compensate for shortfalls of outdoor playing provision compared with the area that they cover. In Cramlington it will be appropriate to look for one such pitch in relation to the South-West sector development, although this is likely to fall beyond the Plan period. A second facility serving the existing residential sectors should be encouraged in an accessible location. At Blyth, the main development area at West Blyth, is an identified location with a further facility sought in the south of the town. At West Blyth, there have been discussions about how a dual use all weather pitch could be placed on the High School site for community purposes. The sportsfields proposed within South Beach should be capable of accommodating one of these facilities if required to. With about half the population of either of the two towns, it would be consistent with the above if at least one all weather surface were to be secured for the Seaton Valley villages, with the central place of Seaton Delaval being the preferred location.

The location of this type of facility has to be planned carefully so as not to cause unacceptable disturbance to surrounding houses or other sensitive uses, such as day centres. This is because, all weather pitches are more intensively and frequently used than other outdoor sports facilities. In addition, bright floodlighting can cause particular problems for residents if they are not carefully designed. The intensive use also means that access and parking for vehicles needs to be given careful thought.

C2 (vi) refers to the fact that existing playing space should be protected or at least directly replaced, if threatened with development.[17]

C2 (viii) cross refers again, this time to policies on accessibility set out in the Movement Chapter. In



Outdoor Sports Facilities at Seghill

17 *The policy for this is set out below, (Policy C6).*

Policy **C 2** — *OUTDOOR PLAYING SPACE FOR SPORT*

In planning for playing space for adult use, as defined in Appendix XVIII, it shall be the aim to improve on current provision, (also indicated in Appendix XVIII), having regard to the National Playing Fields Association recommendation of 1.6 to 1.8 hectares per 1000 head of the population, with the firm objective of reaching a position within each of Cramlington, Blyth and the Seaton Valley villages whereby 1.2 hectares per 1000 head of the population is provided by 2006, through the following means:

i The provision of playing pitches, courts, greens, athletics tracks and related facilities, within existing public open space areas or elsewhere, either directly by the Leisure Services Authority or by other parties, negotiated as part of Planning Agreements, under Policy G11. This will include:

a the provision, within the main new residential developments, of between 1.6 and 1.8 hectares per 1000 of the anticipated population, specifically at (not in priority order):

- **Northburn Playing Fields in accordance with Proposal NE6 (a);**
- **Central Park, Cramlington, in accordance with Proposal NE6 (c);**
- **The South-West Sector of Cramlington, in accordance with Proposal SW6 (a);**
- **West Blyth, in accordance with Proposals WB6, WB9 and WB12 (c);**
- **The South Beach area, in accordance with Proposals SB5;**

b a requirement, in all other new housing developments of ten dwellings or more, where provision is not otherwise made by the applicant, that the applicant enter a Planning Agreement, (under Policy G11), to enable the laying out of the equivalent of 1 hectare per 250 dwellings to the specification set out in Appendix XX. Where provision is off site and/or via developer contributions, the amount shall be used to fund the installation or improvement of outdoor adult playing space within the vicinity of the development, the identity / location of which shall be mutually agreed between the Local Planning Authority and the applicant as serving the development;

(continued....

general, although the catchment areas defined for the purposes of this policy cover whole towns, it should be the aim to avoid the necessity to make unnecessarily long journeys across towns to reach the nearest accessible sports fields.[18]

In applying Policy C2, it is important to be consistent about how different types of sports pitch are assessed as contributing towards the total.[19]

It is also important to ensure that sports pitches are not, and do not give an appearance of being, totally sterile areas. The application of the policy on parkland, that on tree and shrub planting and that on nature conservation will therefore be applied to areas around the periphery of sports areas, as the Plan period progresses.[20]

18 *See also Policy C6.*

19 *The area devoted to future pitch provision will be assumed to be equivalent to the National Playing Fields Association ideal levels for different pitch types, as set out in Appendix **XIX**, unless it is known that the total area of a proposed park or sportsfield will be less than the total of these ideal pitch areas. Parkland or open space areas over and above the levels set out in Appendix **XIX**, shall not be included in the total area counted as being devoted to adult sports provision. Those pitch areas which can be counted as contributing towards overall provision will be counted as equivalent to their area, whether they are in public use, dual use or private use within the community, **unless** they are an artificial or all weather surface, in which case they shall be counted as **double** their total area.*

20 *See Policies C7, E6 and E2 respectively.*

Policy ***C2*** *continued* *OUTDOOR PLAYING SPACE FOR SPORT*

ii **Where possible, achieving the increased or more efficient use of existing pitches through measures such as improved drainage, either:**

a **through a Planning Agreement, under Policy G11, with a developer, where it is agreed that an improvement to a specified existing pitch is necessary before the development can proceed; or**

b **otherwise, as resources become available;**

iii **Securing, through negotiation, either in association with planning applications for new development or other means, the dual use of sports pitches and other outdoor sports facilities in Education Authority or other ownership, especially where they would contribute towards an identified shortfall, having regard to Appendix XVIII;**

iv **Encouraging the establishment of and normally granting planning permission for pitches, courts, greens, athletics tracks and related facilities, where there is the potential for them to be accessible to the general public within the communities in which they are situated, (i.e. Blyth, Cramlington or Seaton Delaval), on a part time basis or in the future;**

v **Seeking the provision of full size, floodlit all weather surfaces, whether as wholly accessible or as dual use facilities as follows:**

- **at least one at Cramlington, at a location (to be determined), within the existing or planned open space areas and easily accessible to residential sectors of the town, with a possible additional facility in association with the development of the South-West Sector, depending on the progress made with the development there;**
- **two at Blyth:**
  - **as indicated approximately on the Proposals Map in association with development at West Blyth in accordance with Proposal WB10; and**
  - **in southern Blyth at a location to be determined;**
- **at least one in the Seaton Valley area, location(s) to be determined, with Seaton Delaval as the first preference.**

Where the location has not been determined, applications will be granted only if:

a **adequate account has been taken of any adverse effects of the proposal on surrounding housing or other development, particularly in relation to any loss of amenity due to:**
  - **noise, light emanating from it, applying Policy E22 if appropriate; or**
  - **the level of activity in and around it;**

b **there is adequate access and parking for vehicles considering the likely intensive use of such facilities.**

vi **The protection of existing playing space in adult use in accordance with criteria set out in Policy C6;**

vii **Seeking that all facilities are as accessible as possible for people wishing to use them from within the communities that they are intended to serve - i.e. Blyth, Cramlington or the Seaton Valley Villages - by public transport, bicycle and on foot, applying criteria in Policies M2, M3 and M5 as appropriate.**

4.3.3 **Playing Space for Children**

The National Playing Fields Association calls for 0.6 to 0.8 hectares of children's playing space per 1000 population. This is the other element of their 2.4 hectare standard. It is to be made up of:

1 Outdoor **equipped playgrounds** for children of whatever age;

2 Other designated play facilities for children which offer **specific opportunities for outdoor play**, such as adventure playgrounds;

3 Casual or **informal playing space** within housing areas.

Unlike sports space, it is extremely difficult to estimate the degree to which the children's playing space standard is being met. Based upon the current population, between about 50 and 65 hectares of children's playspace would be required to meet the needs of the population of the Plan area. Element 1 of the above definition is the equipped playground. Typically, these occupy relatively small parcels of land.[21] The second element, the special facilities, would include the "fad" type of facility like the BMX tracks that were popular some years ago, examples of which were provided in the Plan area. There are relatively few of these one-offs in the Plan area. They will vary over time as different activities wax and wane in popularity. The third element of the definition above, "casual or informal playspace within housing areas", is very difficult to define. Within a housing area, well placed grass areas, "kickabout areas" and well separated shared surfaces would all count towards casual playing space.

In terms of nationally recommended standards, there is an underprovision of children's playing space in the Plan area but it is impossible to estimate, in precise terms, the level of this underprovision.

This Local Plan therefore attempts no overall quantification of children's playing space. Instead, it looks at the geographical distribution of equipped playing space provision. and defines some standards of its own based on geographical rather than absolute area criteria.

First of all, **Policy C3** affirms that the overall aim is to move towards the N.P.F.A. target, even though it is so difficult to quantify current provision. It states the general methods which will be used in order to achieve this. At the root of this is the improbability that the traditional provider - i.e. the Local Council as recreation authority - will be able to meet needs in the future in terms of supplying land, laying it out for children's play purposes and taking on the additional maintenance burden that it represents. Private investment will have to be relied upon through the mechanisms outlined at the beginning of this Chapter and in the General Development Chapter.

C3 (i) encourages the full use of planning powers to gain children's play in relation to new developments. This would not, of course, be above the level recommended by the N.P.F.A.

C3 (ii) affirms that planning applications of all types will be scrutinised for possible additional play needs generated by the development.[22] It is also now recognised that children's play needs to be part, not just of home environments, but also of work places, shopping areas and other focuses of community activity. A special policy below, (Policy C21) deals with childcare needs in these situations.

C3 (iii) aims to avoid the unnecessary loss of children's playspace and seeks its protection - not necessarily in situ.[23]

C3 (iv) The fourth general criterion applied to children's playing areas, will be their accessibility for the children that use them as well as the parents or guardians that take them there. The main consideration here will be safety with planning decisions on play areas concentrating on the avoidance of the need to cross main roads to reach playing facilities.

EQUIPPED CHILDREN'S PLAYING SPACE

The National playing Fields Association defines three categories of formal play provision for children which they would, ideally, like to see in all residential areas. These are:

1 **Local Areas for Play** which are small, fenced-off areas for 4 to 6 year olds, within 1 minute of all homes with seating for carers;

2 **Local Equipped Areas for Play** which cater for children up to about 8 years of age and, ideally have 5 or more types of play equipment and various other features. They would be within 5 minutes walk of home;

3 **Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play** which serve older, unaccompanied children from 8 to 14 years old, provide a range of opportunities for use of equipment and may have special facilities for ballgames, use of skateboards / roller-skates etc. They would be within 15 minutes walking time of home.

Local Areas for Play

The first of the above categories, the small fenced off areas for little children, are something which, as a rule have not been built into the design of housing areas in Blyth Valley. As very small scale features, they could, in theory be slotted into existing open spaces but, in any case, would not fall within planning control.

21 *The fifty or so equipped playgrounds in existence in the Plan area at the time of writing, in total, take up no more than a small fraction of 50 to 65 hectares.*

22 *If these are then sought in connection with the application, they may additionally provide an opportunity to improve on local provision for existing dwellers in the area.*

23 *Whether or not in situ will depend on other criteria, as specified in Policy C6.*

Policy **C3** — *CHILDREN'S PLAYING SPACE - GENERAL*

In planning for playing space provision for children's use, it shall be the aim to improve on current provision, having regard to the National Playing Fields Association recommendation of 0.6 to 0.8 hectares per 1000 head of the population through:

i The promotion of new development incorporating higher standards of directly related provision;

ii Opportunities that may arise within the existing built-up areas, having regard also to the provisions of Policy C21;

iii Protection of existing;

iv Improved accessibility.

There are two ways in which their introduction as features in the urban landscape could be aimed for through planning decisions. Firstly, influence could be applied to modify the layouts of new housing developments so that well overlooked, small areas of open space are created on which appropriate fencing and seating could be ensured through discussion or planning conditions. Secondly, where environmental improvements are being made within housing areas, they could be incorporated in any new hard and soft landscaping.

Blyth Valley has a housing stock, the large proportion of which has its own garden space ant it is often seen as the norm for young children to play in their own or each other's back gardens, rather than relying on communal areas between houses. On this basis, it is therefore not considered appropriate to seek the introduction of Local Areas for Play into all new housing areas. It would be of most relevance to aim for their inclusion in selected schemes, particularly those where the proposed dwellings are flats or houses with small or no gardens, (e.g. terrace, starter homes). This would, similarly be the case, where environmental improvements are being made in areas where not all dwellings have gardens.

Local and Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play

With regard to larger equipped play areas, (categories 2 and 3 above), an analysis has been carried out to provide a framework for policy. This has examined the current distribution of equipped play areas looking in particular at the five minute walk criterion mentioned under (2) above. This is taken as 400 metres. Areas within this distance of an equipped playing space are assumed to be served unless they are across a main road from one.[24] Shown on the Proposals Map, therefore, are areas which are deficient in equipped playspace, applying this simple test. Policies of the Local Authority, as provider and maintainer of recreational facilities may change, so that this pattern of distribution changes. Nonetheless it gives an approximate guide to where new provision may be sought under the Policy below. The improvement of existing equipped play areas will be pursued under the same policy.[25]

Policy C4 is the land use policy for equipped playspace. It aims, not for any absolute level of provision to be met within the Plan period, but simply to move, if possible, towards a situation where there is an equipped playspace within about 400 metres of all dwellings in the built-up areas without the need to cross a main road, as defined.[26] [27]

C4 (i) is intended to secure the installing of new equipped playgrounds, as specified, in association with new developments, all of which are the subject of detailed proposals in the area specific sections towards the end of this Written Statement.

At Cramlington North-East Community Development Area, a Local Equipped Area for Play is planned for the area of the Northburn Playing Fields. A further such facility will serve the area to the north of Horton Drive.[28]

24 *In this case, a main road would includes all top three tiers of the road hierarchy, as defined in the "Movement" chapter plus estate distributor roads.*

25 *This may be the simplest and most cost effective way to improve facilities for a particular locality.*

26 *Clearly, odd groupings of a few dwellings, cut off by main roads will have to be excepted from this.*

27 *In order to assist the process of securing suitable provision, a set of standards is reproduced at Appendix XX. This will enable developers and others to calculate, at an early point in the planning process, what will be expected in new developments. It will be reproduced in Master Plans, as appropriate.*

28 *See Chapter 10, Sub-section 10.2.4.*

At South-West Cramlington, depending on the speed of development, it is thought that up to three equipped playspaces will be required within the Plan period. One of these should be a Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play, as defined in (3) above. This is because it is a totally new part of the town which will have its own focus of neighbourhood activity in the form of schools, the district centre etc.[29]

Two Local Equipped Play areas have been built into the West Blyth Master Plan [30] and at least one further space will be expected within the Southern Development Area.[31]

At South Beach, a Local Equipped Area for Play will be installed within the open space area close to the newer housing areas.

In Seaton Delaval, the scale of the proposal at Wheatridge Park will require the introduction of one Local Equipped Play Area.[32]

The Crofton Mill development Area lies in the heart of an area of Blyth which, at present, lacks equipped playing areas, adding to the justification for provision there.[33]

An input from developers of new housing *elsewhere*, (schemes of ten family size dwellings or more), will be pursued including provision equivalent to one Local Equipped Area for Play per 350 family size dwellings. Within the areas of shortage identified on the Proposals Map, this may entail building, in whole or in part, a new play area, which would be to the specification set out at Appendix XX to this Written Statement. Alternatively, it could involve the improvement of an existing facility, especially if the housing concerned is within the catchment area of a run down playground. The identity and location of the facility to be installed or improved will be mutually agreed between the Local Planning Authority and the applicant as serving the development. If the playground is not being built by the developer on site at the time of the development commencing, it will be necessary to enter a Section 106 Agreement (under Policy G11 and possibly comprising commuted payments).

The last part of **C4 (i)** refers to the selected instances where it would be appropriate for housing areas to be designed to include the small, overlooked fenced off areas for younger children, mentioned earlier. These should normally allow for an activity area of 100 square metres plus a buffer sufficient to minimise audible and visual intrusion to adjacent residents without compromising the overlooking.

C4 (ii) makes clear that, in order to fill many of the gaps in provision within the existing built-up areas, other initiatives will be needed. These may include a continued Local Authority programme of creating new playgrounds; they may involve other initiatives from the community or local businesses.[34] Two proposed schemes are at Wheatridge, Seaton Delaval and Lanercost, East Cramlington. The full range of gaps in provision of equipped playspace are indicated on the Proposals Map and listed at Appendix XXI.

C4 (iii) cross refers to those other policies that specifically protect open spaces, for whatever reason. These will be used to protect existing opportunities for equipped children's play. For a start, all areas of public open space currently containing children's play equipment, are recognised as strategic open spaces for their locality, under Policy C7 below. This does not necessarily mean that equipment needs to be located there, rather than at some other suitable local green space, (applying the criteria in Policy C6). It is simply recognising the areas as existing local resources where children can congregate. In addition, the general examination of open space areas carried out for this Local Plan has included an exercise to make sure that each of the areas of shortfall contains, where possible, a suitable, protected green space on which equipment can be located at some future date if the opportunity arises. Such spaces are also protected under Policy C7 below.[35]

It should be mentioned that problems have been experienced in relation to reductions in maintenance budgets. This can mean that, with reluctance, existing play equipment must be removed. One way of reducing costs is to concentrate equipment into even fewer areas. The cumulative effect of such decisions would be to reduce the areas actually served to an even smaller proportion of the total built-up areas. Should this course of action be unavoidable, it would be preferable for serviceable equipment to be transferred elsewhere than to be lost altogether as a resource.

INFORMAL CHILDREN'S PLAYSPACE

As explained at the beginning of the section on Children's Playing Space, it is difficult to define or quantify the informal element. No attempt will therefore be made to increase provision by a set amount. The application of the principles in Policy C3, should, for the most part, be sufficient to ensure the orderly and satisfactory provision of this element.

Policy C5 adds some additional criteria.

C5 (i) recognises that there will be some new housing developments where it will be appropriate for casual

29 *See Chapter 11, Sub-section 11.3.3 and 11.3.5.*

30 *For practical reasons, it may not be possible to achieve one of these.*

31 *See Chapter 12, Sub-section 12.2.7.*

32 *See Chapter 15, Sub-section 15.2.1.*

33 *See Chapter 17, Sub-section 17.2.2.*

34 *Although new play equipment on an existing open space would not need planning permission, they may need the support of the Planning process in other ways.*

35 *Most, but not all, are protected for other reasons as well.*

Policy **C 4** — *CHILDREN'S PLAYING SPACE - EQUIPPED*

In relation to equipped children's playspace, efforts will be made to improve on existing provision and move towards a position whereby there is an equipped children's playground, to the standards set out at Appendix XX, within 400 metres of all residential properties (which are part of significant residential areas) and without the need to cross a primary, secondary, local distributor or estate distributor road to reach it. This will be pursued by the following means:

i Securing through conditioning or negotiating as part of Planning Agreements, under Policy G11, the following provision of equipped playgrounds in association with new housing, as indicated on the Proposals Map:

			IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROPOSAL
a	North-East Cramlington	2 more local equipped playgrounds	NE6 (b)
b	South-West Cramlington	3 equipped playgrounds within the Plan period including 1 neighbourhood equipped playground	SW6 (b)
c	West Blyth	3 local equipped playgrounds	WB7 and WB12 (d)
d	South Beach, Blyth	at least 2 local equipped playgrounds	SB7
e	Wheatridge Park, Seaton Delaval	at least 1 local equipped playground	SD1
f	Crofton Mill	1 local equipped playground	CM2

g Other locations as appropriate, including a requirement, in all new housing developments, other than (a) to (f) above, involving ten or more new family dwellings (i.e. dwellings with three or more bedrooms), that the equivalent of one Local Equipped Area for Play per 350 family dwellings be provided to the specification set out in Appendix XX. Where provision is off site and/or via development contributions (under Policy G11), the amount shall be used to fund the installation or improvement of equipped children's playing space within the vicinity of the development, the identity / location of which shall be mutually agreed between the Local Planning Authority and the applicant as serving the development;

In addition, in developments of ten or more family dwellings where the majority of dwellings have no garden space, developers may be required to provide small, overlooked, fenced off play areas for small children, with allowance for a 100 metre activity area, the exact specification to be agreed by the Local Authority;

ii Supporting additions or improvements to children's equipped playing space within the existing built-up area, achieved through the Local Authority's own programme or through community based initiatives, especially where gaps would be filled in the zones of shortfall identified on the Proposals Map and listed at Appendix XXI. Specifically, the provision of Local Equipped Areas for Play will be supported at the existing Wheatridge area, Seaton Delaval and Lanercost;

iii Where appropriate, protecting existing children's equipped playgrounds or the open spaces in which they are situated, under Policies C6 and C7 respectively.

playspace to be included in layouts. The situation needs to be avoided where such spaces are not well related to the layout as a whole. Many existing housing areas have areas used for casual play which are poorly situated on backland or not well overlooked, or in positions where ballgames conflict with residential amenity.[36] It is best if these areas can be linked to more general open space provision. Sometimes, it will be appropriate for their positioning to be assessed against townscape criteria.[37]

C5 (ii) refers to the protection of these spaces, either for their contribution towards overall play space, or as open spaces within an area. The two policies immediately following this, will be relevant.

36 *See Chapter 3, Sub-section 3.6.2.*

37 *See Chapter 1, Sub-section 1.6.2.*



Bowls at New Delaval

4.3.4 **Proposals which Displace Playing Space**

Having established aims and targets for the provision of playing space, (Policies C2 to C5), it is necessary to set out some general criteria for dealing with proposals which would displace playing space.

Policy C6 sets out the play space related criteria which will need to be satisfied if faced with an application for development on land occupied by playing space.

There should be no overall loss in playing space provision unless there is already an overprovision. Replacement provision in another location would be acceptable according to the set of criteria then listed.

C6 (i) states that, for sports pitches and other "adult" provision, the replacement should be in the same sub area - and preferably within a mile. Generally, this will mean that a pitch threatened in one of the two main towns should be replaced within the town avoiding locations on the other side of town.

C6 (ii) states that, for children's play space, the 400 metre walk criterion (without the need to cross a main road), as referred to in Policy C4, will be applied.

C6 (iii) makes clear that the replacement provision must be accessible on foot, by bicycle and, if appropriate, by public transport.

The last part of the Policy refers to the fact that the open space areas in which the play areas are situated may themselves merit protection - the subject of the following Policy.

Policy **C5** — *CHILDREN'S PLAYING SPACE - INFORMAL*

The provision of informal playspace for children within housing areas will be improved upon by:

i Securing, through the granting of planning permission for new housing development, appropriate opportunity for informal children's play, taking into account criteria in Policy H21. Where grassed or hard surfaced areas are specially proposed to meet this need, it will normally be required that:

a They are physically linked to another area of open space such as sports pitches, parkland or an equipped children's playground; and/or

b Their contribution towards the townscape is maximised, where appropriate applying the criteria set out in Policy E18 (i);

ii Where appropriate, protecting existing informal children's play spaces for their contribution towards overall play space, under Policy C6, or as open spaces, under Policy C7.

Policy **C6** — *PROPOSALS WHICH INVOLVE DISPLACEMENT OF PLAYING SPACE*

Where a development would have the effect of displacing existing playing space, (including that which is not generally accessible to the public or only made so on a part time ("dual use") basis), it will be the aim that overall levels of playing space provision are not reduced unless there is already an overprovision in the appropriately defined catchment area. Where development would result in a reduction which is unacceptable in these terms, then planning permission will only be granted once provision has been secured for a replacement facility of equivalent standard at a location which meets the following minimum requirements:

i In the case of adult / youth playing space defined in Policy C2, the replacement facilities should be located within the same sports facility sub area - Blyth, Cramlington or the Seaton Valley villages - but preferably within one mile of of the facilities being displaced;

ii In the case of children's playing space defined in Policies C3 to C5, the relocation should be such that no dwellings, currently considered to be served, are placed into a situation where they are not served by this type of facility, through becoming placed either:

- **beyond 400 metres from the nearest such facility; or**
- **not within reach of any such facility without the need to cross a main road, (as defined on Map M-M1 on page 215) or estate distributor road;**

iii Access should be adequate, where appropriate having regard to the provisions of Policies M2, M3 and M5;

In addition, where built development is proposed, the importance of the open space occupied by the playing space will, in any case, be examined under Policy C7 (below) and other relevant policies referred to therein.

4.4 OPEN SPACE AS A FACILITY

In trying to maximise the convenience and quality of playing space, it is easy to overlook the fact that the open spaces in which the sportsfields, playgrounds etc. are situated are themselves an important public resource. They are also an important part of the structure of urban areas.[38]

Most towns and cities include significant areas of open space which serve the function of breaking up the mass of suburban development. These exist for a variety of reasons. Sometimes natural features such as hills or incised valleys do not lend themselves to development. There can be historical reasons such as the protection of fields as common land. Most usually, they are playing fields of some sort but many towns and cities also contain planned formal or informal parks for the general enjoyment of the whole population.

In this latter category, Blyth has Ridley Park which was originally donated to the town in the late 19th Century. Seaton Delaval has Astley Park.

Cramlington, planned in its entirety as a new town, has a complete structure of planned parkland areas which incorporate the outdoor sporting provision, but also include additional grassed or wooded areas plus wide corridors of incidental open space along main roads and between housing areas. The effect of interlinked open spaces gives the town an open feel when viewed from virtually any location within it.

In laying out the north-east sector of the town over the last one or two decades, the general strategy has been to aim for a level of three hectares of open space per one thousand head of the population, incorporating the application of the 2.4 hectare playing space standard plus 0.6 hectares of incidental open space. This has worked well and has meant that many publicly accessible open and landscaped areas can be offered in addition to basic playing space provision. It has also allowed there to be generous woodland planting along routes through the area and in buffer zones around the edge of housing. In part, this is meeting landscape and townscape objectives,[39] but within the "Community Facilities" objectives of this chapter the important goal is to have adequate and accessible open space for all those living in the built-up areas.

The Cramlington approach of aiming for an additional 0.6 hectares per 1000 population of "incidental open space", over and above the playing space sought in Policies C2 to C5, will be applied throughout the Plan area.

Policy C7 sets this as the long term objective. It should be noted that this figure of an additional 0.6 hectares of incidental open space, will not necessarily be appropriate for all new housing developments. This is a level of provision which will be aimed towards as an average for the whole of the Plan area, with Planning Obligations normally being the mechanism for securing provision which is non-immediate and/or off-site.

C7 (i) proposes that additional parkland areas should be created. As well as entirely new areas of land, parkland provision can be improved by the enhancement of existing open areas. The specific proposals are for the completion of the planned parkland within the North-East Cramlington Community Development Area, in the form of a further extension to Northburn Playing Fields and Central Park, the introduction of a network of open space areas in the South-West Cramlington Community Development Area, the continuation of the crescent of parkland associated with the South Beach Development and a central square at Cramlington town centre. All these are the subject of detailed proposals in later chapters. In addition it is accepted that the reclamation of derelict land can result in useful new pieces of public open space, although careful consideration should be given to their potential usefulness, particularly in terms of the playing space criteria under Policy C5 and visual criteria in Policy E18.[40]

C7 (ii) sets the framework for the protection of open spaces from built development. There are three possible reasons for which they can be protected:

1 The strategic nature of the open space;
2 Visual appearance / character, (under Policy E18);
3 Nature conservation, (under Policy E2).

The protection of a particular piece of open space can be for one or a combination of these three reasons. The full list of open spaces protected is contained in Appendix XXII along with the reason(s) for their protection.

This policy lists the main categories that are protected as *strategic* open spaces. All the major blocks of open space within the built-up areas are classified as strategic open spaces. This especially applies to Cramlington where, as explained above, all large open space areas are part of the overall plan. In the other settlements it will, in practice, apply to all substantial, coherent open spaces which are totally within the built-up area Where areas of allotment garden form part of one of these general blocks of open space, they will be included in the protection.[41]

It has already been explained that existing and potential locations for children's play equipment are to be protected for strategic reasons. More generally, it will be ensured as far as possible, through planning decisions, that a usable area of open space is accessible from all areas of housing without the need to cross a primary, secondary or local distributor road. Unlike children's

38 *The metaphor often used in connection with open space is that they allow cities to breathe.*
39 *See Chapter 1 Sections 1.6 (Visual Character) and 1.3, (Landscape).*
40 *For further explanation of reclamation policies see, Chapter 1, Sub-section 1.5.3.*
41 *See Policy C8 below for the general approach on allotments.*

Policy **C7** — *OPEN SPACE AS A FACILITY*

A good distribution of accessible public open space will be sought, with a long term target of at least 0.6 hectares per 1000 head of the population living within the settlement limits defined in Policy G6, over and above playing space, (as defined in Policies C2 to C6), to be provided in the form of formal public parks, other informal public open spaces and planted areas but not including Highway verge areas. Within this overall aim:

i The creation of formal parks or parkland settings will be secured at appropriate locations, where necessary negotiating Planning Agreements under Policy G11, including::

	PROPOSAL	IN ACCORDANCE WITH
a	The northward extension of Northburn Playing Fields in the North-East Cramlington Community Development Area	Proposal NE6 (a)
b	The northward extension of Central Park in the North-East Cramlington Community Development Area	Proposal NE6 (c)
c	The laying out of parkland areas within the South-West Cramlington Community Development Area	Proposal SW5
d	The northward extension of the parkland area at South Beach	Proposal SB6
e	The addition of a central square at Cramlington Town Centre	Proposal CC1 (b)
f	addition, as appropriate of new public open space areas following reclamation schemes	Policy E11

ii Certain open spaces and corridors of open space shall be specifically protected from development, as shown on the Proposals Map and listed at Appendix XXII, along with the reasons for protecting them, which are either:

a that they are of value as strategic open spaces for their area, including:

- **all major planned parks in Cramlington;**
- **all major areas of parkland and open space within the built-up areas of other settlements where there is no other proposal;**
- **all areas containing children's play equipment;**
- **areas which are considered to provide the best location for children's play equipment in areas of shortfall identified under Policy C4;**
- **any other areas which provide the only publicly accessible open space area within easy reach on foot of each residential area within the settlement limits defined under Policy G6, without the need to cross a primary, secondary or local distributor road;**

and/or

b that they contribute visually applying Policy E18; and/or

c that they have nature conservation value, applying Policy E2;

In very exceptional circumstances, within these areas, applications for a small element of non-residential built development may be permitted if:

- **it is of a sufficiently small scale not to dominate the open space;**
- **it assists in retaining the open space use on the rest of the site;**
- **it is functionally related to the open space;**
- **it would not undermine any other Policy, particularly in relation to the reasons for which the open space is protected.**

equipped playing space, it will not be considered unreasonable if an estate distributor road has to be crossed to reach the strategic open space for a particular area.[42]

In terms of this policy, it will be immaterial whether the open space contains playing space or formal parkland, so long as it is publicly accessible, applying criteria in Policies M2, M3 and M5. A particular block of protected open space may contain allotment gardens or a small element of buildings ancillary to the open space use.

The last part of the policy keeps open the outside possibility of open space areas accommodating small elements of built development. On occasion, this could be necessary to allow the remainder of the area to remain open. However such development should be related to the open space use. Ideally it would serve a community purpose. It should also not dominate the site visually and not undermine the reasons for the open space being protected in the first place.

4.5 ALLOTMENTS

Allotments are another major open land use within urban areas, which also provide an important community facility.

Local Authorities had a key role in the creation of allotments.[43] Nowadays their responsibilities are to provide allotment "gardens" not exceeding one-eighth of an acre and to maintain an adequate level of allotment provision to meet proven demands from its residents.[44] In addition the need for Ministerial consent for disposal or use for other purposes remains.

Most Council-owned allotments are "statutory allotments" - i.e. the Council acquired them specifically for that purpose. Any attempt to take them out of allotment use, (e.g. disposal for development), could be open to challenge under the allotments legislation.[45]

The policy of the Council in its role of overseeing the supply of allotment gardens is to retain existing sites.

In spite of this, it is necessary, for planning purposes, to take a more detached look at the distribution of allotment sites around the Plan area and aim to maximise their benefits as a community facility.

The current distribution is somewhat uneven. Blyth has a large number of plots including an extensive area in the heart of the town.[46] On the whole, however, the southern suburbs of the town are served much better than the northern (Cowpen) area. Cramlington has a much lower level of provision than Blyth with approximately half the number of plots.[47] The main area of provision is concentrated at the east of the town well away from the more recently built residential areas. In the Seaton Valley villages, the overall supply of plots is high per head of the population compared with both Cramlington and Blyth. Even so, there is a geographical imbalance in provision with, for example, a total absence of allotments at Seghill.

The Authority is meeting its requirements so long as local demands are being met and there is therefore no point in having a policy which tries to even out the geographical supply of allotments. The geographical inequalities will nevertheless be a consideration, should any relocation of allotments be proposed.

Policy C8 aims to meet the statutory requirement for allotment provision to meet demands, through planning decisions.

C8 (i) covers new areas for allotments, which may be proposed as a replacement for others but may actually represent an increase in overall provision. Full account will be taken of other policies in the Local Plan. Allotments are a use which can be appropriate beyond settlement limits. Nevertheless, It is important to ensure that this type of intensively used facility is easily accessible for those that use them. In practice, situations immediately adjacent to the settlement edges would be preferable.

C8 (ii) sets out criteria against which proposals to displace allotments can be assessed. If it is statutory allotments, (under the allotment Acts), that are involved, there should first be a full assessment by the providing Authority of the adequacy of provision in the locality based on known demand, (measured by waiting lists etc.). This will be the basis for deciding whether any proposed replacement site is suitably located. A suitable replacement site should be negotiated by Planning Agreement before planning permission will be granted for any use which displaces allotments, unless it can be demonstrated that demand has dropped to levels where the displaced provision is no longer necessary. Should a satisfactory replacement site be found, then there must be a suitable lead-in time for the new allotments to establish themselves. It will be at the discretion of the Local Authority to decide what is a suitable lead-in time. During this time, the allotments which they will eventually replace must remain in situ.

As already indicated, some areas of allotment are protected from development because they are an

42 *See Chapter 7, Sub-section 7.5.2 for explanation of road hierarchy.*

43 *The Allotments Act of 1922 introduced into law the concept of the allotment garden, to be used mainly for the production of fruit and vegetables. It led to the creation of small plots mostly in urban areas, which were commonly and legally regarded as a source of food for the poor and needy. Local Authorities were required to consider the need for allotments and acquire or lease land accordingly. The legislation included a stipulation that this land could not be disposed of or used for other purposes without Ministerial consent. The significance of allotments as a source of food increased during the Second World War but thereafter their role was scaled down again.*

44 *In practice, the allotments can be run by separate allotment associations.*

45 *The non-statutory allotments could be disposed of without challenge.*

46 *These are situated at Cowpen Colliery, close to Albion Way.*

47 *For the purposes of analysis, allotments within the East Cramlington, East Hartford and Nelson Village areas are counted as being part of the Cramlington supply.*

Policy ***C 8*** — *ALLOTMENTS*

An adequate level of allotment provision will be ensured as far as possible through planning means both in overall terms and on a more local basis by:

i Encouraging and permitting additional allotments, or the replacement of existing allotments displaced by development, within or outside settlement limits, so long as there is no conflict with other Policies in this Local Plan; where siting is outside the settlement limits account will be taken of the accessibility of the site for residents within the settlement limits; and

ii Where it is proposed to displace allotments as a result of a development proposal, only granting planning permission for the development where both of the following are met:

a in cases where it is statutory allotments that are being displaced, there has been a full assessment of the adequacy of provision, both overall and in the locality, and, where necessary, a replacement site has been identified in a suitable location and with the appropriate lead in time for occupation and its provision guaranteed either directly as part of the planning application or indirectly through negotiation of a Planning Agreement under Policy G11;

b in cases where it is built development, rather than another open use, which is being proposed, the site concerned is neither specifically protected as part of a strategic open space, under Policy C7 (ii) above nor is considered necessary to protect, applying criteria set out in Policy E18;

Overall it will be sought to retain a significant representation of allotment space within the built-up areas. The strategic importance, as a local facility, of the area of allotments to the south of Albion Way, Blyth, will be given full recognition in planning decisions.

integral part of a strategic open space within the built-up areas.[48] This does not necessarily mean that the allotments cannot be displaced under the above criteria - just so long as they are replaced by some other open space use. A similar approach would be applied to those allotment areas, mainly around the periphery of Seaton Delaval, which fall outside the settlement limits - some in the Green Belt (as proposed).

Finally, the strategic value of some areas of allotments to the areas in which they are located needs to be taken into account. The large area of allotments at Cowpen Colliery provides an important community resource for the central and northern part of Blyth and something of a breathing space among the buildings. Although not a strategic open space, nor an area of townscape value, it should be the aim to retain at least the majority of this facility at the present location.

4.6 INDOOR SPORTS PROVISION

Blyth Valley historically has a good level of indoor sports provision, due to there being a major leisure centre in each of the two main towns. These are:

- Blyth Sports Centre which is located in a reasonably accessible location roughly central to the town's built-up area, (though not in the town centre).
- Concordia, which is situated at Cramlington town centre.

Each offers a wide range of facilities. Some are common to both centres - most notably the main sports halls - and therefore provide mainly for that town. Others are only present at one or the other centre and therefore have to cater for the needs of the whole of Blyth Valley.[49]

A Sports Council, examination of indoor provision, concludes that the equivalent of 4 further indoor sports halls of four badminton court size will be required in the

48 *See Policy C7 above.*

49 *Both have swimming pools although they play contrasting roles. Blyth pool serves "serious" swimmers while Concordia offers a leisure pool. Concordia includes an indoor bowls facility, something which is lacking in Blyth at the moment, see also reference below and part iii of the Policy.*

Plan area by 2006.[50] [51] The analysis has two additional conclusions:

1 The shortfalls identified vary geographically and the need is strongest, firstly in the Seaton Delaval area, running across to Seaton Sluice and, secondly the south-eastern part of Cramlington;
2 The shortfall could be met through the dual use of facilities.

Policy C9 therefore sets out a policy for indoor sports provision as follows.

C9 (i) expresses a strong approach in favour of the continuation of the existing two leisure centres. If necessary, expansion will be permitted within the constraints of their sites. Indeed a further expansion site for Blyth Sports Centre exists within the protected open space of Bolam Park. Should the chance present itself for the planned expansion, then the Bolam Park protection will be relaxed accordingly. At Concordia, there is also a small expansion site.[52]

C9 (ii) spells out how moves could be made towards the target identified by the Sports Council.

There is a facility at Astley School which has a degree of dual use already. However, this hall could go towards meeting the shortfall identified in the Seaton Delaval area. The aim will be to meet any additional access requirements of increased public use.

At Cramlington, the shortfall could be met by providing a new facility in association with the development of the south-west. It could be partially funded through commuted payments by developers or a particular developer, through the signing of a Planning Obligation.[53] To maximise its use by different parts of the community and bring forward its construction, it could be built on the existing High School site and provide it with a sports hall facility. All this would be subject to the detailed provisions of the Master Plan, once prepared.[54]

The sports hall at Tynedale High School, Blyth, has an element of dual use. There is scope for a better facility. Should the High School remain or expand on the site, it



Concordia Sports Centre, Cramlington View from Forum Way

50 *The need for indoor sports facilities is measured by examining existing facilities and assessing how heavily they are used in relation to their total capacity. Any expressed or latent demand not being met can then be taken into account. This is a more complex task than that necessary to look at outdoor sports provision, where, for example, the maximum use of pitches is one to two games per week, (see earlier parts of this chapter). With indoor sports facilities, the ease with which demand can be accommodated depends on a complex trade-off between the physical capacity of facilities and the hours during which they are available.*

51 *Recently, it has been necessary, due to financial constraints, to limit opening hours at the existing centres and it is difficult to envisage the provision of additional facilities in such a climate.*

52 *See also Policy C19 below - on Cultural Facilities.*

53 *As the population increase generated by the south-west sector will affect the needs of the town, it is considered reasonable that this development contributes to the cost of the required townwide facilities. This contribution would be based on the eventual total population of the south-west sector as a proportion of the town's population as a whole on its completion, (currently estimated at 17%).*

54 *Policy M2 emphasises the need for a strong pedestrian / cycle link between the High School and the South-West Sector development sites. See also Chapter 11.*

Policy **C9** — *INDOOR SPORT*

Indoor sports facilities will be encouraged to meet community needs, including those generated by new development, and, where possible, to meet new areas of participation. This will include:

i The retention of the two major leisure centres, encouraging their further expansion within site constraints if and when appropriate;

ii Seeking additional accessible facilities on a more localised basis mainly through negotiating the dual use of indoor sports facilities within Educational or other establishments. Included in this will be the aim of adding to the publicly accessible facilities, the equivalent of four further four badminton court size sports halls by the end of the Plan period, which will be assisted by the following, in priority order:

- **a seeking to allow for the any planning implications arising from expanded public use of the existing indoor sports facilities located within the High School complex at Seaton Delaval, in recognition of local community needs in Seaton Delaval and the surrounding area;**
- **b the promotion of the development of a sports hall in association with the development of the South West Sector of Cramlington, with the anticipated location being within the Cramlington High School site;**
- **c seeking to allow any planning implications arising from the public use of new or existing indoor sports facilities located within High School premises at Blyth, having regard, if appropriate, to:**
  - **the need to provide facilities in association with the continued development of West Blyth, in accordance with Proposal WB11; and**
  - **the level and relative location of facilities already provided at Blyth Sports Centre.**

iii The implementation of an indoor bowls facility for Blyth will be given priority. In determining planning applications for this or other one-off indoor sports facilities, regard will be had to:

- **any impact on local amenity resulting from the nature or likely intensity of the use;**
- **the accessibility of the site on foot, by bicycle and by public transport.**

will be aimed to tie in the enhancement of the publicly accessible facility with the housing development at West Blyth.[55]

There is also a sports hall at Ridley High School which currently does not have public access. Moves towards its dual use should that school remain will be made cautiously in view of the proximity of Blyth Sports Centre, in case the role of that centre is undermined. The position of the school in the centre of a housing area means that any increase in public access would need to be examined carefully.

C9 (iii) recognises that there is a strongly expressed demand for the indoor bowls facility at Concordia, Cramlington to be duplicated at Blyth.[56] It is important that any applications for one-off facilities such as this are considered with a view to any impact on surrounding areas resulting from the nature or intensity of the use.

55 *See Sub-Section 4.3.2 above and Chapter 13 . The approach is similar to that for the floodlit facility - see above*

56 *Possible sites have been examined and outline planning permission obtained for the facility at New Delaval. It will be the aim to implement this proposal in the early part of the Plan period.*

4.7 EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

The Plan area has a relatively young population. The proportion of the population of school age was over 15 per cent at the time of the 1991 Census compared with below 14 per cent in Northumberland as a whole.

While the quality of education is not a land use matter, there is a role for planning in ensuring that educational facilities are as accessible as possible.

4.7.1 Distribution of Educational Establishments

Policy C10 sets out the ways in which planning policy will be used to strike a balance between the distribution of educational establishments and the population. Although a matter for the Education Authority, the travelling patterns of children to and from schools, as determined by the locations of those schools in relation to the population, are a relevant consideration for the Local Plan because of its overall aim of minimising travelling distances. Also of relevance is the need to allow for the safe and efficient movement of people by public transport, by bicycle and on foot.

C10 (i) recognises the advantages of the relatively tight network of schools in Blyth Valley.

It is appropriate for the educational needs of large new development areas to be funded in this way. This part of the Policy then sets out the new school provision likely to be needed during the Plan period, if development rates are as anticipated.

FIRST SCHOOLS

A three tier system of schools operates in Northumberland. This means that there is a relatively tight-knit pattern of schools for the youngest age groups.[57]

It is true that there are some parts of Blyth Valley where catchment areas have become anomalous. (For example, in southern Blyth, many children attend a school which is not the closest to where they live). New schools are needed in some places, as detailed below. On the whole, however, provision is good.

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

If there is any disadvantage in having a three tier system of education, in terms of distribution, it lies within the upper two tiers. Middle Schools, with a narrow age band of pupils, are necessarily fewer in number than would be primary schools, meaning longer average journeys to school for nine to eleven year olds in Blyth and Cramlington than would be the case, say, on Tyneside. This is not assisted by the unbalanced distribution of Middle Schools in certain areas. (For instance, both Middle Schools serving the population of the northern half of Blyth, are located within the Tynedale Drive, / Cowpen Road complex).

Nevertheless, with the assistance of a good public transport system, it can be stated that Middle School provision is quite well distributed in Blyth Valley.

HIGH SCHOOLS

High schools present more of a strategic problem in terms of distribution. The town of Blyth has a population which has remained stable in the last ten years or more, at 35,000.

The town has two long established High Schools, on at either end of the town. There is now likely to be a merger of the two facilities onto one enhanced site.

Cramlington has a growing population now approaching 30,000. The town covers a larger land area than Blyth. The 1991 Census showed the school age population of Blyth and Cramlington to be virtually identical. The development of the town has tended to favour the centralisation of certain facilities and this is true of High School facilities which are concentrated on a single campus and seem likely to remain so for the foreseeable future.

In the Seaton Valley area, there is a High School at Seaton Delaval which serves its area fully and has spare capacity.

4.7.2 Additions to Educational Establishments

With the above in mind, the following three parts of Policy C10 look at how additional educational provision may occur.

C10 (ii) tabulates the specific additional First and Middle school facilities that will be sought as a reflection of the policy of the Local Education Authority.

NORTH-EAST CRAMLINGTON

Various school facilities which had been intended for the North-East Cramlington Community Development Area are now no longer needed, due to a combination of factors, including the lower density of housing being built and the lower average household sizes.

Nonetheless, an additional First School is required and there is a possible need for a Middle School too. Land is set aside for this purpose in the locality of the Brockwell Centre.[58]

57 *The original aim of the three tier system was to keep young children close to home for as long as possible in the rural areas. This is because specialist teachers would not be required, on the whole, for the under eights. More urbanised areas such as Blyth Valley gain as a result of this, in that there is a very tight-knit pattern of First Schools within easy walking distance of home for most five to eight year olds.*

58 *See Chapter 10, Sub-section 10.2.2.*

Policy **C 10** — *EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES*

A satisfactory balance between educational provision and the distribution of population will be sought through the planning process by:

i The appropriate protection of existing educational establishments in situ in accordance with Policy C11 below;

ii Ensuring that land is available in suitable locations for anticipated school facility needs over the longest possible forecast period including the safeguarding of sites for new or replacement school provision, as set out in the table below:

	PROPOSAL FOR SCHOOL:	IN ACCORDANCE WITH:
a	A First School and a possible Middle School at Cramlington North-East Community Development Area	Proposal NE4 (b)
b	Two First Schools, (one being a reserve site), and One Middle School at Cramlington South West Community Development Area, at least the first First School to be provided within the Plan period, if the anticipated development rate is realised	Proposals SW4 (a)
c	A second First School, at South Beach Community Development Area	Proposal SB4 (b)
d	A First School at Seaton Delaval to replace an old First School at Double Row, its site to be adjacent to the existing Middle School Site at Western Avenue	N/A
e	A First School in the Crofton Mill area to replace an old school on Plessey Road	Proposal CM4
f	Any school that may be required to provide for other new development in the Plan period	N/A

iii Where new development is proposed within or adjacent to a High School site, ensuring that their layout, access and parking take account of the role of the school as a townwide community facility requiring public access;

iv Where land is available within settlement limits in a location which is accessible by public transport, giving favourable consideration to any proposal to establish a facility for further or higher education within the Plan area subject to there being no significant conflict with other policies and proposals in this Plan;

v Taking account of the need for nursery schools by granting permission for their accommodation, subject to site specific considerations:

- **a within the sites of new or existing schools, also incorporating them into any assessment under Policy C11 (iii);**
- **b as part of community centres or other community facilities;**
- **c in residential areas, applying criteria in Policy W8 (i) and (ii).**

Where necessary and directly related to the development proposed, Planning Agreements under Policy G11 will be negotiated with the developers of large areas of housing to secure the appropriate provision under parts (ii) and (v) above.

SOUTH WEST CRAMLINGTON

Initial assessments of the educational needs of the South-West Sector of Cramlington development are that one Middle School and two First Schools will be required as a minimum to serve the completed sector. Within the Plan period, it is possible that a third to half of the residential content of the Sector will be complete. It will therefore be necessary to provide one First School within the Plan period. The necessity for the Middle School and the other First School within the Plan period will need careful investigation. The latter will take the form of a reserve site.[59]

59 *See Chapter 11, Sub-section 11.3.3.*

SOUTH BEACH

The need for a second First School to serve the South Beach area of Blyth has been recognised for several years during which the existing First School has been operating at or above capacity. A site is therefore allocated and the development of the school sought at an early date.[60]

SEATON DELAVAL

The replacement of an existing older First School in a peripheral location (at Double Row), by a more modern facility has been a target for some years at Seaton Delaval. A site has long been identified within the Middle School site at Western Avenue.[61]

CROFTON MILL

Another facility where the need for a replacement was first recognised some years ago is the First School at Plessey Road, towards the centre of Blyth. Again, this is an older school which does not meet current expectations. The site for this replacement facility is dealt within the relevant area specific chapter.[62]

OTHER NEEDS

Apart from the above, new housing development elsewhere may have the effect of creating the need for additional school provision. The long term development area at South-West Newsham is likely to be opened up before the end of the Plan period, although it is unlikely that any First School would be needed before 2006.[63]

HIGH SCHOOL EXPANSION NEEDS

C10 (iii) recognises that the High Schools are major complexes within the towns in which they are situated. As well as catering for increasing numbers of pupils, they provide an increasing community role. This may have planning implications as the Plan period progresses, in terms of additional facilities or access requirements. These will require careful consideration in the context of the residential areas within which the schools lie.

FURTHER / HIGHER EDUCATION

C10 (iv) takes account of the renewed expansion currently taking place in Further Education and Higher Education. It may be that some form of establishment, along these lines, would wish to locate in the Borough in the future. If so, it would not necessarily require a town centre location but would need to be favourably situated for public transport. No site is allocated for this type of use. Any proposal would therefore need to be considered in terms of the level of conflict with Proposals in the Plan.

4.7.3 **Nursery Schools**

C10 (v) looks at nursery school provision. Their space requirements are usually small. It is often convenient for them to be located within school sites. They may slot into surplus school space if it becomes available - one room on a part time basis may be sufficient.[64] An equally suitable location would be within a community building of some sort. It is also recognised that they will be operated as businesses from the home or, at least, within residential areas. Where they fall under planning control, it will be sought to favour them within criteria set out in Policy W8 on mixed uses.[65]

Finally, the Policy cross refers to the Policy on seeking provision of relevant facilities through Planning Agreements and development contributions[66]

4.7.4 **Changes of Land / Buildings from Educational Use**

Policy C11 looks at the other side of the task of retaining an appropriate pattern of educational establishments - that is, seeking to prevent an over-reduction in facilities taking account of long term geographical needs.

C11 (i) states that, when any proposal is made to develop land or buildings for non-educational purposes, a planning application will be needed and will be looked at in terms of the overall pattern of facilities.

C11 (ii) sets the procedure for dealing with potential losses of school fields. Even if this involves only a small proportion of the school field concerned, it will be assessed in terms of the local provision of public playing space[67] and its townscape merit.[68] [69]

If school buildings are to be lost, it may be appropriate to examine their potential to provide other community facilities for their areas, especially where there are known shortages of community buildings,[70] and negotiate with the Education Authority on this matter.

60 *See Chapter 13, Sub-section 13.2.4.*
61 *See also Chapter 15 for proposals on Seaton Delaval.*
62 *See Chapter 17, Sub-section 17.2.4.*
63 *See Chapter 14.*
64 *N.B. Policy C11 (iii) will be applied accordingly.*
65 *See Chapter 6, Section 6.5.*
66 *See Sub-sections 2.6.5 and 2.6.6.*
67 *See in particular Sub-section 4.3.4 above.*
68 *See Chapter 1, Sub-section 1.6.2.*
69 *School fields are most often considered to be of townscape value if they are in an exposed location on a main road or the edge of a built-up area.*
70 *See especially Section 4.13, below.*

Policy **C 11** — *CHANGES FROM EDUCATIONAL USE*

Where development is for non-educational uses affecting land and buildings currently in educational use or land specifically held for new schools and school expansions, planning permission will only be granted where all of the following criteria apply, as appropriate:

i Either there is a direct replacement for the facilities or site being taken out of educational use or it can be demonstrated that the reduction in facilities is acceptable in terms of the aims of Policy C10; and

ii In the case of school playing fields, there has been an assessment of:

a their current or potential contribution towards any underprovision of publicly accessible playing space, applying the criteria set out in Policy C6;

b their visual contribution to the townscape, applying the criteria set out in Policy E18 (i), with permission normally being refused

- **on those areas or edges of playing fields considered to be of particular townscape value and protected under Policy E18 (ii) and**
- **where the land concerned lies beyond defined settlement limits in which Policy G8, G9 or G10 will apply.**

Policy **C 12** — *TEMPORARY CLASSROOMS*

Where observations are sought, through the Development Control Scheme, on applications to site mobile classrooms or other temporary facilities on school sites, the Education Authority will be encouraged, for reasons of amenity, only to grant planning permission on a temporary basis, preferably for no more than five years, to be renewed only in exceptional circumstances, on the assumption that a longer term need would warrant permanent buildings.

4.7.5 **Temporary Classrooms**

Insofar as the Local Planning Authority can influence such matters it should be the aim to provide permanent, well situated facilities for educational purposes. On occasion, there may be a temporary local rise in school population. It may be that a rise is sustained and there is a temporary local crisis while new school premises are completed. Either of these situations would be a perfectly valid explanation for temporary school buildings. **Policy C12** makes clear that the longer term siting of mobile classrooms, as a substitute for permanent facilities, will be avoided wherever possible.

4.8 SHOPS AND RELATED SERVICES

Shops are another example of a service which, like schools and playing space, have more than one tier of provision - a local element plus more strategically located central facilities.

The overall approach of this Local Plan includes the minimisation of travelling distance. This is firmly applied in land use policies for community facilities such as education and playing space already described, the aim being to strengthen the local network of provision of playgrounds, First Schools etc.[71] This is based upon an assumption that they should continue to be truly local and that people would not be prepared (and should not be expected) to travel unreasonable distances to reach them.

In the case of shopping services, recent trends have reduced the reliability of the lower tier (local) level of provision to a much greater extent than for other types of services. One task of this Local Plan will be reverse this trend as far as is possible through individual planning decisions. This would be meeting two of its basic objectives - minimising energy use (i.e. travelling distance) and equalising accessibility to community facilities.

In spite of the above, the starting point for the planning of shopping services has to be the existing pattern. It must be asked where people do their shopping at present and acknowledged that, although some people may be forced to use particular shopping centres because there is no good local alternative, equally importantly, there is a large element of positive choice involved. Within this framework, the Plan can then look for any inequalities in accessibility and calculate the elements which need to be provided locally to fill any gaps.

4.8.1 Convenience Shopping

The term "convenience shopping" is used to refer to those elements of household purchases which are essential and need to be purchased on a regular basis. It therefore includes all food items as well as such things as newspapers and household cleaning materials. Their traditional outlet is the corner shop. However the increased availability of cars (and deep freezes), coupled with economies of scale have meant that increasing numbers of people have been prepared and become used to travel greater distances to larger outlets, on a less regular basis, for the bulk of their convenience purchases.

SUPERSTORES AND LARGE SUPERMARKETS

On a national level, supermarkets, superstores and hypermarkets have succeeded in capturing an increasing proportion of household expenditure on convenience goods. The average size of store built has increased in order to allow greater space and choice of goods but this has meant that larger sites are needed which town centres do not necessarily provide. In consequence, there has been a shift to out of town locations with associated accessibility problems.

Within Blyth Valley, the dangers of supermarkets located on non-central sites with poor public transport connections, were recognised at an early date and there were strong policies to ensure opportunities for their location in the two town centres. However the arrival in the region of the even larger superstore led to shopping travel patterns on a wider than District level. Out of centre superstores along the northern fringe of the Tyneside conurbation drew a significant proportion of expenditure on convenience goods by Blyth Valley residents, out of Blyth Valley all together.

In Cramlington it was possible to respond through the location of a superstore at the western end of the town centre and this has now been complemented by a replacement anchor store at the eastern end. The size, quality and accessibility of these sites are equal to any out of town location with the added advantage of the adjacent, existing town centre facilities.

It was not easy to find a solution to the problem in Blyth. A centrally located site of sufficient size was simply unavailable. The solution was to grant permission for a superstore within the town but on its fringe - at West Blyth.[72] The site chosen is well served by public transport, being on one of the main access routes into the town; it also provides a valuable facility for the Cowpen part of the town. At the same time, it is also attractive to the car borne shopper by virtue of being at a major junction of the South-East Northumberland Spine Road.

It is now considered that supermarkets are well represented in Blyth Valley and that the necessary choice of outlet is in place for the foreseeable future. It is therefore not necessary to identify sites specifically for further large supermarkets or superstores. The policy framework set out in this section does, however allow for the additional provision of this type of convenience outlet, should the need arise, but with the aim of steering it to the most accessible location.

SMALLER SHOPS

Small, local shops, though in decline in terms of the proportion of expenditure that they capture, continue to be a vital part of the shopping hierarchy. In order to be of

71 *In the case of playing space, the locally provided level is the local children's playground or the park; the higher level is the sports ground serving a whole town. In terms of education, the First School is the facility which people expect to be local; the higher the level of education, the more they accept the need to travel out of the immediate locality.*

72 *See also Chapter 12.*

most benefit, they will supply convenience, rather than comparison goods, (see below). Given the overall aims of the Plan and this set of Policies on community facilities, there is a need to ensure that maximum opportunity continues to be given for small to medium size shops selling convenience goods. The policy framework below aims to allow for this.

4.8.2 **Comparison Shopping**

The term "comparison shopping" refers to the purchase of goods which are either non-essential (luxury) or generally regarded as essential but only need to be purchased occasionally. Comparison between quality, prices etc. is normal before purchase. Stores selling these goods are therefore concentrated in certain locations - particularly main town and city centres.

As with foodstores, car travel encouraged the sale of comparison goods from fewer locations and, eventually, from out of town. The trend has been further encouraged by the fact that any increase in disposable income of the buying public, is usually directed towards the purchase of more and better durable goods which in turn leads to more varied sales methods. The move of comparison shopping out of town was led by bulky goods - in the form of "retail warehouses" and "retail parks"; but, more recently, the full range of comparison goods has been sold from out of centre locations. [73]

THE ROLE OF THE TWO MAIN CENTRES

Blyth and Cramlington, as market towns, are destinations to which people travel to buy and compare goods. They therefore both have outlets selling comparison goods but mobility between places means that neither can be expected to sell a full range. Clothing and other goods are necessarily concentrated in the regional capital, Newcastle,[74] but it has been the strategy to retain and expand upon the range of goods sold in the two main town centres.

Blyth

In Blyth, the key has been the provision of modern floorspace by securing the Keel Row redevelopment scheme. This opened the way for high street stores with very strict space requirements to be represented in the town for the first time. At the very least, it is estimated that Keel Row has stemmed the net outward flow of shoppers from of the town due to Metro Centre and other recent additions to outside attractions.

Cramlington

At Cramlington the strategy for many years was the gradual development of the covered shopping mall at Manor Walks; but this has not been enough. The proximity of the town to Newcastle and the incoming, young, mobile population, (with no established pattern of town centre shopping), tended to prevent retail floorspace growing in line with population growth. Chain stores continue to be underrepresented in the town, considering its size and its status as a regional growth point.

More recently, the aim has been to solve this and other problems by securing the development of a retail park taking up most of the remaining town centre land. The advantages of this approach are:

- it quickly brought the town centre retail floorspace level in line with that expected of a town of nearly 30,000 population;
- it provides retail warehouse outlets, which would otherwise be out of town, in a highly accessible town centre location;
- it enables Cramlington to serve its strategic role in terms of this type of provision, with any large scale retail park development proposal in Blyth likely to be resisted in Blyth on the basis that a retail warehouse park is a sub-regional facility;
- it introduces into Cramlington, ranges of goods not previously represented.

4.8.3 **Approach to Proposals for Shopping Development**

These five Policies follow the approach outlined at the beginning of this Section and set out the ways in which future planning applications for retail development will be assessed and determined.

A GENERAL POLICY

Policy C13 simply makes clear that the accessibility of proposed shops will be the primary concern when deciding whether to grant permission. Regard will be had to the position in relation to surrounding population. Proposals with easy access on foot from residential areas will be favoured. This cannot always be achieved for reasons such as a lack of suitable sites. Applications less centrally placed to people's homes, will therefore be examined mainly in relation to access by public transport. The following Policies introduce a tiered approach, which provides the structure for assessing proposed locations.

MAIN CENTRES

The next Policy deals with the two main town centres - Cramlington and Blyth. Policies in Chapter 2 of this Written Statement reemphasise that these centres should continue their longstanding role. Government advice now recognises that, while new forms of retailing are valid, established centres, with their geographic centrality and well developed transport links, should not be allowed to be overshadowed by large, out of centre developments.

73 *The main local example is the Gateshead Metro Centre).*

74 *These are shops where purchase is relatively rare, and the item is easily carried home.*

Chapters 8 and 9 set out strategies for enhancing the roles of Cramlington and Blyth respectively. **Policy C14** explains those decision making processes, on shopping, which will be common to both.

C14 (i), first of all, defines quite tightly drawn "Central Shopping Areas" and makes clear that, within these areas, it will be the norm to grant planning permission for retail use. This includes some specific Proposals at Cramlington Town Centre. [75]

It is commonly thought that the hearts of large shopping centres thrive better if certain types of non-retail uses which have a tendency to occupy shop front premises are limited. This is the reason for having "retail frontage policies". In Blyth, there are plenty of surrounding streets which contain suitable premises for these other uses.[76] It is therefore possible to limit them in places like Keel Row and the market square with a strong and detailed Policy.[77] In Cramlington, there is not a wider area within which these uses can locate. They must therefore be allowed within the Manor Walks shopping mall, which comprises the Central Shopping Area. They will not, however, be permitted to occupy more than 50 per cent of the total ground floor frontage.

Two of the key words used in describing the condition of a thriving town centre are "vitality and viability". The approach taken has long been that when these aspects are threatened, outside proposals should not be looked upon favourably. Advice currently emerging from central Government allow vitality and viability to be more accurately defined than has been the case in the past. Some of these are concerned with the operation of the economy of the centre. However **C14 (ii)** sets down some of the land use aspects which will be used in assessing whether outlying proposals are likely to pose a threat to vitality and viability. (See also the next two Policies). Diversity, vacancy and accessibility will be three of the key words. Of relevance in assessing the first of these will be the retention of a level of presentation of convenience shopping. When faced with an application that could pose a threat to vitality and viability, an impact assessment will sometimes be required. This may reveal many other types of threat. The list in this part of the Policy is therefore, by no means mutually exclusive.

EDGE OF TOWN CENTRE PROPOSALS

When considering ways in which to accommodate additional shopping floorspace, it is necessary to look beyond the existing Central Shopping Areas.

It is necessary to have a Policy which makes allowance for this overspill effect - defining a zone where restrictions on substantial new shopping floorspace are less strong than elsewhere, in order to allow for additional facilities to locate within walking distance of existing town centre shops.

Policy C15 takes, as its definition of sites that will be treated in this way, any site, all or part of which is within 300 metres of any part of the defined Central Shopping Area.

C15 (i) recognises that such a broad zone will contain residential areas and therefore may have local shopping needs that need to be met. Cross reference is therefore made to a later Policy which deals with local shopping needs. Allowance will therefore be made for proposals which, by virtue of their small scale, or otherwise as specified in that Policy, would meet a purely local need. All applications below 929 square metres gross trading area will be treated as not posing a threat for town centres and will be assessed purely against local shopping criteria in Policy C17 below, although more than one such proposal, closely spaced geographically and over time, could pose a threat. (The figure of 929 square metres, 1000 square feet is taken because it is the cut-off point above which an application is recorded on Northumberland County Council's retail database, which is used as a template against which to assess retail applications with a potential strategic / sub-regional impact).

C15 (ii) sets out how a positive approach will be taken in these edge of town centre zones. A peripheral location may be chosen for an application, for example, if the land requirement could not be met in, or adjacent to, the main shopping thoroughfares. Such land intensive uses may offer benefits for the vitality and viability of the centre, which outweigh the disadvantages of it being some distance away from the existing shops. Where appropriate, it will be sought, through a Planning Obligation, that suitable off-site links, (footpaths, crossings etc.), are made with the town centre.[78] Depending on factors such as the scale of a proposal or its actual physical removal from the existing shops, an impact assessment may be required to assess the effects on the existing shops.[79] If so, the vitality and viability factors, mentioned earlier, will be used. These effects, will be weighed against the positive effects already referred to.

Where large retail units are granted in edge of centre locations under this Policy and are subsequently vacated, applications for alternative uses may not be granted if considered inappropriate or not complementary to the functioning of the town centre, particularly if their removal as available units could, subsequently, lead to further town centre related demand at a less convenient location.

75 *See the beginning part of Chapter 8.*

76 *Chapter 9 defines a wider "Secondary Commercial Area" within which these uses will be allowed to locate.*

77 *See Policy B1 in Chapter 9.*

78 *See Chapter 2, Sub-Section 2.6.5.*

79 *This would be the case, for instance, if the floorspace being provided was in a location not immediately adjacent to the Central Shopping Area and of a type thought likely to attract out an important element of the town centre range of uses already in the centre.*

Policy **C 13** — *SHOPPING: GENERAL*

Applications for retail development, falling within Class A1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, will be determined with a view to maximising the range of facilities available to the whole population, within the parameters set down in Policies C14 to C17 below.

Policy **C 14** — *SHOPPING: MAIN CENTRES*

At the town centres of Cramlington and Blyth, the vitality and viability as retail centres will be retained and enhanced, having regard to

- **their role as main service centres, (in line with Policies G2 (ii) and G3 (ii) respectively)**
- **the strategies for their development, (as set out in Chapters 8 and 9 respectively)**

as follows:

i Within the Central Shopping Areas, which are shown on the Proposals Map:

a planning permission for retail development, falling within Class A1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order, 1987, will be granted, subject to other Policies and Proposals and site specific considerations, including small additions to Manor Walks Shopping Centre, Cramlington, in accordance with Proposal CC1;

b planning permission for other uses, (at ground level), will be controlled:

- **in Blyth, by applying the Blyth Retail Frontage Policy (Policy B1);**
- **in Cramlington, by refusing non-Class A1 Uses, should the proportion of the total frontage within the indoor malls, (comprising Manor Walks at ground floor level), in those uses fall below 50 per cent.**

ii Proposals, with the exception of those entirely within the Central Shopping Areas, which need to be assessed for their potential effect on the vitality and viability of the town centres, applying Policies C15 (ii) or C16 (ii to v), may be required to be the subject of an impact study in association with the planning application and will be considered to have an adverse effect if the retail impact study clearly demonstrates that they would cause:

- **a significant reduction in the diversity of uses within the town centre, including a loss of representation of large convenience outlets, (normally taken to be supermarkets of at least 929 square metres gross trading area);**
- **a significant increase in the proportion of vacant ground floor property within the Central Shopping Areas defined above;**
- **a significant reduction in the average level of accessibility to shopping facilities in the centre, taking account of the modal split of transport use of those using the centre;**

with other effects revealed by an impact study also being taken into account.

In Blyth town centre, an area adjoining the existing Central Shopping Area is seen as a long term expansion site, possibly to include A1 retail uses. Linkages with existing shops would need to be improved. The tests within Policy C15 (ii) will be applied to any large scale retail proposal within the area and this could include a requirement for an assessment of the impact of any proposal on the vitality and viability of the existing central shopping area.

OUT OF TOWN CENTRE PROPOSALS

The next Policy, **Policy C16**, gives the approach to be taken to major retail applications in any location other than the two Central Shopping Areas (Policy C14) and their peripheries (Policy C15). Also excluded from this Policy is the "Local Service Area" defined for Seaton Delaval in Chapter 15.

As made clear in **C16 (i)**, the Policy also omits retail applications which would be acceptable as meeting purely local needs. All applications for below 929 square metres gross trading area will be assessed under the criteria in the local shopping Policy below, (Policy C17), for reasons already explained. That Policy also contains some proposals for local provision, which may total above 929 square metres. Cumulative impacts will, however, need to be taken into account.

C16 (ii) explains that, with the above exceptions, applications will be considered in terms of any possible impact on the vitality and viability of a town centre.[80] It should be made clear that this does not mean that a formal impact assessment will need to be carried out in all cases. Cumulative impacts will however need to be taken into account.

The impact on Seaton Delaval, as a centre serving surrounding areas, is not a subject dealt with in the local shopping Policy below. Nevertheless, it is valid that the criteria in ***that*** Policy, rather than those in the town centre Policy, be used to assess any proposal likely to impact on it. In making such an assessment, account will be taken of the strategy set out for the village in Chapter 15.

Even if a proposal is considered not to have an adverse impact on either of the town centres, to be granted permission, it should be well related to the population, including planned areas of population increase. Where possible, proposals should be close to existing shopping - a topic which is covered below in relation to local shopping parades. It will be sought that new shopping facilities are not cut off from the main residential areas that would make use of them. Where, in exceptional circumstances, a location peripheral to residential areas is chosen and otherwise acceptable - e.g. on a main road where passing trade could be attracted - it will be ensured that the site is capable of being adequately accessed by people on foot, bicycles etc., and of being served by public transport.

One location which is considered to be vulnerable to future retail proposals is the axis of the A19 along the southern edge of Cramlington. A store here would be accessible to large parts of the Tyneside fringe as well as Cramlington itself but would detract seriously from other centres including Cramlington town centre. The Seaton Burn roundabout is a particularly accessible location at the junction of four different Plan areas. It is important to have a co-ordinated approach to resisting pressure for superstore development at this location.[81]

The remainder of the Policy examines categories of retailing likely to seek out of centre locations.

Retail Warehouses

Retail warehouses are a large scale form of development from which particular ranges of goods are sold, using sites which are accessible for motor vehicles. Mostly, it is bulky goods which underlie the reasons for retail warehouse chains being formed and seeking sites that are highly accessible by road. These are the types of goods which customers would normally expect to be able to take away by vehicle. In many of the chains that now exist, the range of goods on offer has widened to include large arrays of associated goods, which may not themselves be bulky. Hence they have the potential, if unchecked, to divert expenditure away from entire sectors of town centre durable shopping.

It is therefore important to place controls on retail warehouses away from town centres. **C16 (iii)** states that the impact of proposals will be looked at in terms of the vitality and viability of the town centres in the same way as will other large shopping developments.

Retail warehouses are now well provided for through the opening of the retail warehouse park at Cramlington which, due to its town centre location, adds to, rather than detracts from, the attraction of Cramlington town centre as a shopping resource. It also provides a strategic facility for the whole of the Plan area.

However, the Policy does allow for the possible location of modest retail warehouse development elsewhere. Within Blyth, which currently lacks retail warehouses, the preferred site is within the road frontage part of the site of the former Bates Colliery. The extent to which such floorspace could be permitted there would depend on any adverse impact on Blyth Town Centre.[82]

80 *There may be instances where this impact could be on a town centre outside the Plan area.*

81 *The proposed Green Belt designation should assist in this process.*

82 *See also Proposal WP2.*

Policy **C 15** — *SHOPPING: EDGE OF TOWN CENTRE PROPOSALS*

Outside the Central Shopping Areas of Cramlington and Blyth Town Centres, as defined at Policy C14 above, but within walking distance, which will normally be taken as within 300 metres of any part of them, an application for retail development, falling within Class A1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order, 1987, will be determined as follows, subject to other Policies and proposals and site specific considerations:

i The application will be granted permission if it is

- **below 929 square metres gross trading area and meets criteria in Policy C17 (iii) or (vi), although the cumulative impact of two or more such proposals will be taken into account, especially where in close proximity to eachother geographically and in their timing; or**
- **is the subject of a firm proposal in Policy C17 (v);**

ii Apart from circumstances covered by (i) above, permission may also be granted for a proposal which cannot be accommodated within the central shopping area, due to land and other constraints, but provided that:

a there are good linkages to the existing central shopping area for pedestrians and other users covered by Policy M2;

b the positive effects are not considered to be outweighed by likely adverse effects on the vitality and viability of the existing central shopping area, applying criteria in C14 (ii).

The area covered by Proposal BP2 to the east of the Central Shopping Area of Blyth, shall include Class A1 retail as an acceptable use, although any proposals for 929 square metres or more gross trading area, will be subject to the above tests.

Retailing Within Work Activity Areas

C16 (iv) recognises that it is important not to allow retailing within industrial estates and other work activity areas,[83] unless it allows factory sales from the same premises, or is otherwise ancillary to another use. The main reasons for this are the need to avoid unnecessary access by the public to the working area and the need, in many of the areas, to ensure maximum availability of land for pure work activity uses. Exceptions may be made for particular bulky goods within a narrowly defined range where there appears to be no practical alternative than an industrial estate setting; but the sale of the wide ranges of bulky goods found in many retail warehouses would not be contemplated within these areas for the above reasons. In addition, some bulky goods - e.g. building materials sold form an open yard - may be visually most appropriate in an industrial setting.

Recently, there have been cases of groups of factory shops being developed in locations away from all or any of the factories in which the goods concerned were manufactured.[84] Their rarity, and speciality value, (in that they sell goods directly to the public at below traditional retail price), mean that they are viewed potentially as a regional attraction. Proposals will therefore be assessed in the same way as would retail warehouses of equivalent floorspace.

Warehouse Clubs etc.

Another relatively recent phenomenon is the warehouse club, where members can obtain goods within both the convenience and comparison ranges at wholesale prices.[85] They have the potential to make inroads into day-to-day retail expenditure, if not checked. These too will therefore, under **C16 (v)** be examined in relation to their potential impact on the established town centres.

83 *These are defined in the Chapter on Work Activity.*

84 *The closest to have gained permission at the time of adoption of this Local Plan is at North Shields.*

85 *Membership is by subscription and is generally available. Major savings on purchasing goods, (normally in bulk), enable the expense of membership to be recovered fairly easily.*

A STRONG POLICY FOR LOCAL SHOPPING PROVISION

Against the background of careful protection of the main town centres, while making room for some expansion and allowance for new forms of retailing, it is important also to draw up a comprehensive policy for the purpose of strengthening local shopping provision in Blyth Valley. This is the intention of **Policy C17**.

Main and Local Service Centres

C17 (i) emphasises the importance of the two town centres as convenient and accessible ***local*** facilities, as well as their more strategic role. It is aimed to retain a good representation of convenience floorspace in the two main service centres, (Cramlington and Blyth town centres).

C17 (ii) makes the same point for Seaton Delaval as a local service centre for the surrounding area.

These three shopping centres are the most accessible to large numbers of people. The term "vitality and viability" has been used extensively above. Government advice stresses that, in order to be fully vibrant (or "vital"), main service centres should retain a significant element of convenience shopping outlets. In other words, the centres would suffer badly if people could not buy food and other everyday items while they were there. This does not just refer to supermarkets, but also the full range of specialist convenience outlets, (bakers, fruit stores etc.). Some of these types of outlet, which used to exist in every local centre, now only survive in the main centres. It is also of great importance to aim to retain the markets which operate on certain days of the week.

Planning decisions can do no more than facilitate the continued existence of these features in the town centres. It may help, for example, if shops are allowed to expand as much as possible within their existing premises or install more functional delivery arrangements. Policies favouring pedestrian only areas can assist, especially in encouraging markets. The chapters on Blyth and Cramlington Town Centres and Seaton Delaval contain policies and proposals to assist the achievement of the above.[86]

Suburban Areas and Neighbourhood Centres

The suburban parts of Blyth and Cramlington, (and Seaton Delaval), contain neighbourhood shopping centres which provide local shopping facilities for their particular areas. The trends discussed above have led to a significant contraction of corner shops and small shopping parades, especially in the older town of Blyth. Vacant units present a problem in some parades. Others only survive because of an element of non-essential services such as antique shops. Specialist food shops have moved out. Chain store general dealers have preferred town centre locations. That neighbourhood centres continue to exist, owes much to those services that still need to be local in spite of the motor car. The two main examples are firstly the "convenience" store (in the true sense of the word) which operates well outside normal working hours and stocks a wide range of goods for "topping up" the weekly shopping basket and secondly newsagents; although there are other more recent additions to this list - notably video hire - as well as some of the service uses that prefer to be around the corner - takeaways, hairdressers etc..

A survey has been carried out to ascertain which of the suburban groupings of shop and related uses constitute useful facilities which planning policy should seek to retain for the benefit of the neighbourhood in which they lie.

C17 (iii) takes the list of identified neighbourhood facilities and aims towards the retention of a useful convenience shopping element within or close to them for the duration of the Plan period.

Six ways are listed in which this will be done.

a In spite of their continued existence, many of the listed centres are run down and radical action, using an element of redevelopment or additional development, may be the only answer to implementing this policy successfully. Firstly, therefore, subject to site specific considerations, permission will be granted for additions to these centres, where the layout of the site permits. (If they are above the threshold of 929 square metres, they will be subject to the tests relating to their effect on the town centres).

b Secondly, additions will be particularly encouraged in two cases by allocating sites alongside. One of these, at the Clifton Road parade, will counterbalance the policies of resisting further additions to the nearby High Pit local shopping centre, (see below). The other, also in Cramlington - Glenluce Court - is an example of a centre that has suffered decline. The fact that land exists for additional units could assist improvements.[87]

c Thirdly, the opportunity for developing housing next to local shopping or combining dwellings and shop units in the redevelopment of a site, can open the door for improved shopping facilities. Where housing can be built adjacent, there can be benefits of improved access, parking, security (through overlooking etc.). It is hoped that resources can be put into environmental improvements in parallel. Some of the housing sites already have permission. The remainder are allocated in the Housing Chapter.[88]

d Fourthly, in relation to the shopping centre in the High Pit / Klondyke area, there are problems relating to traffic movement and the sporadic

86 *See Chapters 9, 8 and 15 respectively.*

87 *There are also possible opportunities for housing to be added.*

88 *See also Section 3.5 in the Housing Chapter and Section 1.7 in the Chapter on Environmental Protection and Enhancement.*

Policy **C 16** — *SHOPPING: OUT OF TOWN CENTRE PROPOSALS*

Beyond the two Central Shopping areas, beyond areas within 300 metres of any part of them and beyond the Local Service area of Seaton Delaval, applications for retail development, falling within Class A1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order, 1987, will be determined as follows:

i The application will be granted permission if it is:

- **below 929 square metres gross trading area and meets the criteria in Policy C17 (iii), (iv) or (vi), although the cumulative impact of two or more such proposals will be taken into account, especially where in close proximity to eachother geographically and in their timing; or**
- **is the subject of a firm proposal in part (v) of that Policy;**

ii Where (i) above does not apply, the application will be assessed against:

a the impact on the vitality and viability of the town centres of Blyth and Cramlington or other town centres outside the Plan area, applying the criteria in Policy C14 (ii);

b any adverse effects on shopping centres at Seaton Delaval and as listed at Policy C17 (iii), applying criteria in Policy C17 (iii)(f);

and permission will only being granted in locations which are:

- **well placed in relation to the existing and proposed population;**
- **suitably accessible by public transport and for pedestrians and others covered by Policy M2;**

with development close to the corridor of the A19(T) being very strongly resisted;

iii Retail warehouses will be assessed on the basis of (ii) above, but recognising that they may not be appropriate for the town centres. Some provision will be permitted at the site of the former Bates Colliery, in accordance with Proposal WP2;

iv Where an application is for retail use within the work activity areas defined in Policies W1 and W2, permission may be granted if the retail use is:

a strictly ancillary to a manufacturing use on the same site; or

b in exceptional circumstances, limited to the sale of bulky goods, which:

- **in each case, should be within a precisely defined range, to be limited through a planning condition or the signing of a Planning Agreement; and**
- **could not, for access reasons, be reasonably sold from a town centre location; and**
- **would not, from a visual point of view, be appropriate for a prominent, main road site;**

Applications for individual or groups of factory outlet shops which are not linked to a manufacturing unit on the same site will be assessed on the same basis as retail warehouses, (part iii above).

v Categories of floorspace, such as warehouse clubs, where there would be some reliance on expenditure that would normally be made in retail outlets, while they will be considered on their merits, (in relation to their scale and local impact and other policies and proposals), will be subject to an assessment of their impact on the vitality and viability of the town centres of Blyth and Cramlington or other town centres outside the Plan area, applying the criteria in Policy C14 (ii).

distribution of shops and other services. The implementation of the East-West Link Road proposal could help by removing much of the through traffic.[89] However, in the meantime, environmental improvements will be programmed. Further retailing or related services will not be permitted if they would add to existing problems of congestion. It is hoped that the land allocated at Clifton Road will provide an attractive alternative, although there may be other acceptable sites in the near vicinity.

e Fifthly, within these shopping centres, if a key convenience store becomes vacant and the shop concerned becomes the subject of a planning application for some other use, the application will be treated on its merits and determined in the light of local factors. There is no point in refusing applications simply in the hope that a locally useful shopping facility will come along. Service uses may provide an equally useful neighbourhood asset.[90] However, if the shop unit concerned is regarded as part of the cohesive neighbourhood facility, (e.g. in the middle of a row of adjacent shops), applications which involve the removal of the shop front or the opportunity for the unit to return to shopping use at some future date will be refused where appropriate.

f Finally, the continued existence of the listed neigbourhood facilities will be secured through the assessment of ***all*** shopping applications outside existing town and local shopping centres for any potentially adverse effects on these local centres. It would be inappropriate for these centres to be considered in terms of their vitality and viability.[91] Instead, applications will be examined as to whether they are likely to cause a major reduction in shopping facilities in an existing centre, through the diversion of trade, which would manifest itself in a high level of vacant units in the centre. Even if this were the case, it would be unreasonable to refuse permission if the new facility would provide an equally, (or more) accessible local shopping facility for those currently served by the existing centre. Applications will therefore be examined for both their positive and their negative effects before a decision is taken. N.B. This will also apply to the neighbourhood and local centres proposed at (v) below.

Another key centre with potential conflict between traffic and any new shops, is that close to the level crossing at Newsham, Blyth. Its well-being as a shopping centre will be kept under review in the light of the opening of the South Newsham Diversion, the proposed district centre at South Beach and the low car ownership in Newsham compared to the South Beach areas. There are very limited opportunities to add to or redevelop buildings in at the Newsham centre, so no proposal is made at this stage.

Important within shopping centres are their detailed design and the amenities provided. These aspects are covered elsewhere in the Local Plan.[92]

The general street scene in shopping centres is also important. The shop fronts policy tries to keep centres as visually attractive as possible.[93]

Shops in the Villages

Although the villages within the Plan area are not isolated to the degree of those in more rural areas, they a sufficiently cut off from the main service centres for it to be a concern of the planning system to ensure that they retain local services. Convenience shopping is one of the most important community services.

It has been standard practice in rural communities for the village post office to double as the village shop. The key to retaining an element of convenience shopping in the villages is diversification. Post offices are an example but there are many other services which, if provided in association with shop use, will help maximise its viability.

C17 (iv) therefore proposes that a sympathetic approach should be taken to applications within villages, not just for retail use, but also for the other types of uses that one would expect to find in a shopping centre. In a small village, Other policies, such as that on hot food takeaways will be taken fully into account.

The second arm of this Policy to protect villages shops and services, is to prevent retail uses outside the settlement limits which may pose a threat. It is not sufficient to assume that Green Belt and related Policies will prevent such development. Policies in previous chapters encourage the conversion of rural buildings for other uses and allow for the diversification of activities on farms. Farm shops selling produce from the farm on which they are situated will not be prevented. However, where a significant element of floorspace is proposed, it may be refused on grounds that it would provide a scale of facility that might threaten the continuation of nearby village shops.

Sometimes petrol stations or other roadside or countryside uses have the ancillary feature of a convenience shop, which provides for a nearby local community while achieving viability because of the additional passing trade. Depending on the exact

89 *See Policy M9 (ii).*

90 *Some restrictions are necessary on such uses - see especially Sub-section 4.13.1 below, in relation to hot food take-aways.*

91 *In any case, Government advice does not recommend that centres other than town centres are looked at in these terms.*

92 *Access and accessibility are very important. Facilities for pedestrians, wheelchairs, cyclists etc. are covered in the Chapter 7. Detailed policies and proposals on the movement of pedestrians, people in wheelchairs, pushchairs and prams, bicycles and motor vehicles within the central shopping areas of Blyth, Cramlington and Seaton Delaval are covered in the respective chapters on those areas. Access to the shops themselves - wide enough entrances to cope with wheelchairs etc. - is part of this, see Policy M3*

93 *See Chapter 1, Sub-section 1.7.2.).*

Policy **C 17** — *SHOPPING: ACCESSIBLE LOCAL PROVISION*

The accessibility and quality of local shopping and service facilities will be maximised for residents within the Plan area through planning decisions and, in particular, by the following means:

i The implementation of Policies C14, 15 and 16 above and the strategies in Chapters 8 and 9, which promote Cramlington and Blyth town centres as strong centres for retailing and other services;

ii Reemphasising the role of Seaton Delaval as a local service centre for the area of the Seaton Valley Villages, in line with Policy G4 (ii), through the implementation of the strategy in Chapter 15;

iii Seeking to maintain the existing level of neighbourhood shopping facilities within the suburban parts of Blyth, Cramlington and Seaton Delaval, by continuing to facilitate local shopping at or close to the existing nodal, neighbourhood locations listed overleaf and indicated on the Proposals Map. This will be achieved through:

- **a subject to site specific considerations, granting permission for new additions to the centres within Class A1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, if they are considered to be in scale with them, with applications for 929 square metres or more gross trading area also being subject to tests in Policy C16 and/or C15 as appropriate;**
- **b in certain cases indicated below, permitting additional retail units on land adjacent to the existing centres, as indicated on the Proposals Map;**
- **c in certain cases indicated below, seeking environmental improvements in line with Policy E19, with the option of achieving these in association and simultaneously with the development of immediately adjoining land for housing or the redevelopment of the site for a combination of housing and shopping related uses;**
- **d in the area of High Pit Road and Front Street, Klondyke:**
  - **seeking environmental improvements in line with Policy E19;**
  - **refusing any applications which may be likely to increase congestion or otherwise compromise opportunities to achieve environmental improvements, including the strict application of Policy C22 on hot food takeaways;**
  - **the promotion of the the Clifton Road parade in accordance with (b) above;**
- **e in cases where the centre includes continuous frontages of shop front units, refusing any application for the physical removal a shop front, (for conversion to residential, or to another use outside Use Class A), if the shop front concerned has other shop fronts on either side and its removal could prejudice the continuation of the remaining shop front premises as a coherent shopping centre from a functional and/or physical point of view;**
- **f assessing all applications for Class A1 Use outside the Central Shopping Areas of Cramlington and Blyth, the Local Service Area at Seaton Delaval and the existing local shopping centres listed below for any adverse effect on the centre at Seaton Delaval, the proposed neighbourhood and local centres at (v) below and those listed below, with permission being refused if there would be:**
  - **a major reduction in shopping facilities or a high level of vacant premises within an existing local shopping centre; and/or**
  - **a significant reduction in the average level of accessibility to shopping facilities for the population served by an existing centre; and/or**
  - **the effect of prejudicing the implementation of any of the proposals at (v) below.**

(continued....

Policy ***C 17*** *continued* — *SHOPPING: ACCESSIBLE LOCAL PROVISION*

LOCAL SHOPPING FACILITY (Ref No as on Proposals Map)		CROSS REFERENCES
N1	West Blyth	
N2	Briardale Road, Blyth	where (c) above will apply in association with the Nordale Way housing site, (ref Appendix II Site HB2.1)
N3	Brierley Road, Blyth	
N4	Swaledale Avenue, Blyth	where (c) above will apply in association with the adjacent roadside housing site, allocated in Policy H20 (iii)
N5	Walton Avenue / Renwick Road / Marlow Street, Blyth	
N6	Plessey Road / Park Road area, Blyth	
N7	Broadway Circle, Blyth	
N8	Crofton area, Blyth	
N9	Fifteenth Avenue, Blyth	where (c) above will apply in association with the redevelopment of the whole centre, sought, in conjunction with surrounding land under Policy H20 (i)
N10	Southend Avenue, Blyth	
N11	Druridge Drive, Newsham Farm, Blyth	where (c) above will apply in association with the adjacent roadside housing site, allocated in Policy H20 (iii)
N12	Newsham, Blyth	where provision will be kept under close scrutiny in the light of changing circumstances
N13	The Brockwell Centre, Cramlington	
N14	Dewley Place, Hall Close Grange, Cramlington	where (c) above will apply in association with the adjacent roadside housing site, allocated in Policy H20 (iii)
N15	Glenluce Court, Southfield Green, Cramlington	where (b) above will apply in relation to adjacent land
N16	High Pit Road / Front Street Klondyke, Cramlington	where (d) above will apply
N16A	Clifton Road, Mayfield Glade	where (b) above will apply in relation to adjacent land
N17	Elsdon Avenue, Seaton Delaval	where (c) above will apply in association with the adjacent roadside housing site, (ref Appendix II Site HR2.1)

(continued....

location, the above Policy will be applicable to existing garage or other facilities which wish to add a shop. New petrol stations etc. would not be permitted on the basis of a convenience shopping facility being provided.[94]

Proposals for retail use *within* the villages, which are considered to be out of scale with the settlement or to cater for wider needs than the settlement itself, (or tourists visiting it for other reasons), will be resisted.

New Neighbourhood Facilities

C17 (v) returns to the main three settlements in the Plan area and proposes four moderate sized local shopping facilities at key locations.[95] The reasons behind these proposals are either that there is underprovision at present or because the site concerned is part of a development area. It is hoped that, in each case, a range of shops can be provided. Depending on the location and the scale of facility that can be accommodated, it may be appropriate to allow for a small supermarket to provide an 'anchor' for the centre. In order to safeguard existing facilities, any substantial supermarket proposals for these sites will only be granted permission where they would not affect the vitality and viability of the town centres.

Proposals for Individual Small Shops

C17 (vi) should be read alongside Policy W8, which deals with the question of businesses operating from home and business uses within otherwise residential areas. The aim is to be as flexible as local and environmental constraints allow, in order to meet Government guidance on the matter and keep the local economy as dynamic as possible.

94 *They would be assessed against the relevant policies, depending on whether the proposal was in or out of the settlement limits.*

95 *This is in addition to sites where they are already in place, have gained permission or are otherwise committed - i.e. in Cramlington, at the Brockwell Centre, and in Blyth, at Cowpen Road (2 sites) and the former Albion Depot.*

Policy ***C 17*** *continued* — *SHOPPING: ACCESSIBLE LOCAL PROVISION*

iv Seeking to protect local shopping provision at New Hartley, Holywell, Seghill, Seaton Sluice and East Hartford, by:

a taking account of the need for a range of services in the villages, when determining applications for Classes A1, A2 or A3 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 or a combination of these, while adhering to other Policies in this Plan, in particular Policy C22 on hot food takeaways etc.;

b refusing applications for retail outlets, outside the settlement limits, (which may be otherwise permissible under Policy G10 and, in some cases, encouraged by Policy E8 on farm diversification), if they would provide a scale of facility that could threaten the continuation of any village shop that is more accessible on foot or by public transport to the population of the village.

Within these settlements, retail proposals which are considered to be out of scale with the settlement will be resisted. This will be judged against the resident and working population of the settlement and an assessment of visits made thereto for other purposes;

v Allocating land for local or neighbourhood shopping centres in areas of growth and community development, as shown on the Proposals Map and set out in the table below; the floorspace will be determined at a later date but, if any individual retail unit has a gross trading area of 929 square metres or greater, it will be subject to an assessment in accordance with Policy C14 (ii):

LOCATION	FACILITY SOUGHT	IN ACCORDANCE WITH / SUBJECT TO
Land identified on the Proposals Map within the South-West Cramlington Community Development Area	A district shopping centre	Proposal SW4 (b)
Land identified on the Proposals Map at South Beach Western Development Area	A district shopping centre	Proposal SB4
South-West Newsham	A district shopping centre if required during the Plan period	Proposal SN1
Land identified at Wheatridge Park, Seaton Delaval	A shopping facility to include the opportunity for a substantial supermarket outlet	Proposal SD1 (a)

while allowing for necessary provision within other new housing areas;

vi Where it is proposed to change the use of individual non-retail premises to Class A1 Retail Use, away from established centres, and provide a small scale facility that would have the effect of improving the level of service in a currently underserved locality, permission will be granted if it is considered that there would be no adverse impact on local amenity.

The closer that a local shop unit is to the home, the more convenient it is. There are some areas where there is a lack of neighbourhood shops, most notably:

- The Cowpen Quay / Hodgsons Road area of Blyth;
- Parts of the South Beach area of Blyth;
- The Wensleydale Terrace / Solingen estate area of Blyth;
- The Eastfield area of Cramlington.

As well as this, there are many smaller pockets where there is no immediate corner shop for local residents to use. A new small shop within a residential area would establish both a business and a service within the community.

It is therefore proposed that applications for changes to A1 retail use should be treated as sympathetically as possible, particularly where there are shortfalls in provision along the lines described above, accepting the severe physical constraints associated with residential areas. As long as proposals are small scale it should be possible to allow them in certain circumstances. Amenity will be the main consideration. Hours of operation may, for example, need to be limited.

4.9 COMMUNITY HEALTH FACILITIES

Access to healthcare facilities is important for all local communities. Irrespective of the degree to which individual facilities operate independently of central control, it is the task of the Local Plan to be as accommodating towards them as policies allow, with physical accessibility to the community the key consideration.

Centralised facilities have increasingly been the norm in the towns within the Plan area. So far, it has been possible to agree sites which are in the heart of the towns and accessible by public transport. Further central sites may be called for as the Plan period progresses. Equally, certain types of use will continue to operate from residential streets - particularly private practices, (chiropodists, dentists etc.).

Policy C18 is intended to influence, insofar as planning decisions can, the distribution of medical and other healthcare facilities in relation to the population which they serve.

C18 (i) deals with proposals for medical practices operating from residential properties or former residential properties within otherwise residential areas. This is a category of business which would generally be acceptable within residential parts of settlements, on the basis that such facilities should be as close to the population served as possible. on the other hand the layout of the residential area will be an important factor from an access and amenity point of view. Proposals will be assessed against criteria in Policy W8.

C18 (ii) is a statement of intent, that all new housing areas of any significance will be assessed in relation to the accessibility of medical facilities. Although they would not be refused on those grounds, it may be sought that, say, a suitable pedestrian access way be introduced.

As with most of the other facilities covered in this chapter, medical facilities are hierarchical. At present and, almost certainly, for the duration of the Plan period, mainstream hospital facilities are not (and will not be) available within the Plan area. Patients, out-patients and visitors must travel to Wansbeck (Ashington) or North Tyneside (Rake Lane) General Hospitals for most services. It should be ensured that public transport links to these two locations, (neither of which is within the centre of a town) are as good as possible for residents of Blyth Valley. Regional, more specialised facilities normally involve a journey to Newcastle.

This pattern of provision may alter, as hospitals become more independent and begin to offer a different range of services to a wider pool of clients. Vigilance will be required to ensure that public transport links serve those destinations to which residents of Blyth Valley may be forced to travel.

It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that a hospital or clinic will be proposed within Blyth Valley. Unless specifically intended to serve local residents, such a proposal would, primarily, be dealt with in the same way as other potential work activity uses. It would be a possible candidate for an individual user site.[96]

C18 (iii) takes account of the fact that the population of Cramlington is creeping up towards that of Blyth, which has its own community hospital. As a new town, the average age of its population is low compared with other towns. However this too is edging upwards. A community hospital within the town will become increasingly appropriate. Provision is therefore made in the proposals for Cramlington Town Centre, by safeguarding land within the northern expansion site.[97]

C18 (iv) seeks to ensure that land is available within new development areas where a need is demonstrated and refers to proposal to improve local healthcare facilities in the North-East Cramlington Community Development Area.[98]

4.10 CULTURAL FACILITIES

Certain types of community provision, not yet touched upon in this chapter, can be grouped together and collectively termed "cultural facilities".

These include general community buildings, meeting halls, religious buildings, libraries, museums, art galleries, theatres, cinemas, concert halls, discotheques, other places of entertainment, clubs and public houses.[99] Some provide almost exclusively for the community, whether at neighbourhood, village, or town level; others also cater for visitors.

Policy C19 refers back to the General Development policies. Cultural facilities will often be secured through Planning Obligations in relation to larger development schemes. They can be an appropriate use of monies from community provision funds, built up from commuted payments, where after some years, the new community is without a focal point or meeting place on site.[100]

96 *See Policy W2.*

97 *See Chapter 8, Sub-section 8.2.1.*

98 *See Chapter 10, Sub-section 10.2.2.*

99 *It should be noted that some of these uses, including meeting halls, religious buildings, libraries, museums and art galleries, all fall within one Use Class of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, along with medical facilities, which are the subject of the previous Policy. While this would allow interchangeability between these uses, once permission is given, in practice, if a new facility is proposed, the type of building or form of conversion works will largely determine the use accommodated.*

100 *See Policy G11.*

Policy **C 18** — *COMMUNITY HEALTH FACILITIES*

A satisfactory distribution of community health facilities shall be sought through the following means:

i When considering planning applications for:
- **the change of use of residential premises for Class B1 use intended for medical purposes; or**
- **the introduction of medical consulting rooms to part of a residential property,**

permission will be granted provided that other policies and safeguards are met, in particular applying criteria set out in Policy W8 (i) and (ii);

ii Taking account of accessibility of medical facilities when determining all planning applications involving significant amounts of residential development;

iii Providing for the possibility of a community hospital for Cramlington by safeguarding land at the town centre northern expansion site, in accordance with Proposal CC2;

iv Ensuring that any local healthcare facilities required as a result of new development can be accommodated, including the safeguarding of land at Cramlington North-East Community Development Area, in accordance with Proposal NE4 (a).

4.10.1 **Local Community, Cultural and Religious Buildings**

It is often assumed, in planning new areas within existing settlements, that the existing community centres or rooms, meeting halls, local cultural facilities (such as libraries) and religious buildings in the vicinity will be able to cope with and provide for the additional influx of people.

Even more so than other types of community provision, (such as shops and playgrounds), these are often treated as an afterthought.

C19 (i) to (iii) seek to enable a proper network of provision.

C19 (i) refers to those limited cases where land will be specifically earmarked for these uses.

At South-West Cramlington, there will be a central place containing the main district shopping centre. This will also provide the location for community halls and any religious buildings that may be proposed.[101]

At South Beach, a site, close to those identified for the District Centre and the First School, will be able to accommodate modest community or religious buildings.[102]

Provision may also be sought if other development areas come forward. Eventually, there will need to be provision made at South-West Newsham, when this longer term development area comes forward, as it is relatively isolated from other built-up parts of Blyth. However it is unlikely that this will be needed within the Plan period.[103]

Finally, townwide community buildings are one possible use on the "Northern Expansion Site" defined in the chapter on Cramlington Town Centre.[104]

C19 (ii) is a more general proposal relating to this type of provision. Different groups have different perceptions of what constitutes their own community. There is little point, therefore, in attempting to define areas of shortfall for community centre provision. However, it is appropriate to have the longer term aim of having this type of facility within walking distance of all homes in the built-up area. New residential applications, especially, will be considered in relation to the existing pattern of such facilities.

It should be endeavoured through planning decisions to react as favourably as possible to expressed demand for community centre provision and improvement. At least three expressed demands for community centres exist at present and are shown on the Proposals Map. At north-east Cramlington, scope exists for such a facility to be accommodated within the existing Northburn First School and this will be actively pursued. At Shanklea, a

101 See Chapter 11, Sub-section 11.3.3.

102 It is considered that another community centre will be needed by the time that the area is completed and representations have been received from the church authorities. See also Chapter 13, Sub-section 13.2.4.

103 See Chapter 14, Sub-section 14.2.1.

104 See Chapter 8, Proposal CC2.

community centre is housed in a temporary building. At Isabella, Blyth, there is currently no community centre other than the unsatisfactory sharing of a sports pavilion, which is subject to vandalism etc.. A new building may be the answer, or it may be more economical to upgrade the building with the dual use.

C19 (iii) proposes that planning decisions take account of the many ways in which community, cultural or religious centres for local areas can be accommodated within the existing urban fabric and that they should be as helpful as possible in that respect.[105]

One of the best ways to provide a community centre or a compatible cultural facility, is to attach it to or include it within a school complex, (irrespective of whether it is a First, a Middle or a High School). Examples of this include the library at Cowpen, (on school land at Tynedale Drive) and the community room at Burnside First School, Cramlington.[106]

Another, equally good way of providing accommodation for communal purposes is through the conversion or shared use of an existing building. The dual use of pavilions or changing facilities at sports pitches is just one possibility.

The accommodation of community uses in temporary buildings will not be favoured unless as a short-term extension to the utilisation of a temporary building which is already in place.

4.10.2 **Wider Area Needs**

C19 (iv) to (vi) look at wider area needs for community or cultural buildings.

BLYTH VALLEY ARTS CENTRE

C19 (iv) reflects the results of an independent study, carried out in the early 1990's, which recommended that Blyth Valley should be provided with an Arts Centre to serve its population, plus, possibly, the wider population of South-East Northumberland; that this facility should be provided in the town of Blyth;[107] and that it should be a comprehensive facility, including:

- a performance space with several hundred seats [108]
- a major exhibition space
- other smaller spaces for rehearsals, workshops etc.
- a local museum base
- cafe, bar and other supporting facilities.

It would be intended to:

- attract all sections of the community;
- provide a base for local arts activity encouraging new involvement in the arts;
- provide a focus for existing creative activities in Blyth Valley;
- assist in community, economic and tourism development and regeneration of the town centre / Quayside axis.

The main locational requirement is that it should be central and/or accessible by public transport.

CRAMLINGTON TOWN CENTRE

C19 (v) recognises that Cramlington currently lacks a whole range of townwide cultural, community, entertainment etc. facilities, many of which are present, (in some form), in Blyth. The town centre area would provide the best location, (although there would probably not be room to accommodate the full possible range).[109] The area of the retail warehouse park development includes a site for leisure use to be developed at a later date. A bowling alley had been proposed but other uses might be feasible given the unconstrained nature of the site. More modest meeting rooms or exhibition space could be accommodated within or on land adjacent to Concordia. There may be grounds for considering land within the Northern Expansion Site (Proposal CC2), for certain types of arts / cultural facilities if there is no scope for their accommodation at the current town centre area and/or if developments relating to that site and its relationship with the rest of the town centre have proceeded to a stage which would allow for such consideration.

OTHER FACILITIES

C19 (vi) allows for other possible facilities in other locations.

Museums have opened and closed on something of an ad hoc basis over the years. Proposals to open museums should be viewed sympathetically bearing in mind the long term aim to house artefacts of district-wide interest at the Arts Centre proposed at C19 (iv), and taking account of accessibility and local constraints.

105 *Beaconhill and Isabella present only two examples of ways in which accommodation can be provided.*
106 *Policy C11 (ii), above, ensures that community uses are considered before any surplus school land is released for other uses.*
107 *At the time, the study suggested that the centre should be located at Blyth Quayside. The former Drill Hall building was looked at in the study but is now occupied by another user. This would not exclude the possibility of a different site being chosen within the Quayside general area.*
108 *The redevelopment of the Phoenix Theatre has provided a performance space which goes a long way towards meeting this requirement.*
109 *See also Chapter 8.*

Policy **C 19** — *CULTURAL FACILITIES*

A satisfactory level of provision of cultural facilities shall be sought through the application of planning policies including Policy G11 relating to Planning Obligations. In particular:

i **Land will be safeguarded for the accommodation of local community, cultural and/or religious buildings at large scale development areas with the construction of community centres normally being sought through community provision funds, as follows:**

- **a South West Cramlington Community Development Area in accordance with Proposal SW4 (b);**
- **b South Beach Community Development Area in accordance with Proposal SB4 (c);**
- **c other development areas if a need is identified;**

In addition, such facilities could be accommodated at Cramlington Town Centre Northern Expansion Site under Proposal CC2:

ii **Community meeting places may be sought in connection with large scale planning applications for housing if there is an absence of such facilities accessible on foot. Specific improvements in provision will be pursued for the areas of**

- **a North-East Cramlington Community Development Area within the grounds of Northburn First School, Cramlington;**
- **b Shanklea, Cramlington**
- **c Isabella / Cowpen Farm, Blyth;**

iii **Proposals to provide accommodation for local cultural, community and/or religious purposes within the existing built-up areas will be granted wherever parking, access, amenity and other policy considerations allow, including:**

- **a accommodation within school sites, where appropriate;**
- **b schemes involving the conversion or shared use of existing buildings;**
- **c proposals for the short term extension to the utilisation of a temporary building already in place;**

iv **The development of an arts centre on a suitable site or involving the conversion of a building and well located in relation to public transport will be granted permission within Blyth;**

v **Proposals for arts or cultural facilities and/or places of entertainment will be granted permission subject to other Policy and local amenity considerations, within the area of the Central Shopping Area of Cramlington Town Centre, defined in Policy C14 (i), or between that area and Westmorland Way, or within the area of Proposal CC2; this will include the investigation of the feasibility of providing arts centre / gallery facilities as part of or adjacent to Concordia Leisure Centre;**

vi **Other proposals for cultural facilities will be assessed individually on their merits, with proposals for museum use being particularly encouraged.**

4.11 EMERGENCY SERVICES

Policy C20 deals with the limited way that planning decisions can assist emergency services. Like education or health facilities, this service is organised regionally or sub-regionally but provides a vital service for all local communities. They have varying land requirements.

C20 (i) recognises that central positions are not necessarily the best because of the need to be within quick reach of all areas served. Nor are nodal positions within the road network ideal if they are away from built-up areas. Suburban locations or sites within industrial estates may be the best compromise. Efforts should therefore be made to accommodate emergency services at their optimum locations but seeking to avoid unreasonable departures from other policies and proposals within this Local Plan.

C20 (ii) proposes a second way in which emergency services can be helped in their function. This is to ensure that new layouts are designed to allow them access to their satisfaction. This can only be achieved through close consultation during the planning process.

4.12 CHILD CARE AWAY FROM THE HOME

Policy C21 recognises that traditional ways of planning workplaces, main shopping centres and other focuses of community activity away from home, have not, as a rule, incorporated facilities for looking after small children - crêches, play areas (indoor or out), baby changing facilities etc..

C21 (i) makes clear that negotiations with applicants for large developments, involving public access, will aim for the inclusion of appropriate childcare facilities.

C21 (ii) sets a principle in favour of applications for stand alone facilities catering for these needs within work activity areas. They would only be unacceptable, if their operation was hindered by the nature of the uses and activities around them or if they themselves prevented a neighbouring use from operation.[110]



View to the Listed Police Station, Blyth

110 *Such situations should be covered by the Policies on pollution control - see Section 1.8 of Chapter 1.*

Policy **C 20** — *EMERGENCY SERVICES*

The needs of the emergency services will be accommodated as far as possible through planning decisions while ensuring that there are no unreasonable departures from policies in this Plan. This will include:

i Their accommodation, if required, within the work activity areas defined at Policy W1;

ii Close co-operation with the emergency services in planning the layouts of new areas.

Policy **C 21** — *CHILD CARE AWAY FROM THE HOME*

In relation to provision for childcare away from the home:

i Pre-application discussions and planning conditions will be utilised to ensure provision, as appropriate, in association with planning applications for significant new shopping facilities, large work places, work activity areas and other focuses of community activity away from the home;

ii Applications to provide such facilities within work activity areas will be granted permission provided that it is considered that surrounding uses and activities would not prevent the facility from operating satisfactorily and vice versa.



Children's Playing Area, Blyth Links

4.13 FOOD AND DRINK ESTABLISHMENTS

Food and drink establishments[111] are another form of community facility whose distribution within the community can be important. Such establishments can provide a dependable local service to "pop out" to (e.g. the local fish and chip shop) or they can provide a meeting place for the community (especially the local pub). On the other hand, they often attract people from outside their immediate locality and, coupled with the fact that their opening times and peak usage are often late at night, they are a form of land use that requires careful control.

4.13.1 Hot Food Takeaways, Cafes and Restaurants

Hot Food takeaways have been the subject of special scrutiny in recent years. The range of types of hot food offered and the availability of former shop units in places from which local shops have migrated, mean that applications to change the use of premises to hot food takeaway have been frequent.

Premises proposed for this type of facility are often in the heart of a residential community, the aim being to capture trade from the immediate vicinity. Alternatively, they may try to attract passing trade and locate on main roads in and out of the towns.[112] In either case, casual parking traffic generation can be a problem. Where housing is close at hand, problems of noise and disturbance, exacerbated by late night opening hours, and odours and fumes can add to the negative effects. Other side issues include the tendency for people to hang around outside takeaways and dispose of litter in the vicinity.

All of this has prompted a detailed policy to control these uses and give guidance to those who may be thinking of applying for permission.

4.13.2 Public Houses

Public houses have been recognised as community gathering places in past planning decisions.[113] They will be accommodated where it is considered beneficial to propose or permit them,[114] Generally speaking, elsewhere, proposals for new public houses or expansions to the "drinking area" of existing pubs should be assessed on their merits. Within residential areas, they will be looked at in a similar way to hot food establishments. However account must also be taken of the fact that public houses are sometimes proposed in "stand-alone" locations.

4.13.3. A Policy for Class A3 Uses

Policy C22 sets out the approach to dealing with applications for food and drink establishments.

C22 (i) specifies the defined shopping areas along with the other groupings of shops as areas within which applications for takeaways, cafes and restaurants will be considered. The latter two uses may be appropriate elsewhere, (e.g. within a converted farm building), but takeaways would only be granted permission outside shopping areas in exceptional circumstances. In addition, the limitations on non-retail uses in certain areas will apply.[115] In all cases, access, parking and amenity considerations will be important.

More specifically, **C22 (ii)** sets out circumstances in which permission will be refused. This applies to all Class A3 uses. Mostly, reasons for refusal will be connected with parking and proximity to residential property. However parking and traffic may also be a problem in other situations such as a location on a main road.

The tenancy of any flat above takeaway or restaurant premises will be a consideration. In other words, if the flat is let or owned separately from the premises below, the potential disturbance and loss of amenity to that resident will be taken into account; if the flat is connected to the premises, a more positive attitude could be taken on the assumption that the householder may run the takeaway and accept the disturbances etc..

C22 (iii) states conditions that will normally be placed on permissions for takeaways, restaurants etc..

C22 (iv) concentrates on additional controls that will apply to certain sub-categories within Use Class A3 - particularly those which may attract large numbers of people from a fairly wide area, to make use of premises over a period of time. Public houses and restaurants would obviously be included in this.

As well as being assessed against the criteria in ii above, concerning parking and traffic, specific car parking standards will be applied, as set out in Appendix XVII.[116] Isolated locations where car access would be heavily relied upon should be avoided and permission may be refused.[117]

111 *These uses make up Class A3 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987.*

112 *If such applications were to fall within the central areas of Blyth, Cramlington or Seaton Delaval, as non-retail uses they would be subject to an extra layer of assessment under the various frontage Policies. (See Policy C14 in this chapter, Policy B1 in Chapter 9 on Blyth Town Centre and Proposal SD2 in Chapter 15 on Seaton Delaval). Where the proposal falls within a shopping parade of local significance, then the range of services provided in the parade as a whole may be a consideration. (See Policy C17 (iii)).*

113 *A recent example adjoins the Brockwell Centre, Cramlington.*

114 *This could possibly include district centres within the Community Development Areas of South-West Cramlington and South-West Newsham.*

115 *See Section 4.8 above.*

116 *See also Chapter 7, Sub-section 7.5.5.*

117 *The provisions of the countryside policies in Chapter 2 would also apply - see especially Policy G10.*

Policy **C 22** — *FOOD AND DRINK ESTABLISHMENTS*

Uses falling within Class A3 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 will be assessed as follows:

i Hot food take-aways, cafes and restaurants will be permitted in:

- **the two Central Shopping Areas defined in Policy C14, subject to the frontage Policies at C14 (i)(b);**
- **the Secondary Commercial Area of Blyth defined in Policy B3;**
- **the Local Service Area at Seaton Delaval defined in Proposal SD2, subject to the frontage Policy at SD2 (b);**
- **the local shopping centres listed at C17 (iii);**
- **other groupings of shop units; and**
- **elsewhere as appropriate, although only exceptionally for hot food takeaways,**

subject to access, parking and amenity considerations and the provisions of ii and iii below;

ii Applications for uses falling within Class A3 will be refused, (including, where appropriate at the above locations), if the proposal is considered likely to result, in:

a additional on-street car parking within a residential area and/or

b additional vehicle movements

- **late at night within a residential area or**
- **causing detriment to road safety;**

c indiscriminate parking on a primary, secondary, local distributor or estate distributor road as defined in this Local Plan such that it would be detrimental to road safety.

The tenancy of any flat above premises forming the subject of such a proposal will be a material consideration, whether or not it is linked with that of the said premises.

iii Where planning permission can be granted for hot food takeaways, cafes and restaurants, following an assessment on the above basis, it will normally be conditioned so as:

a to place a time limit on the preparation or sale of food (or ancillary purpose) to minimise local disturbance;

b to place adequate control on extraction systems and other plant and equipment as advised by expert agencies;

c to ensure that, where food will be carried off the premises, the applicant provides for the deposit of generated litter and the maintenance of any litter receptacles so provided, to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

iv Any proposal for new or extended public houses restaurants, cafes or related facilities, while being assessed against the criteria in (ii) above, will also be subject to car parking standards and, where outside the settlement limits defined in Policy G6, may be refused if considered to be in too isolated or inaccessible a location, including in respect of public transport.

Policy **C 23** *OTHER COMMUNITY FACILITIES*

It will be the aim, through planning decisions, to improve the accessibility of public services within public places. In particular, permission will be granted for additional or improved public toilet facilities at appropriate locations away from housing and close to community or recreational facilities and it will be required that developers provide toilet facilities for public use in large multi-use facilities such as shopping centres which are visited by large numbers of people. In both cases, it will be required that the toilet provision includes access for less mobile people (including people in wheelchairs), and, unless inappropriate, facilities for baby changing. If necessary, the required facilities will be secured through Planning Agreements under Policy G11.

4.14 OTHER COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Planning applications for many miscellaneous, locally needed services, other than those already dealt with in this Chapter, will mostly be decided by applying policies elsewhere in the Plan.

Shop front services such as post offices, building societies, betting shops, etc. are generally handled in the same way as shops, with locations within shopping centres preferred to isolated sites. Additional controls are applied at central locations where there are retail frontage policies.[118]

Other services, occupying more standard office space, are covered in the sections on offices and mixed uses in the Work Activity Chapter.

Yet other local services such as milk delivery or laundry services require central works or depots which will normally be located on industrial estates.

Some local services require the location of features within the Highway or other publicly accessible areas. Obvious examples are phone boxes and pillar boxes. While outside planning control in most cases, these are important features within the townscape both visually and in terms of the service they provide. Their exact locations are dictated by Highway considerations but it is best if they can bel integrated into the townscape[119] and with any other services provided in the locality. A related aspect is the larger scale development associated with telecommunications etc..[120]

Public toilets are a facility provided at interludes within the urban environment - usually in town centres or in association with other large scale public areas - e.g. parks or the coastal strip. If they occur elsewhere, they tend to be a remnant of a past era of more comprehensive public provision. It is quite usual for the impression gained by visitors to an area to be influenced by the quality of the public toilets. Equally important is their accessibility for less mobile people including those in wheelchairs. There is also the need to incorporate baby changing facilities in certain cases.

Policy C23 deals with the generality of streetside services in the terms described above. It would be appropriate for such facilities to be secured via Planning Agreements should they be justified as the result of a proposed development.

118 See Section 4.8 above

119 See also Chapter 1, Sub-section 1.6.2.

120 See also Chapter 1 Sub-section 1.9.2.

5. Leisure and Visitor Activities

- *Chapters 5 and 6 deal with the two types of development or land use which have the strongest role in developing the local economy. Work activity in general is dealt with in the next chapter. This chapter covers the expanding field of leisure and visitor activity, which not only brings work to the area, but also the additional income associated with tourism and day trips. Appendix XXIII to this Written Statement is an outline of the local economy and gives a useful background to the policies and proposals in these two chapters.*

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with activities, (other than work activity - covered in the next Chapter), which are not specific to particular Communities. It therefore covers tourism activities and outdoor leisure pursuits which are not community based.

These will cater for two groups:

- Residents of Blyth Valley looking to pursue activities away from the immediate environment of their homes;
- Visitors to the district from elsewhere in the region and beyond.

They can be seen as activities which are additional to the essential needs of the community. Catering for them offers advantages, in terms of the overall aims of this Plan, relating mainly to economic development.[1] However, there can also be disadvantages, particularly in terms of a negative impact on the environment.[2]

THE WIDER CONTEXT

The natural and historic features of the countryside within and adjacent to Blyth Valley offer a wide range of opportunity for recreation for residents of the Plan area and visitors alike. When viewed within their wider context, they could contribute towards the attraction of considerable numbers of visitors, who are already attracted by regional features. Features such as the National Park and the Heritage Coastline draw considerable visitors from around the country and their popularity needs to be drawn upon to encourage visitors to Blyth Valley.

Tourism is one of Northumberland's most important industries, bringing in around £100 million to the local economy every year and leading to the employment of some 7,000 people. There are estimated to be over 1,000 tourism businesses in the County. Blyth Valley Borough Council, in conjunction with the County Council, will encourage the co-ordinated planning of all tourist and leisure facilities within its area, with an active partnership between statutory and non-statutory organisations.

A POLICY FRAMEWORK

The remainder of this chapter sets the policy framework firstly for catering for visitors to the Plan area and then for the outdoor leisure pursuits which are provided for both visitors and residents.

The specific Sections which follow are:

- **Potential for Visitors** - an examination of the potential for attracting visitors;
- **Visitor Accommodation** - in terms of hotels, guest houses etc., caravan policy and camping activity;
- **General Visitor Interest** - a look at some particular attractions and their relative promotion, as well as some more general measures;
- **Informal Countryside Leisure Pursuits** - some particular zones in which outdoor leisure pursuits can be promoted as well as the more general promotion of informal recreation in the countryside through the "network strategy";
- **Formal Recreation in the Countryside** - including land intensive uses such as golf courses.

5.2 THE POTENTIAL FOR VISITORS

Blyth Valley is well located to have the potential to act as a base for visitors to the region,[3] with three factors favouring this:

1 Both Newcastle International Airport and the North Shields International Ferry Terminal are within a few minutes of many parts of the Plan area;[4]

1 *Although there can be environmental benefits - for instance where income from visits helps to pay for upkeep and management.*

2 *There are grey areas between community facilities and the topic area of this chapter. In practice, community facilities will cater for an element of outside visitors - most notably, townwide facilities such as the two indoor leisure centres, (see Policy C9), and the proposed arts centre. Similarly, outdoor facilities aimed at visitors from a wide area, may also provide for a local community need. Holywell Dene, for example, will effectively be the "local park" for parts of Holywell and Seaton Sluice. Cross references to the preceding "Community Facilities" chapter will therefore be made from time to time.*

3 *In the same way as Tyneside does at present.*

4 *Although from a number of areas there would be a reliance on the use of a taxi or private car.*

2 The adjacent Tyneside conurbation houses one million residents and plays host to 120,000 visitors a year;[5]

3 The main visitor attractions of Northumbria[6] are sufficiently within reach.[7]

At present, Blyth Valley is not generally thought of as a destination for tourism, nor is it a place to which people from the Tyneside area would automatically come for day trips. This is in spite of:

- the existence of a variety of attractions or places of potential interest *within* the area - most notably the coast, Holywell Dene and Seaton Delaval Hall;
- the location of vast numbers of potential visitors "on the doorstep" in Tyneside or passing through on their way to the more immediately obvious visitor destinations.

The situation is not assisted by a distinct shortage of facilities specifically catering for visitors' needs. This is particularly true of hotel and self-catering accommodation.

The twin aims of the Policies below are:

- the enhancement of the existing provision of facilities; and
- the better promotion of those assets that already exist.

However this has to be balanced against the danger of overuse of the countryside and other assets.

5.3 THE ACCOMMODATION OF VISITORS

Figures produced by the English Tourist Board illustrate that a visitor staying overnight will spend three times as much within the local economy as a day visitor. The Economic Development aims of this Plan would therefore be significantly assisted if the Plan area were to have within it as wide as possible a variety of visitor accommodation, in terms of cost, type and location.

Policy L1 aims to facilitate this in the form of planning decisions relating to hotels / guest houses and caravan / camping sites.

5.3.1 Purpose-Built Hotel Accommodation

Currently Blyth Valley offers only around 100 bed spaces in hotels and guest houses. Apart from a roadside facility on the A19(T) offering 40 rooms, these are limited to small concerns. Given the potential of the Blyth area to attract visitors and the benefits that would accrue to the local economy, this is interpreted, for planning purposes, to be a deficiency. **L1 (i)** therefore firstly identifies a key location for a hotel within Blyth Valley. The optimum location combines the market advantages of being on the edge of the largest town in Northumberland, (Blyth), with those of an accessible location next to the sea. This is the Links location at Blyth.[8]

Cramlington, as a successful new town, arguably has more reason to have a large hotel associated with it.[9] However it is much closer to existing large hotels. Nevertheless, in recognition of its strategic importance, a hotel should be encouraged to locate within the vicinity of the town centre. This is recognised in Proposal within the Chapter on the town centre.[10]

There is also a further site identified in Blyth, close to the main road junction at West Blyth. Hotel development is just one of a range of prestige uses that may be considered for this site.[11] The location is well integrated into the main industrial zones of Blyth as well as the existing transport network.

5.3.2 Other Opportunities for Providing Hotel Accommodation

Opportunities to develop hotel or guest house accommodation may also arise through the conversion of existing properties rather than through the building of new facilities.

L1 (ii) provides for this eventuality by stipulating that conversion proposals within built-up areas will be measured in terms of their scale, the range of adjoining uses and access & parking implications. It is the case that certain types of residential streets lend themselves more to hotel conversion than others, much depends on the access arrangements and opportunities to provide off-street parking for guests' vehicles. Development proposals will be assessed on a site specific basis, but with particular regard to the car parking standards as produced by Northumberland County Council [12] (reproduced in Appendix XVII).

The conversion of farms and agricultural buildings for hotel use is a more sensitive issue and will only be permitted where development does not conflict with the overall strategy of retaining open land outside the identified settlement limits. Criteria set out in the General Development chapter will be applied as appropriate.[13] On the other hand, in the correct circumstances, it should be encouraged in line with the Policy on farm diversification.[14]

5 *i.e. Visitors from elsewhere, staying in accommodation for at least one night.*

6 *These include Hadrian's Wall, the North Northumberland coast and Durham.*

7 *i.e. close enough to be the subjects of half day or day trips.*

8 *Details of this location and further reasons for its identification are given in Chapter 18 of this Written Statement.*

9 *For example it is closer to both Newcastle International Airport & Tyneside and has a greater representation of international businesses.*

10 *See Chapter 8, Proposals CC1 and CC2.*

11 *See Chapter 12 on West Blyth Community Development area.*

12 *See Policy M8.*

13 *See especially Chapter 2, Section 2.5.*

14 *See Chapter 1, Sub-section 1.4.3.*

Policy **L1** — *THE ACCOMMODATION OF VISITORS*

The potential to accommodate visitors within the Plan area will be maximised, while applying other policies and necessary environmental safeguards, as follows:

i Hotel accommodation will be strongly promoted on a site at Blyth Links, in accordance with Proposal BL1 and will also be encouraged, (subject to any other specific proposals for those sites):

- **at West Blyth on a site south of the existing superstore, one of two alternative uses, in accordance with Proposal WB2;**
- **at or close to Cramlington town centre to accord with Proposal CC1 or CC2 as applicable;**

ii The conversion of existing properties to visitor accommodation will be determined:

a in built-up areas, on the basis of their impact on the surrounding area in terms of predicted increases in noise, traffic congestion and disruption; and

b in areas of open countryside, in line with Policies E8 on farm diversification and in accordance with criteria in G8 or G9, and G10 on development in the countryside;

iii The further siting of static or touring caravans along the coastal strip, which is defined as that area which lies beyond the defined settlement limits and is east of the existing mineral railway line, as far south as New Hartley and east of the dismantled railway to the south of that, will not normally be permitted and their siting elsewhere will normally be refused unless all of the following apply:

a the site is limited in size and well enough screened so as not to cause an unacceptable environmental impact, particularly to the local community and road transport network; and

b the site would not prejudice the achievement of other policies and proposals in this Local Plan, particularly those on open land, agricultural land, nature conservation and landscape;

c the site will have no harmful effect on local agriculture and can be satisfactorily provided with water supply, sewerage and refuse disposal;

iv Camping facilities will be considered appropriate in conjunction with future proposals for caravan sites or other leisure related development.

5.3.3 **Caravans**

L1 (iii) deals with the siting of caravans which require strict planning control due to their mobility, their ability to become semi-permanent, fixed dwellings and their pre-determined design and appearance. New caravan sites will be resisted in all open locations, including the whole of the coastal strip. It is possible that, in well-screened locations further inland, the siting of a limited number of caravans could be allowed, provided that this does not interfere with other Plan aims and policies. In addition, the Policy lists some other criteria which must be complied with, including the adequate servicing of the site.[15]

5.3.4 **Camping**

In the past, the location for camping activity within the Plan area has been south of Blyth, on the Local Authority camp site at Meggies Burn. Little interest has been expressed by any party in revitalising this facility or in providing a separate facility at a different location. **L1 (iv)** nevertheless recognises that some provision must be made for camping in the Plan period.

15 *See also Sub-section 3.4.4 on Gypsy accommodation.*

5.4 GENERATING VISITOR INTEREST

Regardless of attempts made to increase the number of visitors to Blyth Valley that stay overnight, as implied in the introduction to this chapter, the vast majority of visitors will continue to be day trippers. This group, however, also represents an important contribution to the economic development aims of the Plan. Policies are therefore directed towards attracting an increasing number of visitors to Blyth Valley, on a more regular basis.

Policy L2 consists of a number of measures designed, in the first instance, to increase the patronage of Blyth Valley by day visitors. The potential of some of the attractions becoming destinations for longer stay visitors from outside the region, is implicit in the policy. The policy differentiates between attractions where an unregulated increase in visitors could pose problems, (particularly of an environmental nature), and places where there is the opportunity to promote their attraction without posing insurmountable environmental problems.

5.4.1 The Creation of Visitor Attractions

L2 (i) seeks to broaden the appeal of two attractions which fall into the latter category.

The first of these is the axis taking in Blyth town centre and Blyth Quayside. Blyth town centre with its wide range of shops, popular market, cinema and sports centre, already represents a visitor destination but its appeal is more related to its role as a service centre than to any tourism interest.[16] The strategy to change the character of the Quayside area is fully explained in Chapter 16. The aim of attracting visitors is only one strand of the approach to be taken in that area. It is considered that, by attracting additional visitors to the Quayside, there could be a knock-on economic benefit to the town centre; they are within walking distance of



The Old Staithes, Blyth Quayside

16 *The closure of Blyth Museum has only compounded this trend.*

Policy ***L 2*** *TOURISM INTEREST*

Tourism interest within the Plan area will be promoted, where possible through Planning decisions, while seeking to avoid their direction towards the most environmentally sensitive areas, with particular emphasis as follows:

i The following locations will be established as the foci for increased leisure and visitor activity:

a Blyth Quayside, as part of a mixed use proposal contained within Policy W8, including the implementation of Proposal BQ5; and

b Blyth Links and the immediately surrounding area, (where some sites have alternative uses proposed for them), including the implementation of Proposal BL1;

ii There will be further investigation as to the scope for Seaton Sluice and Seaton Delaval Hall to cope with increases in the numbers of visitors, with particular attention to potential problems of car parking or environmental protection.

one another. It could also work the other way, with further measures taken during the Plan period to improve the attractiveness of the town centre for visitors.[17] It will be the aim not to exacerbate any car parking problems in the town centre through this policy.

The second location to which it will be the aim to attract visitors is Blyth Links and the surrounding area. This northern end of the long beach between Seaton Sluice and Blyth, represents the location with the greatest potential for additional development and the lowest for environmental damage. Detailed proposals are put forward in Chapter 18. It will be the aim that any new development does not prejudice the long-term nature conservation interest of the dunes.

5.4.2 **The Present Main Attractions**

L2 (ii) recognises that, at present, the two locations with the most obvious potential to attract visitors are, firstly, Seaton Delaval Hall and its associated estate and, secondly, the Harbour and surrounding features at Seaton Sluice.

A visitor strategy aimed at increasing the overall number of visitors to the Borough cannot be based entirely on steering visitors towards new or enhanced attractions. After all, the existing main attractions are those most likely to draw people in in the first place. Furthermore, these two main attractions themselves have plenty of scope for enhancement - with the potential to become greater attractions in their own right. However, both of these longstanding destinations for visitors lie within the Seaton Delaval Estate Conservation Area, where there are already problems associated with the draw of visitors, particularly in relation to parking. There is potential for this problem to be exacerbated at Seaton Sluice, and to develop at the Hall. There are also nature conservation / landscape interests at or close to both locations, with the potential for problems if large numbers of people visit the area.

The aim will therefore be to strike a careful balance between planning decisions likely to result in visitors being pulled into these areas, and the need for protection and preservation. There will be ongoing investigations into the potential for these areas to absorb further visitors.

17 *Chapter 9, on Blyth Town Centre explains the need to capitalise on what has already been achieved in terms of attractions and the general environment.*

5.5 INFORMAL COUNTRYSIDE LEISURE PURSUITS

There is a growing interest in countryside pursuits in leisure time. At least 80 per cent of the national population visit the countryside once a year.[18] Meanwhile, there is a growing awareness of (and concern for) the environmental problems which the countryside faces.

Blyth Valley has countryside assets which, while being well known to local people and some visitors, offer the potential to take additional visitors. However they are unable to do so satisfactorily - i.e. without the potential for environmental damage - unless there is a coherent strategy for their planning and management. Management strategies are produced, and regularly updated, on the countryside and aspects of it [19] but there is a need also for a policy on which to base planning decisions and actions relating to the use of the countryside by visitors. This is the aim of **Policy L3**.

As demands on the countryside continue to increase, the approach will be to enhance its assets selectively, as resources allow, through capital investment in features and facilities for visitors, plus enhancements to the natural assets coupled with proper maintenance & management. Only through the co-ordination of such measures, will it become possible within the Plan area to provide for:

- the proper recreation of any residents of Blyth Valley who may wish to visit countryside areas without the need to travel far from home;
- the needs of visitors from outside the District, recognising
  - the location of Blyth Valley on the fringe of the Tyneside conurbation, which has only limited countryside assets of its own to offer its inhabitants; and
  - the strategic aim to attract visitors;

while ensuring maximum protection of natural assets.

5.5.1 Particular Focuses of Countryside Activity

Use of the countryside is still dominated by the informal activities - usually drives or walks - mixed with static activities such as picnics. In Blyth Valley, these pursuits are presently focused on:

- The **coastal strip** between Blyth Links and Old Hartley;
- **Holywell Dene** - mostly downstream of Holywell Village; and
- The **valley of the River Blyth** - upstream of Kitty Brewster Bridge.

Improvements to these areas have been undertaken gradually over a period of years, with the creation of short self-guided walks, the provision of car parks and the insertion of interpretation panels. However, there are many more opportunities for visitors to be absorbed sensitively into these areas.[20]

L3 (i) therefore seeks the further development of the informal recreational role of these sites. The nature of these areas means that further measures will normally be small-scale. These may include extensions to the path networks or the provision of small scale features such as picnic tables and interpretation boards. In carefully selected locations, there may be justification for additional, larger scale works such as the insertion of a small (well-screened) car park [21] or a new footbridge. Proposals relating to Blyth riverside and to the coastal strip will be subject to the provisions of the Blyth Estuary Management Plan and the Blyth to Seaton Sluice Dunes Management Plan. A similar approach will be adopted for Holywell Dene with the preparation of a comprehensive management plan, the content of which will be the subject of public consultation with relevant organisations and local residents.

In implementing the above, there must be an acknowledgement that these three areas of visitor attraction can only accommodate a certain level of visitor pressure before the natural features that the public come to enjoy start to be eroded and despoiled.

5.5.2 Making Use of The Countryside "Network"

The second part of the planning approach on informal countryside activities therefore involves "spreading the load" of this potential pressure. It recognises that some relief could be afforded to these popular locations by enhancing the opportunities for visitors (and residents) to explore the wider countryside without the worry that they may be trespassing.

Blyth Valley's existing public rights of way network represents a good basis for achieving this objective. However, a survey and subsequent assessment of all the Public Footpaths, Bridleways, RUPP's.[22] Byways and unsurfaced, unclassified country roads (embodied in a Network Strategy) has pinpointed a number of deficiencies as follows:

- The network largely consists of public footpaths which limit access only to walkers;
- Many of the routes are linear, connecting settlements or places of interest, which makes it difficult for users to start and end their journey from the same point; and

18 *Based on Countryside Agency surveys during the 1980s.*

19 *The Countryside Strategy is prepared and updated every year by the Countryside Commission and Blyth Valley Borough Council. A "Network Strategy" has been produced by Blyth Valley Borough Council, which deals with the management and enhancement of the Public Rights of Way network. Northumberland County Council, in association with the District Councils, has produced a "Coast Management Plan" and may, in the future, prepare an "Urban Fringe Management Plan". Finally, The "Landscape Strategy", and the "Nature Conservation Plan", produced by Blyth Valley Borough Council, also deal with aspects of the countryside.*

20 *The recreational benefit of woodlands is recognised in Policy E5 (vi)(c).*

21 *See also Policy M8 (ii).*

22 *Roads Used as Public Paths.*

Policy ***L 3*** — *INFORMAL COUNTRYSIDE LEISURE PURSUITS*

Informal recreational activities in the countryside will be further encouraged by:

i Promoting, through planning decisions and, where necessary, the agreement of landowners and relevant statutory bodies, the creation of features and enhancements appropriate to the improvement of the coastline, Holywell Dene and Blyth Riverside as destinations for visitors and nearby residents to pursue activities appropriate to these settings, subject to considerations of environmental impact, including the full retention of their nature conservation and landscape interest;

ii Encouraging the public to access the wider countryside via the public rights of way network which will be:

a protected from future developments which would result in a significant reduction in public access amenity; however where unavoidably affected by development, detailed planning permission will not be granted until a diversion is agreed which does not result in a significant reduction in public access amenity;

b improved via the creation of a number of recreational routes for use by cyclists and horse-riders, with bridleway status where possible and a series of short circular self-guided trails with comprehensive signposting throughout.

- Despite paths being clearly demarcated on the ground, there is a lack of public confidence in using them either because they are not signposted or it is not clear where they lead to.

L3 (ii) therefore protects the existing Public Rights of Way system and addresses these failings by seeking to develop recreational routes, create circular walks and promote its greater use.

These recreational routes will not only provide safe access opportunities for walkers, cyclists and horseriders to enjoy the countryside but will also supplement the improved conditions sought in Policy M2 for those travelling on foot or bicycle to work, school or the shops from one settlement to another. The main connections in this category, which are shown in Appendix XXIX, are:

- Blyth Links to Old Hartley, approximately along the route of the A193;
- Newsham to Seaton Delaval, making use of the former railway track;
- South Beach to the coast, New Harley and East Cramlington, making use of the existing network of public footpaths and farm tracks;
- Seghill to north Cramlington, via the path network on Northumberland County Council's areas of reclaimed land;
- Seghill to south-east Cramlington, following the old road system;
- Seghill to North Tyneside and Holywell, making use of the existing network of public footpaths and farm tracks;
- South-west Cramlington to North Tyneside, by closing stretches of Arcot Lane and Beacon Lane to motorised traffic;
- Shankhouse to New Delaval, via the former Plessey Waggonway, and to Bebside by closing Hathery Lane to motorised traffic;
- Cowpen to Furnace Bank Bridge, making use of the existing riverside connections;
- Cramlington to Plessey Woods, approximately along the route of the A1068;
- Additional connections within the Sports Park area to the north of East Cramlington.

In time, the aim is to establish these recreational routes as public bridleways, thereby securing their long term future. However, it is recognised that the legal process of achieving such a designation can be lengthy, particularly as only one unresolved objection can lead to a public inquiry. It may be the case that in the short term a route can more readily opened up for recreational cycling or horse-riding by entering into a legal agreement with the landowner.

Where the opportunity arises to achieve the improvements sought within both parts of Policy L3, through a Planning Obligation in relation to other development,[23] it will be taken, subject to other policies in this Local Plan.

5.6 FORMAL RECREATION IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

While the vast majority of trips made to the countryside are for informal recreation, some provision is required to meet more formal and organised leisure and sport activity.[24]

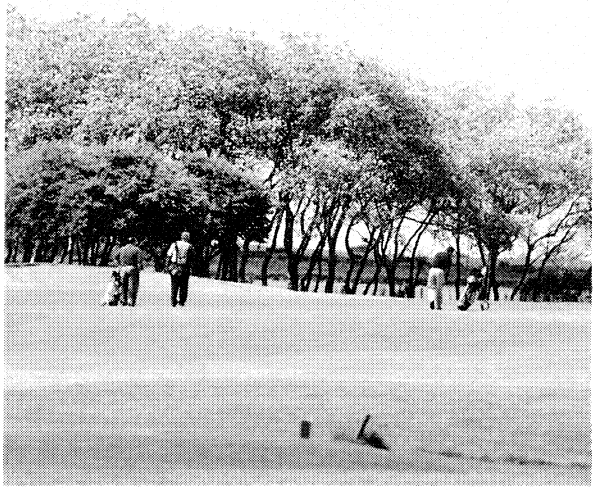
Golfing activities, equestrian activities, mountain biking, clay pigeon shooting and go-karting are examples of activities that cannot be satisfactorily accommodated within settlements due either to the space they require or the disturbance caused to residents. Furthermore, without careful planning, they have the potential to cause environmental damage in open land areas too.

Policy L4 identifies how these pursuits can best be accommodated.

5.6.1 Golf and Other Extensive Sports Activities

Golf courses exist on the edge of both Blyth and Cramlington but the demand is such that there may be the need for another such facility in the Plan area.[25] However new golf course or similar developments need to be carefully assessed as to their potential impact on the landscape, natural and historic features of an area.

L4 (i) outlines the criteria against which golf or other extensive outdoor sports proposals will be measured. Perhaps the most likely impact of such proposal will be on the landscape. The character of an area can be considerably altered by features such as greens and bunkers. On the other hand, there may be a positive impact where the landscape is currently unexceptional.



Blyth Golf Course

5.6.2 Positive Proposals for Countryside Sports Activities

L4 (ii) refers to two areas where the introduction of sports activity may have a positive impact in environmental terms, as well as in terms of the provision of facilities.

THE SPORTS PARK SITE

The chapter on Environmental Protection catalogues the many areas of reclaimed land in Blyth Valley. While much of this has been restored to farmland with other sections afforested, an element has been retained for public recreation at East Cramlington - the site referred to as "the Sports Park site". This extends to 85 hectares. It is served by good road and footpath access [26] and, while the extensive tree planting is maturing, there is currently limited nature conservation interest. It is therefore identified, together with adjoining farmland, as an appropriate location for golf course use.

The sports park site has not been included in the Green Belt. As such, proposals for recreational uses involving an element of built development[27] could be considered in the longer term in the absence of any firm golf course proposal.

Access to any facility at the Sports Park could be via the existing B1326 East Cramlington Road if the proposal is modest in scale and in terms of its likely traffic generation, although a realignment at its eastern end (towards Seaton Delaval) may be sought in association with it.[28] On the other hand, if a major proposal comes forward, it may be necessary to seek, in association with the development and the building of the eastern part of the proposed Cramlington East-West Link Road, the construction of direct access from the A189 South-East Northumberland Spine Road.[29]

MEGGIES BURN

Reclaimed land on the now culverted Meggies Burn currently accommodates formal recreational activities such as model aircraft flying and go-karting, despite the absence of on-site facilities. Land will be kept available for such uses, although this may be contracted to simplify the area covered by the "Gloucester Lodge" rugby pitches, depending on whether these pitches are successfully relocated to a new site at South Newsham Road.[30] This also retains the option of developing a small camp site in the long term.[31]

23 *See also Policy G11.*
24 *i.e. over and above the local and townwide provision of Sports Pitches covered in the Community Facilities Chapter.*
25 *Based upon Sports Council findings.*
26 *It is intended that any development of the area will include an integrated network for pedestrians, cyclists & horseriders in line with Policy L3(ii).*
27 *This could include stadium type facilities.*
28 *See the proposal at Policy M10 (ii)(b).*
29 *See the proposal at Policy M9 (ii).*

Policy L4 — FORMAL RECREATION IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

The provision of formal recreational facilities within areas outside the settlement limits, as defined in Policy G6, will generally be acceptable provided that there is no conflict with other Plan policies. In relation to this:

i Proposals for new golf course developments or other expansive outdoor sports facilities which involve disturbances to the ground and water table, alterations to the landscape or other environmental disruption will be assessed, as appropriate, against policies on

nature conservation	**Policy E1 & E2**
landscape	**Policy E4 & E5**
agricultural land	**Policy E7**
archaeology	**Policy E12**
conservation	**Policy E13 & E15**

The general impact of such proposals will be assessed applying criteria in Policy G10;

ii Specific provision for the accommodation of large scale, formal countryside activities will be made as follows:

a land at East Cramlington is reserved for the development of a golf course subject to the criteria identified in L4 (i) above and:

- **the retention of at least 50 per cent of the land currently owned by Northumberland County Council as a contiguous area of public open space as shown on the Proposals Map;**
- **the provision of public car parking at a location well-related to the public open space and the intended road access point;**
- **the provision of a broad circular "green corridor" incorporating bridleway rights around the perimeter of the land allocation and incorporating links to the B1326, the A1061 and the footbridge over the A189;**
- **the retention and supplementing, wherever possible, of the existing areas of plantation woodland, with maintenance undertaken according to the local authority's specifications; and**
- **the protection and enhancement of the nature conservation value of the linear wildlife corridor running north-south through the site via the linking of the different habitat pockets already present on the land;**

b land at Meggies Burn will be actively promoted for the further development of formal recreational activities subject to the satisfactory relocation of the existing playing fields and the provision of appropriate public access as identified in Policy L3 (ii).

30 *See Proposal SB5.*

31 *See also Policy L1 above.*

6. Work Activity

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The main aims of the Local Plan have been set out in the introduction. Traditionally, the development of the economy, one of the four main objectives of the Local Plan, has been associated with the development of land to provide jobs. This continues to be the case. However economic development depends on more than just the accommodation of work opportunities. It embraces the full range of land uses in this Local Plan. Equally, work activity as a land use should reflect all the main aims of the Local Plan - including the other three "E's", (Environment, Energy Conservation and Equality of Opportunity).[1]

Appendix XXIII sets down the background to the local economy. The characteristics of the local economy and the policy background, (in terms of assisted status etc.) have been a major factor in shaping the Policies and Proposals in this chapter. However the chapter particularly concentrates on the **land use implications** of decisions on local economic development, in the form of **"work activity"**.

"Work activity" refers to existing work carried on in establishments such as factories, warehouses, offices, shops and schools, and in less fixed work places - e.g. on construction sites, in transport, on the land, at places of leisure and at home. It also refers to new opportunities for such activities.

Positive land use policies in this Plan cover the retention and enhancement of existing land and premises in work activity use as well as the identification of sufficient land for:

- The **expansion** of existing work activity;
- The **relocation** of existing work activity where this may be necessary or desirable for planning reasons;
- **New** work activity where this may be developed through new ventures moving into the Borough.

6.1.1 Work Activity covered elsewhere in the Local Plan

Much work activity overlaps with areas of Local Plan policy which have already been dealt with:

- The **Environmental Protection and Enhancement** Chapter which includes sections which deal with:
  - the relationship between agriculture and the environment, with implications for agriculture as a work activity;
  - how the Authority would react to large scale engineering operations, such as opencasting and waste disposal activity, with implications for local and contract employment;
  - how pollution would be controlled;[2]
- The **General Development** and **Housing** policies, which will, to a considerable extent, determine construction activity in the Borough;
- **Community Facilities** policies which include work related activities in fields such as retailing, recreation, education and the arts;
- **Leisure and Visitor Activities** policies which clearly involve employment in a variety of situations;
- **Movement** policies which will affect work activity in the fields of transport and construction and on major employment sites, as well as issues of travel to work.

6.1.2 Separate Areas for Work Activity?

This chapter concentrates on those work activities which are traditionally carried on separately (and can therefore be geographically separate) from other community activities, (although there are always going to be "grey areas" where the work activity involves an element of public access).

The two areas of work activity which have traditionally (at least over the past few decades) been geographically separate are:

- **Industrial Activity**, manufacturing and service - usually located on industrial estates;
- **Office Activity** - located in business districts within town centres or elsewhere on their own sites.

Land can also be specifically designated as a "business park" which could involve a combination of industrial and office activity. Information technology has had the effect of blurring the distinction between the two. Specific areas have, in the past, been identified for such activities. In reality, it will need to be recognised that a significant. proportion of allocated land should be capable of accommodating an increasingly wide range of work activities.

Sometimes, neither traditional industrial estate locations nor town centre sites are suitable - particularly where a prestigious, well landscaped location or one with good road access is required. This too must be taken into account in land use policies in this Local Plan.[3]

It has also become appropriate to allow for certain of the traditionally separate work activities to be carried on within the fabric of the built up area, including residential or mixed use areas.

1 *This is why this chapter is headed "Work Activity" rather than "Economic Development".*
2 *See Chapter 1, Section 1.4 on agriculture, Section 1.5 on mineral extraction etc. and Section 1.8 on pollution control.*
3 *See Sub-section 6.2.2.*

6.2 LAND FOR WORK ACTIVITY

Traditionally, local plans, in allocating land for work activity, have concentrated on industrial activity. As stated above, a narrow definition of industrial activity is no longer possible. However it is necessary to have some measure of land needs for work activity. Industrial estates, business parks and similar areas must therefore be examined in terms of land available and land required taking into account the changing roles and definitions described above.

STRATEGIC GUIDANCE

Strategic guidance of relevance from Central Government [4] emphasises the need to widen the economic base through land use policy by providing for a wide range of types of site and premises.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY STRUCTURE PLAN

The Replacement Northumberland County Structure Plan takes account of the cross fertilisation between different categories of work related land use. The first part of Appendix XXIV gives a brief account of the land supply situation in Blyth Valley as analysed in the Structure Plan Economy Topic Paper. Based upon this analysis for each district, the Structure Plan has identified a total requirement for land to accommodate "general and local employment and business park uses". For Blyth Valley, the figure is approximately 60 hectares. The figure would include all available land on existing industrial estates, business parks etc. plus any new allocations.

The existing or already identified areas of land which can be counted towards the Structure Plan category are set out in the second part of Appendix XXIV. This shows that considerably more than the required 60 hectares of land (almost double) remains available in existing or firmly proposed industrial estates / business parks etc.

There is therefore no need for this Local Plan to identify, for general / local employment or business park use, any land which is not on an existing industrial estate / business park or has at least been identified for the purpose prior to the emergence of this document.[5]

The other category of definable work activity land identified in the Structure Plan, refers to individual, environmentally attractive sites in non-industrial estate locations. No figure is put on this. Instead, it is suggested that such sites ought to be provided at or near the main towns in the County. The Structure Plan also has statements on offices and other uses. These are dealt with individually below.

6.2.1 Land for General and Local Employment and Business Park Use

Policy W1 covers the designation of land for the above purpose. It is proposed that the areas listed in the second table at Appendix XXIV, containing, as they do, sufficient available land, should collectively be designated in this Local Plan for general and local employment purposes, with the exception of Crofton Mill which is the subject of a separate policy.[6]

Policy W1, though a blanket designation to meet an identified land requirement, covers a wide range of types of site, including older industrial areas, traditional, modern industrial estates and areas occupied by individual users.

Most are the subject of policies or proposals later in this chapter or elsewhere in this Local Plan. However pure land use issues relating to them are covered within Policy W1 and this section. In brief, the areas are as follows.

BLYTH

In Blyth, there are the **Kitty Brewster and Cowpen Industrial Estates**, to the north of Cowpen Road, (collectively known as the Blyth Industrial Estates). Added to this is the southern portion of the **former Bates Colliery land** (a new site) and an area **south of Mansell Terrace, Bebside**, (also the site of a former coal mine). There are two small pockets of industrial development close to but outside the Port of Blyth Development Area - i.e. **Burt Street**, **Ballast Hill** and an area close to **Wensleydale Terrace**. There is also the area occupied by the **Delaval Street workshops**.

CRAMLINGTON

In Cramlington, there is the whole of the north-west sector industrial zone, comprising **Bassington and Nelson Industrial Estates** and the **Windmill area**. There is also the **South Cramlington** area, the eastern part of which was identified as a "distribution centre" site during the mid-1980's. In addition, there is an industrial estate at **East Cramlington**.

OTHER AREAS

Outside the main two towns, there are two areas at **Seaton Delaval** - at **Double Row** and **Avenue Road** (the latter developed by a single user) - plus the **Seghill industrial area**, a small part of which is in existing industrial use, the rest proposed.

All together, some 450 hectares of land has been committed to industrial, warehouse or related business uses in these (mostly) purpose-built areas. Of this, about

4 *This includes Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Note 4 on Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Firms. There is also Regional Guidance covering Northumberland, Durham and Cleveland, currently under review.*

5 *The two new allocations in Policy W1 were also identified in the existing, adopted local Plan, (the Blyth Valley East Local Plan). There is some evidence that, should an existing large firm within the Blyth industrial estates wish to expand and should that firm not have sufficient expansion space in situ, then it may not be possible to identify a replacement site of sufficient size within the town of Blyth. While not a marked problem at present, the fact that the work force in Blyth is relatively immobile, may justify a full review of the availability of 'General and Local Employment and Business Park' land, as part of the first review of this Plan.*

6 *This relates to mixed use redevelopment - see Chapter 17.*

one quarter remains to be developed and about a quarter of *this* amount is under option for development.

Not all of the areas listed have land available. However they are included in the designation under Policy W1 because the policy is intended to cover changes of use, redevelopment, on-site expansions etc. within the designated areas, as well as the land allocations themselves.

Some of the available land comprises quite small parcels and there is a good range of medium size sites. The largest site remaining available is in the Nelson area of Cramlington, at somewhere below 20 hectares.

This is about as large a site as one could expect to find on a standard industrial estate or business park.

Policy W1 is not intended to cover the provision of larger sites. The approach of the Local Plan in relation to this issue is set out below.[7]

USES TO BE ACCOMMODATED

Within the areas designated under Policy W1, it is necessary to ensure that as wide a range as possible of industrial and other appropriate work activity uses can be accommodated while aiming, through planning controls, to limit each individual area to uses appropriate for that area.

The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 is, strictly speaking, a development control tool to allow reasonable scope for changes of use between similar types of industry (or other use) without the need to apply for planning permission while retaining necessary controls for more marked changes of use. However it can be usefully applied as a guide to what would or would not be appropriate to permit within each individual work activity area.

A table, setting out uses favoured or otherwise in the various areas, therefore forms part of Policy W1. A number of qualifications to this tabulation are listed elsewhere within the policy, **(W1 (i) to (v))**. It aims to allow for maximum flexibility, taking account of the land and premises available and the constraints imposed by the various sites and their locations.

The main Use Class elements are now dealt with in turn, with reference made to individual areas designated in Policy W1 (and listed in Appendix XXIV) where appropriate.

THE "BUSINESS" USE CLASS ("B1")

This Use Class consists of:

- Those **offices** which would not necessarily require accommodation in a town centre or close to residential areas, (i.e. not including financial and professional services);
- **Research & Development establishments**;
- Those industrial uses which are generally compatible with residential. These used to be known as **"light industrial" uses** but, with technology evolving continuously, this range of industries is increasingly difficult to define. It would include processes which make use of computer technology and also production line industries, as long as any noise, fumes, vibration etc. would not be unacceptable in a residential area.

In general the above three types of land use are considered acceptable in all industrial estate / business park locations.[8]

THE "STORAGE" USE CLASS ("B8")

Class B8 of the Use Classes Order covers warehouses and distribution centres. Given that there are no on-site industrial processes (such as there would be in premises occupied by manufacturing firms), it might be thought that this type of occupant would be acceptable in any of the areas listed in Appendix XXIV, (2nd table). However storage uses are not always desirable:

- Although on site activity will be low, certain storage uses generate large amounts of **traffic** and there can be periods of fairly intensive activity with associated noise, fumes etc.
- In terms of work activities, this Use Class is largely **land intensive**. As such, it would not be desirable for large scale storage uses to be granted planning permission on sites regarded as key industrial employment sites for whatever reason. (The same would apply to purpose built premises).
- Although many industrial buildings are designed to be functional and often present a non-descript face

7 *See Policy W2.*

8 *Ideally, larger office blocks with a higher employment density should be located closer to transport nodes although it has to be accepted that, being within Use Class B1, this may be difficult fully to control.*

to the outside world, it is more likely that storage / warehouse buildings would be of this type of **basic design**. For this reason it is not always visually advantageous to have large areas of storage uses within industrial estates or business parks where the aim is to present an attractive environment for incoming employers and others with cause to visit the area.

W1 (i) makes it clear that the above three factors may combine to necessitate the refusal of permission for large scale storage uses in certain circumstances.

Limiting Changes of Use to Storage

The General Development Order [9] allows for interchangeability between the "Business" and "Storage" Use Classes without the need for a separate planning application, so long as the application is for below 235 square metres floorspace. So even if one or other Use Class is favoured initially, the character of an area can nevertheless change considerably over a period of time as companies move and change. A bustling industrial estate can, for example, evolve into an area dominated by storage uses.

It will be necessary to monitor this carefully. Where an area, originally intended as a manufacturing and general employment base for an area, strays too far in the direction of storage uses, the ultimate solution will be to seek an "Article 4" direction to limit the General Development Order so that changes of use from Class B1 ("Business") to Class B8 (Storage") can be properly controlled.[10] Such a measure may be proposed for land at Seghill, as described below.

Distribution Centre

In spite of low employment levels and other disadvantages set out above, storage uses are a necessary part of any local economy, allowing goods to flow from manufacturer to consumer.

It has been recognised that strategically located distribution points can make a significant contribution to a regional economy, possibly encouraging both manufacturing and service industries to locate in the area, by helping to form a distribution network.

In recognition of this, during the mid-1980's, the eastern part of the area of land known as South Cramlington,[11] was identified and designated as a "Distribution Centre". It was envisaged that the land, with direct access from the A19 / A189 junction, would accommodate a range of uses requiring good access from the road network.

W1 (ii) gives recognition to this strategic policy. It is considered that proposals for storage uses should be encouraged to locate at South Cramlington, rather than in areas where there may be an identifiable disadvantage.

As well as Class B8 (storage uses), the land was given planning permission for Class B1 (business uses).[12] It is unlikely to be necessary to seek limitations within this range of uses so long as the status of the site remains unchanged.[13]

Seghill - Difficulty of Accommodating High Traffic Generating Uses

At Seghill, the existing industry, mainly occupying former pithead buildings, will be added to significantly through the development of land reclaimed from the former brickworks. Under the existing planning permission, storage uses would be able to locate there. This area of land was formerly well away from houses, in a relative "backwater" within the village. The road which would provide the access, Pit Lane, was non-residential. This situation has now altered significantly. Now the proposed industrial area (and what remains of the existing) sits within an area which is predominantly residential in character.[14] Pit Lane now acts very much as a residential distributor road. While no houses actually face onto it, there are dwellings close to the road on either side. It would be prudent to try to preclude large traffic generating uses, especially where the local employment benefits may be limited.

W1 (ii) therefore, as well as encouraging the location of Class B8 uses at South Cramlington, discourages them from locating at Seghill. Planning permission will not normally be granted for individual B8 uses of 235 square metres and above. In addition, an Article 4 Direction under the General Development Order will be sought to introduce local planning control over changes of use from Use Class B1 to Use Class B8.

9 *Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995.*

10 *It is also proposed for land in the south-west sector of Cramlington. This land is not part of the general / local employment / business park allocation, under Policy W1, but is proposed to provide individual sites in a non-industrial estate location, under Policy W2 below.*

11 *Part of the general / local employment / business park designation under policy W1.*

12 *In any case, as explained above, transfer between B1 and B8 would be possible.*

13 *W1 (iv) cross refers to the next Policy, which designates certain work activity areas including this part of South Cramlington for larger, individual users.*

14 *A substantial acreage of formerly derelict land close to Pit Lane is now occupied by houses. Some was planned. Other land gained permission for housing only after a planning appeal or otherwise came forward unexpectedly.*

THE "GENERAL INDUSTRIAL" USE CLASS ("B2")

Class B2 of the Use Classes Order, "General Industrial" covers a large range of industry including the heavier side of manufacturing. Included in this category would be most of the pharmaceutical industry at Cramlington, plus some of the more traditional, larger manufacturing employers - e.g. on the heavy engineering side. The category also includes those industries which were formerly categorised as "Special Industrial Uses".[15]

The Need to Limit Areas for General Industry

While all the work activity sites designated under Policy W1 are definable areas, exclusive of any residential or other incompatible uses, (e.g. schools), there is a wide variation in their proximity to the nearest such area. For this reason, **W1 (iii)** encourages Class B2 uses to locate in particular areas within the totality of work activity areas. Blyth Valley's main industrial areas in Blyth (North of Cowpen Road) and in Cramlington (in the NW sector of the town), form the most appropriate locations.

As a rule, uses in Class B2 would be inappropriate in a residential area. It follows that, where work activity areas abut residential or other sensitive areas, it would be disadvantageous to allow General Industrial uses, at least not without adequate safeguards. Pollution control policies will be applied.[16] However there is also the need for site specific safeguards:

- **Cramlington** has been planned with the separation of industry from residential areas firmly in mind. The north-west sector of the town contains all of the town's industrial development and other specialist work activity sites. In spite of this there are **parts of South Nelson and Bassington Estates**, (including currently vacant sites), which are just across the main railway line from the Nelson Village residential area. It would be appropriate for Class B2 uses to be encouraged to locate elsewhere in the sector.

- In **Blyth**, the only substantial area of industrial estate land lies along the **northern side of Cowpen Road**. There are a few places where housing is close to the area defined under Policy W1. Bearing in mind that the economy of Blyth relies heavily on this area, it would be inappropriate to exclude General industry entirely. Its location **immediately adjacent to housing** should be avoided where possible.

- Outside the two main towns, two former pithead areas - at **Double Row, Seaton Delaval** and in **Seghill** - plus a reclaimed site at **East Cramlington**, have provided the foci for small scale industrial development over the years, (albeit in an ad hoc fashion). The only large scale industrial development has been the cosmetics factory development at Avenue Road, Seaton Delaval. There has been a general presumption in favour of general industrial uses in the work activity areas of the Seaton Valley villages. One reason for this is historical - the fact that there has traditionally been a heavy industrial presence in these villages, in the form of the collieries themselves. In fact, these areas are not really suited to industry except if compatible with residential use:

  - Double Row is bisected by a road which also provides the main access way into the residential village of New Hartley. Most premises in the Double Row Industrial area take access directly from this road.

  - The East Cramlington industrial area adjoins the residential area of the village and is in a visually prominent location.

  - At Seghill, as explained earlier under the heading of Storage uses, the character of the surroundings of the proposed industrial area has altered markedly following the building of a significant number of dwellings in the area with houses close to the industrial area and the access road to it. It will not be possible, (nor necessarily desirable from an economic development point of view), to preclude further general uses from the villages entirely. On balance, it is considered that the Seghill industrial area could potentially experience the worst environmental disbenefits.

  Within the villages, therefore, those parts of Double Row and East Cramlington away from housing, are the preferred locations. At Seghill and also in the other areas close to housing, permission will normally be refused. for these "B2" uses.[17]

CROSS REFERENCES

W1 (iv) cross refers to the next Policy which is of relevance for one of the areas in this Policy - South Cramlington.

W1 (v) cross-refers to the fact that port related uses will also be favoured in a general industrial area at Quayside / Ballast Hill.[18]

The tabulation at the end of the Policy also cross refers to a number of site specific proposal relating to the areas covered. Most of these are towards the end of the Chapter.

15 *Special Industrial Uses included many of the more polluting uses that would normally be considered unsuitable for location next to residential or other sensitive uses. Nowadays, the pollution control legislation is adequate to prevent any unsuitable changes within the new, widened Use Class B2.*

16 *See Chapter 1, Sub-section 1.8.*

17 *The land has previously had a planning permission which includes B2 uses. However, it would be inappropriate to grant a similar permission in the light of changed circumstances.*

18 *See Chapter 16.*

Policy ***W1*** *GENERAL AND LOCAL EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS PARK USE*

The land areas listed in this policy and shown on the Proposals Map are designated primarily for work activity and will constitute the land requirement for general and local employment and business park use for the Plan period. The first list consists of existing sites and estates. The second list is of sites allocated by this Policy.

Within these areas, subject to the availability of land and premises and site specific considerations, planning permission will normally be granted for activities falling into those Use Classes of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, indicated in the table, towards the end of this Policy, with the following qualifications:

i **A planning application involving a significant amount of floorspace for storage purposes, falling within Class B8 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, will be refused if it is considered that the result will be an unacceptable reduction in the availability of land for work activity in an accessible or otherwise attractive location, or in the industrial character of the area in the immediate vicinity of the application site.**

ii **Uses within Class B8 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 will be encouraged to locate on available land at South Cramlington Industrial Area and will be refused, if more than 235 square metres, at Seghill Industrial area.**

iii **Uses within Class B2 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes Order) 1987 will generally be encouraged to locate at the Blyth Industrial Estates, or within the North-West Sector of Cramlington, as well as being permitted within those other areas as indicated in the table. However, a planning application for a use falling within this Class will be refused if it would be unacceptably close to a residential area or other sensitive land use. The pollution control policy, Policy E22, will be applied as appropriate. If unacceptable in a particular location, efforts will be made to identify a suitable alternative location within the areas where Class B2 uses are acceptable. Particularly close scrutiny will be given to applications:**

- a **in those parts of the Bassington and South Nelson industrial areas located close to Nelson Village;**
- b **in those parts of the Blyth Industrial Estates and former Bates Colliery site, close to Cowpen Road, which adjoin residential or other sensitive uses;**
- c **in work activity areas in East Cramlington, Double Row and Avenue Road, Seaton Delaval.**

iv **Land at South Cramlington, east of Dudley Lane, will also be subject to criteria in Policy W2 below in which case it may be necessary to refuse incremental applications for developments on small sites;**

v **Port uses will also be favoured at the Ballast Hill / Quayside area.**

(continued....

Policy ***W1*** *continued* — *GENERAL AND LOCAL EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS PARK USE*

The areas to which this Policy refers are as follows; Use Classes favoured in each (i.e. "Business" Use Class ("B1") or "General Industrial" Use Class ("B2") or "Storage" Use Class ("B8")) and cross references to Proposals including those towards the end of this chapter, are also given:

WORK ACTIVITY AREA	USES FAVOURED AND OTHER QUALIFICATIONS	CROSS REFERENCE TO RELEVANT SPECIFIC PROPOSALS
EXISTING AREAS:		
The Blyth Industrial Estates, Cowpen Road	B1, B8 throughout; B2 in accordance with iii above	Proposal WP1
Bebside - Land South of Mansell Terrace	B1, B2, B8	Proposal WP3
Blyth Harbour Area (not including main Port Development Area but including Burt Street, Ballast Hill / Quayside Area and an area close to Wensleydale Terrace)	B1, B2, B8 and Port related uses in accordance with v above	Proposal BQ1 (for the Ballast Hill / Quayside area)
Delaval Street, Blyth	B1, B8	N/A
Cramlington North-West Sector Industrial Estates	B1, B8 throughout; B2 in accordance with iii above	N/A
East Cramlington Industrial Estate	B1, B8 throughout; B2 in accordance with iii above	Proposal WP6
South Cramlington Industrial Area (includes Fergusons Industrial Area)	B1, B8; in the area east of Dudley Lane, (v) above will apply and B8 uses will be subject to ii above	Proposal WP5
Seaton Delaval, Avenue Road	B1, B8 throughout; B2 in accordance with iii above	Proposal WP7
Double Row, Seaton Delaval	B1, B8 throughout; B2 in accordance with iii above	Proposal WP8
Seghill Industrial Area (Existing Part)	B1, throughout; B8 in accordance with ii above	Proposal WP9
AREAS ALLOCATED IN THIS POLICY:		
Land at Former Bates Colliery (south of railway line)	B1, B8 throughout; B2 in accordance with iii above	Proposal WP2
Seghill Industrial Area (New Part)	B1, throughout; B8 in accordance with ii above	Proposal WP9

6.2.2 Land for Users Requiring Individual Sites in Non-Estate Locations

The general land requirement for work activity [19] has been dealt with in considerable detail in the previous Sub-section, as have the particular range of uses to be permitted in each identified area.

The Structure Plan identifies a separate requirement for a range of environmentally attractive sites to accommodate investment by firms requiring individual sites in non-estate locations. This element has not been included in the assessment so far. The Structure Plan does not identify a total land area requirement for this purpose. However it implies that the locations should be associated with the main towns in the County.

Policy W2 makes provision, so far as is possible, for this identified land requirement.

In the past there has been no specific aim to capture this type of "prestige" employment use in Blyth. Efforts have been concentrated on establishing work activities in a relatively pleasant industrial estate setting to provide a replacement for the declining traditional industries - particularly coal mining. There has also been effort to provide for the continuation and diversification of the Port of Blyth.[20]

W2 (i) proposes two allocations of land for the purpose of accommodating individual users. Both sites are in Cramlington reflecting:

- its strategic role as a growth point for employment;
- its unique position in relation to the pool of labour in Tyneside, South-East Northumberland, and also the road system;
- the high quality of environment that it can offer; and
- its Assisted Area Status

In Cramlington, there has, to a certain extent, been the recognition in the past that some larger firms will wish to be accommodated on individually accessed sites.[21] Such companies have large work forces and often include substantial office activity and possibly a research and development function. Visits by outsiders will form a significant element of journeys to and from the premises and the "prestige" factor - i.e. well landscaped approaches direct from the main road system - will become significant.

Land at Windmill is now fully occupied with the exception of nine acres which is under option. It has, for the sake of convenience, been classified as part of the general employment etc. area under Policy W1.

SOUTH-WEST SECTOR - OFF FISHER LANE

The opening up of the South-West sector of the town provides the opportunity to identify land of high environmental quality to provide a continuity of supply of individual user sites. The land identified is removed from the proposed residential heart of the South West Cramlington Community Development Area. It is along the western limit of the town and will take direct access from the A1068 Fisher Lane. Although this Policy allocates the land, a separate Proposal[22] setting out the design constraints that will be introduced in order to ensure a high quality of development. Detailed design criteria will be drawn up for the land in advance of any detailed planning permission being granted within the area.

South of the southern end of this land allocation, there is a further area of land which, though outside the proposed settlement limit for Cramlington during the Plan period, has not been included in the Green Belt. It is intended that this land could act as a long term reserve site for the same range of land use as the rest of the area. Its development would only be considered following development of sites to the north or, exceptionally, if those sites were incapable of accommodating an appropriate user.

WEST HARTFORD FARM

The Fisher Lane proposal will create a unique employment environment, new to the Plan area. However, there is still the need for a further individual site for inward investment, offering a similar environment to the sites at Windmill. The need for such a site, on the edge of Cramlington, was originally proposed strongly by Northumberland County Council who have traditionally had the role of economic development authority throughout the County as well as having a specific role of promoting Cramlington as a strategic growth point. Although this Policy allocates the land, a separate Proposal[23] sets out those considerations which any development of the site will need to satisfy before planning consent is granted.

SOUTH CRAMLINGTON

South Cramlington is an industrial area defined in Policy W1 above for general industrial use. As stated above, the use originally envisaged for the site was a "distribution centre", with a concentration of activity in Use Class B8 requiring easy access to the main road network. The same factors mean that the land is also suitable for large, inward investors seeking a non-industrial estate location, as made clear in **W2 (ii)**. The proximity of housing areas in Dudley, to the south and across Valley Park mean that Class B2 uses will need to be excluded.

19 *i.e. 60 hectares of undeveloped land in industrial estates, business parks and similar areas.*

20 *See also Sub-section 6.2.3 below.*

21 *In the past, this has been done successfully in the Windmill area towards the north-western corner of the town, with some of the larger incoming pharmaceutical companies.*

22 *See Chapter 11, Sub-section 11.3.2.*

23 *See Sub-section 6.6.6.*

Policy **W2** — *INDIVIDUAL USERS*

The needs of work activity requiring large, individual sites in non-estate locations will be met by:

i Allocating land specifically for this purpose, as shown on the Proposals Map, as follows:

a within the South-West Sector of Cramlington, land accessed from the A1068, Fisher Lane, for individual users within Class B1 of the Town and Country Planning (use Classes) Order 1987, with planning permission only being granted in accordance with criteria in Proposal SW3;

b at West Hartford Farm, north of the A192 at N. W. Cramlington, for a large-scale development within Use Classes B1 and B2 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, with planning permission only being granted in accordance with criteria in Proposal WP4;

ii Encouraging and permitting such uses to locate on that part of the land at South Cramlington, identified in Policy W1 above, which lies to the east of Dudley Lane. In the case of such a use locating towards the western end of this land, a new access point at the junction of Dudley Lane and the A19 may be sought;

iii Where there is a proposal for a large scale work activity within Use Classes B1 or B2, which has particular requirements that cannot be met within sites allocated within this Policy or Policy W1, then, in very exceptional circumstances, permission may be granted in areas which are:

- **not part of the Green Belt;**
- **directly accessible from the main road network; and**
- **capable of satisfactory access by public transport.**

The assessment of any application for such development will place particular emphasis on the criteria in Policy G12 (iii) and, where outside the settlement limits, the criteria in Policy G10.

Where other land uses proposed in this Plan would be displaced, permission will only be granted if the Local Planning Authority are satisfied that the uses previously proposed could be satisfactorily accommodated elsewhere applying relevant Policies elsewhere in this Plan.

Separate access from Dudley Lane should be possible if a separate inward investor locates towards the western end of the site.

FURTHER LARGE SCALE INWARD INVESTMENT

W2 (iii) recognises that the situation may arise during the Plan period, in which there is, once again, a shortage of land for inward investors.[24]

It is considered important, if possible, to prevent the situation where inward investment seeking a location with the advantages offered by the Plan area - especially Cramlington - is diverted elsewhere. Criteria are therefore given against which proposals can be assessed.

Such a proposal may involve land beyond settlement limits and there must therefore be exceptional reasons for giving positive consideration to it. It will be necessary to avoid all Green Belt areas. Other relevant Policies will be taken into account (e.g. that on Areas of High Landscape Value). However, the main considerations will be those on the environmental impact of large scale development set out in part (iii) of the general development control policy, (Policy G12). Also, Policy G10, gives some criteria on the impact of development in the countryside generally.

Such a proposal may also involve land allocated for some other use, such as housing or open space. In that case it will need to be decided whether removing the possibility of those uses on the site concerned, will require the identification of further areas for them.[25] [26]

24 *This could occur, if there is an early take-up of the West Hartford Farm or Fisher Lane land.*

6.2.3 **Port Related Activities**

The port of Blyth is one of the biggest users of land in the Plan area. This section deals purely with the land needs of port uses. The main function of the port involves the movement of goods on land and water The chapter on "Movement" therefore also touches on the subject of the port.[27] The Quayside area is the subject of revised proposals.[28]

PORT ACTIVITY AND EMPLOYMENT

In the terms referred to earlier, the port activities are land intensive in that there are relatively few people employed permanently on site compared with the amount of land held by the port authority. The reason for this is that much of the trade which passes through the port uses roll-on- roll-off (ro-ro) facilities of which there are presently two in Blyth. The reality is that, due to the relative timing of the land and sea transport, the large capacity of the ro-ro facilities and the ships themselves, large amounts of goods need to be stored on land in close proximity to the loading areas. This means that large warehouses or outside storage areas are needed with obvious land-take implications.

In addition, Blyth Harbour Commission has a statutory responsibility to develop port trade and facilities. This involves the Commission being required to hold a substantial land bank [29] and it is inevitable that much land will be left vacant or let for temporary uses.

The Port Development Area covers somewhere over 30 hectares. The port directly employs some 250 persons within the Plan area.[30]

In spite of this fairly low employment density, it would be unwise to ignore the contribution of the Port to the economy of Blyth and the region. For example, it is estimated a further 350 persons are employed in activities connected with the Port's presence in the town. There is also an indirect linkage with significant employment further afield, most notably at the Alcan aluminium smelter at Lynemouth, which relies on the port for the import of its raw materials.

Much of the land holding and a significant element of the Port activities occur to the north of the River Blyth, in the Wansbeck District.

CONTINUED PORT ACTIVITY

Policy W3 is a general policy seeking to encourage the continuation of port activity in Blyth and recognising that the influence of the Port will go well beyond the Port Development Area itself. There are appropriate references, (**W3 (i)**), to possible impact that need to be taken into account, including access, traffic and nature conservation matters, (the latter being mentioned because of the proximity of the internationally important Special Protection Area).[31] There is also a cross reference, (in **W3 (ii)**), to a Policy in the next Chapter that seeks the retention of public access.[32]

THE PORT DEVELOPMENT AREA

Policy W4 defines the Port Development Area. Broadly, this follows the boundary of the longstanding "Operational Land" area of the port with a few small additional areas along the periphery.

However this Local Plan proposes the major addition of the rail-coal handling facility and land to the north - both part of the site of the former Bates Colliery.

Following the closure of Bates Colliery (in 1986), it was possible, with grant aid, to reopen the branch railway from Newsham junction to the site of the former colliery, and install a rail / coal-handling facility. This enabled coal to be brought to the port (for export) by rail rather than road. The movement of coal by road had been the cause of environmental problems along Cowpen Road.

The recent recession has meant that the facility has not been as intensively used as intended. However, the facility has planning permission for a twenty-five year period and, with the prospect of continued coal production in Northumberland,[33] it is expected that it will last for at least the duration of the Plan period.

In addition, the Harbour Commission took the opportunity of acquiring land between the rail / coal-handling facility and the River Blyth for the purposes of port expansion.[34] Given the very limited opportunities for port expansion south of the river, this land area provides the most logical site for any significant expansion of port activity.

25 *This could form a reason for an early review of this Local Plan.*

26 *The importance of the area around Cambois, outside the Plan area, to the north - in the Wansbeck District - should also be noted. It is a location with sites of sufficient area to accommodate virtually any footloose industry that may come along requiring very large areas of land. The Wansbeck District Local Plan makes it clear that there will be environmental improvements, including "structure planting" of trees which should gradually improve Cambois as a location for incoming employers. Cambois, along with the Blyth area now shares Development Area status with Cramlington, (see above). Above all, Cambois is relatively close to the Plan area, particularly Blyth, which, at the time of writing, contains the five highest unemployment wards in the Plan area.*

27 *See Chapter 7, Sub-section 7.5.4.*

28 *See respectively Chapter 16 and Chapter 5, Sub-section 5.4.1.*

29 *In theory, this land bank is supposed to allow for fifty years ahead.*

30 *See also Policy W4 below. There is a density of just 8 employees for each hectare of land in the Port Development Area.*

31 *See Chapter 1, Sub-section 1.2.1.*

32 *See Chapter 7, Sub-section 7.2.5.*

33 *See also Chapter 1, Section 1.5, for the approach to be taken on mineral extraction.*

34 *The potential of this land for port use had been recognised in the Blyth Valley East Local Plan.*

Policy **W3** — *PORT OF BLYTH: CONTINUED ACTIVITY*

The needs of Port Development at Blyth will be recognised, as far as is possible through land use decisions, by seeking to maintain existing and facilitate additional work activity associated with the port function, both within the Port Development Area and, as appropriate, elsewhere in the Plan area.

The above will be applied recognising the constraints of the existing built environment and other policies and proposals in this Local Plan. In particular, it will be sought to:

i minimise any adverse traffic-related or other environmental impact of Port related proposals, applying Policy M7 (ii) and other relevant policies, with particular care being taken to avoid any adverse impact on the Special Protection Area applying Policy E1; and

ii retain existing permitted public access along the river frontage where possible including The Dun Cow Quay, Quay Road and South Gate, in line with Policy M2 (v).

Policy **W4** — *PORT OF BLYTH: PORT DEVELOPMENT AREA*

A Port Development Area is defined, as shown on the Proposals Map, covering Operational Land and other land between the eastern edge of Cowpen Industrial Estate in the north and Beach Way in the south. Within this area, where an application for planning permission is required, port uses will be granted planning permission, but:

i Subject to conditions on:
- **size, appearance and general impact of buildings and other works on surrounding areas, particularly when proposed in close proximity to the Heritage Conservation Area;**
- **vehicular access not causing adverse impact on the environment or residential amenity;**

ii Not where there is a significant adverse impact on the adjacent Special Protection Area applying Policy E1;

Other land uses will also be permitted within the Port Development Area, subject to (i) and (ii) above, especially with a view to avoiding the possible blighting effect on other uses of the uncertain timing of port development proposals, with each case being considered on its merits including the possibility of granting at least temporary consents.

Limited extensions to the Port activity will be favoured where it can be demonstrated that the extension proposed will assist the implementation of Policy W3, while having careful regard to:
- **The provisions of (i) and (ii) above; and**
- **The need to minimise any adverse environmental impact and enhance amenity including the use of screening where appropriate.**

Regard will be had to the need for continued Port activity at land and buildings which are the subject of Proposal BQ1 as indicated on the Proposals Map.

The Blyth Harbour Commission has the statutory power to carry out port development on operational land in its ownership without the need to submit a planning application. This includes the construction of substantial buildings as long as they are necessary for the functioning of the port.[35]

The Commission does have to apply for planning permission on land which it buys from other owners. This would only become Operational Land through an enactment of Parliament.

Policy W4, therefore, as well as defining the Port Development Area, also, in **W4 (i) to (ii)**, sets out how the limited planning powers available will be used to control development in the Port area.

Certain areas of land close to the Port Development Area are particularly sensitive. It is recognised that the area of Operational land adjoining Bridge Street between Wellington Street East and Bath Terrace is suitable for port development but its prominent location means that particular care will be needed in developing the site.

Agreement has been reached with the Blyth Harbour Commission for landscaped strips to the Bridge Street frontage of the Port Development Area; similar works may be sought on the frontage of Wensleydale Terrace and Links Road.

The Harbour Commission has to comply with stringent safety measures which can have the side effect of reducing the scope for public access to the Port area.[36]

EXTENSIONS TO THE PORT AREA

The final part of Policy W4 sets out some criteria for any expansion of port activity. It is quite possible that, during the period of this Local Plan, the Harbour Commission will wish to extend activities beyond the area defined at the beginning of Policy W4. There appears to be little scope for this in practice due to the heavily built-up nature of most of the surrounding area.[37]

DECOMMISSIONED PORT LAND

There is a possibility that, during the Plan period, areas of Port land will be released for other uses for whatever reason. The location of the Port alongside the residential areas of Blyth, the town centre etc. means that many peripheral parts of the Port area are regarded as sensitive development sites or as being potentially valuable for alternative development. Should such land become available for release from Port use, the general approach will be to encourage its use for non-industrial purposes - the particular use depending on the location of the site concerned. Individual decisions would have full regard to the land availability situation outlined earlier in this chapter.

There are two particular sections of the Port Development Area where it will be actively sought, through discussions with Blyth Harbour Commission to move away from the strict limitation to port use only. These are:

- **The Dun Cow Quay** where, as well as maintaining public access, it is hoped to formalise the visitor attraction role which already exists, albeit informally;[38] and
- **The remainder of the south timber yard** where it will be sought that the land eventually be released for leisure related use or, failing that, that it be left undeveloped so that this possibility is not precluded from future implementation. Should development of the site be unavoidable it will be sought that this is low rise. Additionally it will be the aim that the ad-joining sand dunes are left totally undisturbed.[39]

6.3 PREMISES IN THE WORK ACTIVITY AREAS

In **Policy W5**, the subject matter moves from land requirements for industrial related work activity to premises for this purpose. One lesson learned particularly from the recession of the early 1980's was that, in order to regenerate a local economy and encourage new firms to start up, it is not always sufficient simply to provide serviced land. As a result, the various agencies involved in providing advance factory units began to build much smaller units so that new firms could avoid the need to build their own premises or to use run down, older premises.

In **W5 (i)**, the Local Plan will seek to facilitate the provision of a range of sizes of premises. with the aim that new businesses will not only be able to start up but also that, when they expand, they can remain within Blyth Valley.

W5 (ii) makes clear that a good design of building will be required in all work activity areas.[40] Refurbishment of existing, redundant buildings to provide premises will be encouraged where possible and appropriate.

Energy conservation measures will be looked for, where appropriate or where the opportunity arises.[41]

35 *A recent example of this has been the transit sheds towards the southern end of the Port Development Area, (at Wensleydale Terrace).*

36 *This is covered in the Movement Chapter and in detail in the section on the Quayside Area but is referred to in Policy W3.*

37 *The interaction between port activity and the natural environment of the River Blyth means that the provisions of the Blyth Estuary Management Plan will need to be taken into account when certain planning decisions are taken.*

38 *See Chapter 16, on Blyth Quayside.*

39 *See Chapter 18 on the Blyth Links and Surrounding Area.*

40 *Separate development guidance will be produced for the South-west Sector of Cramlington and may be extended to other areas.*

41 *See Chapter 1, Sub-section 1.10.2.*

Policy ***W5*** *PREMISES IN WORK ACTIVITY AREAS*

Within the work activity areas defined in Policies W1 and W2, and within the limitations of those Policies:

i Planning permission will be granted for work activity premises, having regard to the main aim of maintaining a range of sizes of unit so as to allow for firms to start up and expand within Blyth Valley; where possible, the refurbishment of redundant buildings will be encouraged;

ii Layout and design of any new buildings will be considered in relation to:

- **any particular aims on the quality of the environment of the work activity area in which the premises are situated, having regard, as relevant to Proposals WP1 to WP9 below or other relevant proposals;**
- **energy conservation considerations, in line with Policy E29.**

6.4 OFFICES

Northumberland County Structure Plan encourages office development in the main towns in the County, including Cramlington and Blyth both of which are already, to a certain extent, office centres. There are two main categories of office:

- **Professional and Financial Services, (Within Class A2 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987).** This category consists of uses which are normally found in a town centre or other central location. They include functions which require a street level frontage in or adjacent to a shopping centre (e.g. banks, building societies and estate agents) and those which need to be located centrally but are less customer oriented, typically located in a separate business area or above the shops (e.g. solicitors and insurance brokers).
- **Business Offices, (Within Class B1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987.** These have already been touched upon in the section on land for general and local employment and business park uses.[42] They typically rely less on public access and can be away from town centres. For example, if linked to industrial or storage functions, they may favour a location on an industrial estate. If a head office, a separate, landscaped location may be preferred.

6.4.1 Professional and Financial Services

Blyth has a long tradition of catering for these, mostly involving conversion from residential or retail use. However there has always been an element of purpose building.[43]

In Cramlington, where there is no large stock of older housing capable of conversion to other uses, efforts have been made to establish an office element by incorporating offices in the town centre complex.[44]

Clearly, certain professional and financial services are sited in a wider range of locations than just the main town centres. Seaton Delaval, as a local service centre, has banks, building societies etc. Some professional offices, such as firms of architects, may not require to be centrally located at all.

Policy W6 sets out the strategy of the Local Plan on this type of office. Small scale examples could be accommodated in many different parts of the Plan area. Where in regular use by the public, they should preferably be in locations which are accessible by public transport - ideally, within or close to an existing shopping centre, as defined in Policy C14 or C17.

42 *See Sub-section 6.2.1 above.*

43 *The original bank buildings in Bridge Street are an established example. More recently, advance office units have been built at the eastern end of the town centre to complement the existing provision.*

44 *This is known as Dudley Court.*

In particular, they should be encouraged within the two town centres. Even within the Central Shopping Areas,[45] where they are discouraged from occupying a large part of the frontages, there *is* scope. They are an ideal use for upper floors which may otherwise lie vacant.[46] Blyth town centre, offers further scope within the defined Secondary Commercial Area.[47] This contains an area set aside for the expansion of town centre uses. The importance of office based services in the smaller service centre of Seaton Delaval is also recognised.[48] Finally, the proposals for Blyth Quayside allow for such uses.[49]

6.4.2 **Business Offices**

Policy W7 covers business offices They have been covered above, in part, in that they fall into Class B1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987.

W7 (i) recognises that, since Class B1 also includes light industry, offices have now become generally acceptable within most work activity areas,[50] although high employment density offices may not be appropriate in the central part of industrial areas, away from public transport routes.

W7 (ii) makes clear that the Blyth town centre Secondary Commercial Area will be considered a suitable location for this type of office, as well as professional and financial services.

This category of office has also found a home within the fabric of the existing built-up area, through conversion or building on infill sites.[51] **W7 (iii)** therefore cross refers to the next Policy which deals mixed use situations.

W7 (iv) covers three places within the Plan area where a site or sites have been identified as suitable for individual offices in their own grounds:

- At Blyth, an area of land at Chase Farm Drive, (south of the superstore at the junction of Cowpen Road and the SE Northumberland Spine Road), has been set aside for individual uses within a range which includes offices.[52]

- At Cramlington, the new area identified for individual users requiring non-estate locations, in the south-west sector of the town has already been referred to in this Chapter.[53] As far as possible, the occupants of this land are being limited to Class B1 uses and strict design criteria are being applied.[54] Head offices and office uses, either freestanding or linked with research, information technology or clean, light industry will be given particular encouragement to locate here.

- It is recognised, however, that some office complexes will continue to provide work for substantial numbers of people, not all of whom will have access to a car. In recognition of this and in order to reflect the energy conservation aims of this Local Plan, offices could be accommodated in a parkland setting within the Cramlington town centre northern expansion area, close to Cramlington Station and town-wide bus routes.[55]

6.5 **MIXED USES**

The term "mixed uses" has many possible meanings. However in this case it refers to the mixture of work activity and residential use - normally (but not necessarily) the occurrence of work activities in housing areas rather than the other way around.

The tradition, since the inception of planning, has been to separate different uses.[56] More recently, however, it has been realised that not all work activity uses are necessarily incompatible with residential use. One trigger for this was the recession of the early 1980's when a special effort was made to give encouragement to small businesses starting up. Even with the provision of a range of small premises,[57] the only way that certain types of business could get off the ground was to allow operation from the home. Government advice was issued that these should be favoured. Certain business uses are, in any case, classified as ancillary to residential uses and do not require planning permission (e.g. child minding).

Policy W8 deals with work activities in residential areas which do require planning permission.

45 *These are defined at Policy C14.*

46 *See also Chapter 9, on Blyth town centre, Sub-section 9.2.3, on Living Over the Shop.*

47 *This is defined in Policy B3.*

48 *See in particular, Proposal SD2.*

49 *See Chapter 16.*

50 *At one time it was sought strictly to limit industrial estates to manufacturing activity but more recent trends mean that other work related uses have moved in.*

51 *For instance, Blyth Valley Borough Council's Civic Centre at Blyth was part conversion, part new build. The offices of the Blyth Harbour Commission are an early example of a purpose-built business office.*

52 *See Chapter 12, Sub-section 12.2.2.*

53 *See Sub-section 6.6.2.*

54 *See also Chapter 11, Sub-section 11.3.2.*

55 *See Chapter 8, Proposal CC2.*

56 *The separating of different uses dates back to the Public Health legislation of the late nineteenth century. The old style development plans that were drawn up for most built-up areas of the country during the 1950's and 1960's carried the tradition forward into zoning plans. Much of the uniformity of the environment in towns today is due to the application of this principle.*

57 *See Section 6.3 above.*

Policy **W6** — *OFFICES: CLASS "A2" USES*

Offices falling within Class A2 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, will be accommodated within the Plan area by permitting new development, change of use, redevelopment or conversion of premises for this purpose where other Policies and Proposals in this Local Plan allow and having regard to accessibility by public transport. Particular encouragement for this use will be given within:

- **The Central Shopping Areas at Cramlington and Blyth town centres while applying Policies C14 (i)(b) and B1, (the Retail Frontage Policies), at ground floor level;**
- **The Blyth Town Centre Secondary Commercial Area, applying Policy B3;**
- **The Seaton Delaval local service area, as proposed at Proposal SD2;**
- **Part of the Blyth Quayside area, as proposed at Proposal BQ2.**

Policy **W7** — *OFFICES AND CLASS "B1" USES*

Offices not covered by Policy W6 above, will be accommodated by granting permission for uses falling within Class B1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, as follows:

i **Within work activity areas in accordance with Policies W1 and W2;**

ii **In the Blyth Town Centre Secondary Commercial Area, applying Policy B3;**

iii **Where appropriate, as part of mixed use developments or individually within the built-up areas, applying the provisions of Policy W8;**

iv **By encouraging the location of individual office complexes at:**

- **a** **West Blyth as one of two alternative uses proposed at Proposal WB2;**
- **b** **South-West Cramlington in accordance with Policy W2 and Proposal SW3;**
- **c** **Cramlington Town Centre Northern Expansion Site, as proposed at Proposal CC2.**

6.5.1 **Business from the Home**

Firstly, there are the type of businesses which are ancillary and operated from the home but which nevertheless have a noticeable effect on the character of the area. Probably the most common example is the private hire business where one or more minicab or minibus is parked on the highway outside the house.

W8 (i) sets criteria against which applications for the operation of businesses from the home can be determined. The precise location of the house in relation to access into the estate, parking opportunities, the potential for disturbance etc. will be important. Particular emphasis is given to the need for consultation.[58] The protection of residential amenity will be sought by imposing conditions. Commonly, these will limit the period of permission and/or make it personal to the applicant. The reason for this is that the business may grow with overspill effects, (such as the on-street parking mentioned above), reaching unacceptable levels.

The cumulative effect of a number of non-residential uses in a locality will be taken into account when assessing individual applications. Where it is considered that the proposal in combination with others will have the effect of significantly reducing the residential character, then this may be a reason for refusal.

58 *Further details on this are contained in a development control policy note dealing with home-based businesses that require permission.*

6.5.2 Small Workshops / Offices in Residential Areas

The next level of business use is stand-alone premises, such as a workshop or small office, which is separate from the dwellinghouse. There is now specific Government advice on mixed uses in which Local Authorities are discouraged from the strict zoning of employment uses away from residential areas, particularly if the work activities concerned are of a sufficiently small scale and compatible with the residential use.

It is therefore necessary to have a policy which not only covers businesses from the home but also provides a framework for dealing with applications for separate workshop premises in residential areas, giving them some encouragement. **W8 (ii)** aims to do this.

It is necessary measure proposals for stand alone business premises against the same criteria, (relating to access, parking, disturbance and residential amenity), as businesses operating from the home. In particular, this reflects a need to make a distinction between the very different environments of old and new housing areas.[59]

Although it is not possible to have a fully exclusive policy, a list of Use Classes is given containing most of the categories of business that could, depending on particular local circumstances, be acceptable within built-up areas with a residential element.

The cumulative effect of several non-residential uses in a locality referred to above will be even more relevant, where complete premises move to non -residential use.

6.5.3 Areas for Mixed Uses

In order to be more positive on this front, it is proposed in **W8 (iii)**, that certain parts of the urban fabric should be planned to include the possibility of work activity mixing with other uses. This is particularly appropriate where non-work related uses are being introduced on the site of former work activity.

The idea will be pursued during the first part of the Plan period in two localities: Crofton Mill and the Blyth Quayside.[60] Both areas are expected to experience the relocation of existing non-compatible industry or the removal of outdated premises. The introduction of new workshops, small offices etc. is entirely appropriate in these circumstances. Other areas may lend themselves to new mixed use development, or it may be possible to incorporate workshop uses into existing older housing areas through conversion. In certain cases it may be appropriate for new housing areas, other than that at Crofton Mill, to contain a small element of work activity.[61]

6.5.4 Blyth Town Centre Secondary Commercial Area

W8 (iv) cross refers to the Blyth Town Centre chapter, (Policy B3) which defines an area which currently retains residential pockets but where there will be a stronger presumption in favour of suitable business uses over the Plan period.[62]

6.6 SPECIFIC PROPOSALS FOR WORK ACTIVITY LAND AREAS

This final section of the chapter sets out some area specific proposals for the work activity areas defined in Policies W1 and W2, towards the beginning of this chapter.

Where the work activity areas fall within an area which is the subject of one of the Area Specific Chapters at the back of the Written Statement, they will be referred to here but the proposals will appear with the other area specific proposals.

6.6.1 The Blyth Industrial Estates, (Existing; uses permissible defined in Policy W1)

Proposal WP1 covers the Kitty Brewster and Cowpen Industrial Estates.

There is still scope to improve their environment. In particular, the riverside walk along the northern edge of both industrial estates would benefit from further investment. There may be instances where buffer planting is needed alongside adjacent housing areas. A positive approach towards securing the development of remaining sites within the estates is also important.

The juxtaposition of the work activity with the estuary of the River Blyth means that the provisions of the Blyth Estuary Management Plan will need to be taken into account when certain planning decisions are taken here.

59 *Previously, in the absence of a policy, where workshop or small business uses have not been designed into the fabric of otherwise residential areas, it is fair to say that they have been discouraged. This has not reflected any wish to discourage small businesses from being established close to the homes of those who run them and work in them. Again, it can be blamed on the post-Victorian tradition of separating uses. Twentieth Century housing areas have simply not been designed to absorb work activity uses satisfactorily. They meet very strict standards of spacing, layout, access etc. which prevent other uses being introduced without obvious visual, noise, traffic or other intrusion. If anything, the more recently built housing estates with their narrow culs-de-sac, shared surfaces and tight densities would be the* ***least*** *capable of absorbing work activity.*

60 *See Chapters 17 and 16 respectively.*

61 *See also Chapter 3, Section 3.5.*

62 *See Chapter 9, Sub-section 9.2.2.*

Policy ***W 8*** — *MIXED USES INVOLVING WORK ACTIVITY*

Recognition will be given to the positive contribution made by the existence of work activity uses within areas of mixed use or predominantly residential areas, while seeking to protect fully the amenity of all residential property in the Plan area, as follows:

i By granting planning permission for the operation of appropriate small businesses from dwellings in residential areas such that a residential use would remain as the principal use of the property, where:

- **a the business concerned is acceptable from the point of view of, parking and residential amenity;**
- **b the form and layout of the residential area is considered suitable for the necessary access requirements of the business; and**
- **c there has been full consultation with the occupants of all possible affected properties and it can be demonstrated that there would be no unreasonable disturbance or other environmental implications;**
- **d the proposal would not significantly reduce the residential character of the area, taking account of the cumulative impact of changes to non-residential use in the immediate area;**

Where it is considered reasonable for a business to seek separate premises once fully established, planning permission will be conditioned so as to impose time or occupancy limits;

ii By granting planning permission for conversion or change of use of buildings, or, where appropriate, new construction, to create separate business premises within residential areas, provided that (i) (a), (b), (c) and (d) above apply; uses permitted will normally fall within Classes A1, (applying Policy C17); A2; A3, (applying Policy C22); B1; B8; C1; D1; of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order, 1987;

iii By promoting schemes of mixed use development where workshop and small office uses will be permitted alongside residential and/or other uses, subject to safeguards, at:

- **a Blyth Quayside as part of Proposals BQ2 and BQ3;**
- **b Crofton Mill in accordance with Proposal CM2;**
- **c other appropriate locations, including the application of Policy H20 (ii), but especially where the land concerned formerly contained work activity;**

iv By granting permission for certain business uses in the Secondary Commercial Area of Blyth Town Centre, in line with Policy B3.

6.6.2 **Land at the Former Bates Colliery, (Allocated under Policy W1)**

Proposal WP2 contains proposals for the new industrial and commercial area on the southern part of the site formerly occupied by Bates Colliery.

As explained above, the Port Development Area now incorporates the central and northern parts of the land. When the rail-coal handling facility was constructed careful attention was paid to screening the area from its surroundings so as to avoid any overspill effects from, noise, dust etc. As a result there is now adequate physical separation between the newly redefined Port Development Area and the area closer to Cowpen Road earmarked for future general and local employment development.

The following works still need to be undertaken:

- The reclamation of much of the land between the rail-coal handling facility and Cowpen Road;
- The introduction of a screen buffer of some sort along the boundary between the expanded Port Development Area and Cowpen Industrial Estate.

These works will be sought as a matter of priority.

On the area of land south of the railway, a high quality form of development will be sought in a well landscaped setting. For the bulk of the land, **(WP2 (a)**), a range of industrial uses are favoured, (with qualifications due to

the proximity of housing),[63] because it is important that the site provides for continuity from the Blyth Industrial Estates with the same range of uses being allowed. In practice the land area is not of sufficient size to accommodate substantial general industrial firms.

WP2 (b) proposes that that part of the land fronting onto Cowpen Road should be planned carefully and comprehensively. The road frontage location will allow for the location of a slightly wider range of uses, including commercial operations where direct access by the general public is required. This could include commercial offices (of the sort included in Class B1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987), car show rooms or similar uses which present a well designed facade to the main road.

Retail Uses are inappropriate with the possible exception of retail warehousing on a modest scale. It would be hoped that any proposal including retail warehouses would also incorporate other uses with a view to improving the location. Any retail warehouse proposal will be assessed for its impact in accordance with criteria set out in Chapter 4.[64]

Also in relation to the Bates land, it is necessary to take full account of the fact that development sites on the former Bates Colliery land will gain access from and be close to Cowpen Road which operates at close to full capacity during peak hours.[65]

In the case of major proposals, assessment under the Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1988 may be required.[66]

6.6.3 **Bebside, (Existing; uses permissible defined in Policy W1)**

The existing Bebside work activity area (defined in Policy W1) represents a visually prominent collection of unattractive buildings and storage yards which are only partially screened from Front Street and the adjoining houses. **Proposal WP3** seeks to remedy this in association with the development or redevelopment of the land.

6.6.4 **Areas Close to the Port of Blyth, (Existing; uses permissible defined in Policy W1)**

The Port of Blyth has been covered in some detail. There are, however, pockets of work activity alongside, which fall outside the Port Development Area. Ballast Hill and the area near the Dun Cow Quay are part of the Quayside Development Area and the subject of a proposal in that chapter.[67] Significant improvements are also being undertaken in the Burt Street area. Replacement workshops are to be constructed within a secure campus for businesses associated with offshore technology. There is a further area south of Ridley Park and east of Wensleydale Terrace which is beyond the Port Development Area and designated for general / local employment purposes.

6.6.5 **New Delaval, (Existing; uses permissible defined in Policy W1)**

At Plessey Road, New Delaval, the Council constructed small workshop units during the 1980's.[68]

6.6.6 **The North-West Sector of Cramlington, (Existing; uses permissible defined in Policy W1. Additional area allocated under Policy W2)**

Within the Plan area, the north-west part of Cramlington is the most extensive area devoted to work activity, yet it presents few planning problems and it is not necessary to set out a detailed policy framework. This reflects the careful planning that has gone into the distribution of uses as well as the layout and landscaping of the area. There will be an investigation of the scope for improving the landscape structure so as to take full advantage of initiatives in the field of structure planting.[69]

Proposal WP4 refers back to the allocation of land at West Hartford Farm to accommodate investment by firms requiring individual sites in a similar environment to Windmill.[70]

In order to safeguard the environmental quality of the area, the development of the site should satisfy the following criteria as set out in the proposal.

It is anticipated that the land will form the site for a single company relocating or inwardly investing in the sub-region. **WP4 (a)** recognises the importance of avoiding a situation where the land is taken up by smaller developments which could just as easily be accommodated on existing vacant land in the north-west corner of Cramlington or elsewhere. As such, permission will be refused for any use which is considered to fall into this category and would subsequently diminish the

63 *See Policy W1 (iii) above.*

64 *See Chapter 4, Sub-section 4.8.2. It is envisaged that such a development would be limited to one or two units - well below the scale of the Cramlington facility.*

65 *This is covered in more detail in the "Movement" chapter - see Chapter 7, Sub-section 7.5.3.*

66 *See also Chapter 1, Section 1.11.*

67 *See Chapter 16, Proposal BQ1.*

68 *Neighbouring buildings now have permission for an indoor bowls facility which would be in line with Policy C9 (iii) although further workshop units would be an alternative use.*

69 *See Policy E6.*

70 *This is a fully-occupied industrial estate on the north-western corner of the town that successfully attracted the large pharmaceutical companies of Merck, Sharpe and Dohme and Knoll Pharmaceuticals.*

Proposal ***WP 1*** — *THE BLYTH INDUSTRIAL ESTATES*

On the Kitty Brewster and Cowpen Industrial Estates, defined under Policy W1 and shown on the Proposals Map, it is proposed to continue to pursue environmental improvement of both Estates to a high standard through:

- **The provision of landscape buffers where necessary, in line with Policy E6, particularly where housing abuts industry; and**
- **Further improvements to the riverside walk, to meet requirements in Policy M2 (v).**

Proposal ***WP 2*** — *SITE OF FORMER BATES COLLIERY*

On that part of the land formerly occupied by the Bates Colliery, (which lies outside the Port Development Area defined under Policy W4), allocated in Policy W1, it is proposed that a reclamation scheme be secured at an early date, in line with Policy E11, leading to beneficial after use as follows:

a Within the range of uses defined under Policy W1;

b Within a separately defined area fronting onto Cowpen Road, a comprehensive development scheme will be sought, to include the uses referred to in (a) above, but where the following may also be permitted as an element of any scheme:

- **commercial uses, including car show rooms, or leisure uses where direct vehicular access from the main road system or a prominent position in visual terms would be advantageous;**
- **retail warehouse development, in line with Policy C16 (iii), on a scale which accords with criteria in Policy C14 (ii);**

Suitable buffer planting and mounding will also be sought, particularly along the Cowpen Road frontage of the site.

Proposal ***WP 3*** — *BEBSIDE: LAND SOUTH OF MANSELL TERRACE*

Screen planting along the boundary edges of the existing Bebside work activity area, defined in Policy W1, will be introduced as the opportunity arises, including in relation to any development of the land, particularly with a view to enhancing the amenity of adjoining residential properties.

availability or attractiveness of the land for inward investors.

WP4 (b) indicates that the access will be taken from the A192. The proximity of the land to the existing north-west sector of Cramlington should be advantageous. This has the added advantage that it is reasonably removed from areas of housing. Class B2 uses should be acceptable subject to pollution control considerations.

On the other hand, **WP4 (c)** recognises that with the River Blyth valley lying just to the north [71] and the North-East residential sector of the town to the south-west, appropriate safeguards will be needed. The impacts on the surrounding farmland and the presence

Proposal ***WP 4*** *WEST HARTFORD*

Land allocated for specified work activity uses under W2(i)(b), at West Hartford Farm, will be developed subject to:

a No sub-division of the site except in exceptional circumstances;

b Access being taken from the roundabout junction of the A192 and A1171;

c The incorporation of the appropriate safeguards, particularly in relation to the River Blyth corridor to the north, the nearby housing to the south-east, surrounding farmland and the presence of species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act;

d The introduction of appropriate buffer planting, particularly to screen the proposed development from the West Hartford Farm buildings; and

e The provision of new public access links to and along the Blyth riverside to connect with existing public rights of way.

of protected species will also have to be fully considered in any emerging proposals.

WP4 (d) states appropriate buffer planting will need to be introduced to screen the proposed development, particularly from the adjacent dwellings at West Hartford Farm.

Finally, **WP4 (e)** affords the opportunity for enhancing the informal recreational potential of the Blyth riverside area by seeking the provision of new public access links both to and along the wooded banks of the river.[72]

In view of the anticipated scale of the development and the above list of criteria against which this proposal will be considered, it is anticipated, subject to the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1988, that a planning application for the site will require the preparation of an Environmental Assessment.[73]

6.6.7 The South-West Sector of Cramlington - Off Fisher Lane, (Allocated under Policy W2)

Again, detailed proposals for this new area, including access and layout arrangements, are dealt with separately.[74]

6.6.8 South Cramlington, (Existing; uses permissible defined in Policy W1 and Policy W2)

Proposal WP5 sets out the framework for this area. As explained earlier, on the eastern part of the land at South Cramlington, transport related proposals are favoured at present, as will be large industrial uses. The landscape structure, (and possibly the detailed access arrangements), will depend on which is implemented. A landscape structure was approved in association with the granting of planning permission for the distribution centre use. This involved the sub-division of the site into several large sites on either side of a central, east-west spine road, each to be surrounded by structure planting. This has been implemented but may need adding to, depending on any particular proposals that come forward. The proposal is that Section 106 Agreements or planning conditions should be utilised in association with each detailed application to ensure early (preferably advance) planting. This is particularly important because the land is prominently located alongside a main transport corridor and, while development has started from the eastern (Moor Farm Roundabout) end, a second access point has been approved at the western (Dudley Lane) end.

As stated above,[75] there is a possibility that the site will be found to be a suitable location for one or two larger users. In the case of two sites, both access points would be used. Revised planting may then be required.

71 *The valley is a Site of Nature Conservation Importance, (see Policy E1), an important woodland area, (see Policy E5), an Area of High Landscape Value, (see Policy E4), and an area to which visitors are to be encouraged, (see Policy L3).*

72 *In line with Policy L3.*

73 *Environmental Impact Assessments draw together, in a systematic way, expert quantitative analysis and qualitative assessment of a project's environmental effects, presenting the results in a way which enables the predicted impacts and the scope for modifying or mitigating them to be properly evaluated.*

74 *See also Chapter 11, Proposal SW3.*

75 *See Sub-section 6.2.2 above.*

Proposal ***WP 5*** — *SOUTH CRAMLINGTON*

In granting detailed planning permission for development within the work activity area at South Cramlington, east of Dudley Lane, whether this development is in line with Policy W1, (as a distribution centre or similar general employment use), or Policy W2, (for individual large users), developers will be required to reinforce existing structure planting, as appropriate, in line with Policy E6 and in accordance with a scheme to be approved by the Local Planning Authority; such a scheme to include any additional screening of the site required from housing to the south, (within North Tyneside).

Proposal ***WP 6*** — *EAST CRAMLINGTON WORK ACTIVITY AREA*

At East Cramlington planning applications for work activity within the categories identified in Policy W1 will be strictly assessed with a view to:

- **Minimising any adverse impact on the adjoining residential properties and open countryside with planting or other buffer landscaping being sought, in line with Policy E6, if necessary;**
- **Excluding uses likely to generate heavy goods vehicular traffic to the extent that would cause disturbance to residents or environmental, safety or traffic problems along the length of the B1326 between its junctions with the A189 and the A192.**

Proposal ***WP 7*** — *COMPLEX AT AVENUE ROAD, SEATON DELAVAL*

At the industrial complex on Avenue Road, Seaton Delaval, identified at Policy W1, further screen planting along the edges of the site which abut the settlement limit and residential areas will be sought, in line with Policy E6, to be implemented through the use of conditions or via a Planning Obligation in association with any future planning application on the land.

In either case, it will be important to screen the residential areas of Dudley (in North Tyneside) to the south and, possibly, the openness of the area as viewed from the adjoining trunk road.

6.6.9 **East Cramlington, (Existing; uses permissible defined in Policy W1)**

Proposal WP6 recognises that the East Cramlington work activity area is sandwiched between the proposed Green Belt and housing and is accessed from a "B" road which passes residential property and is tortuous. It advocates additional planting along the edge of the area. Given that the area will be considered for "Class B2" (General Industrial) Uses,[76] additional environmental safeguards may be required. The location on a Secondary Road will also have to be taken into consideration when the access requirements of individual businesses are being assessed.

76 *See Policy W1 above.*

Proposal ***WP 8*** — *DOUBLE ROW*

In the Double Row area, identified at Policy W1, further environmental improvements will be secured in association with the consolidation of land uses. In particular, it will be sought over the timescale of this Local Plan to eliminate the need for on street parking for those working within or visiting the area, in line with Policy M8, by the gradual introduction of off street car parking in association with future planning applications within the area or through direct provision should the opportunity arise.

Proposal ***WP 9*** — *SEGHILL WORK ACTIVITY AREA*

At the Seghill work activity area, including both sections identified at Policy W1, i.e. the existing and the allocated areas, planning applications for work activities within the categories identified in that Policy will be strictly assessed with a view to:

a Minimising any adverse impact on the adjoining residential properties with the enhancement of the landscaped buffer being sought in addition to new buffer planting along the boundary with the residential area to the south-east, in line with Policy E6;

b Excluding uses likely to generate heavy goods vehicular traffic to the extent that would cause disturbance to residents or environmental, safety or traffic problems along the length of Pit Lane and other unclassified roads in the area and, if appropriate, seeking the introduction of traffic calming measures on the approach roads, in line with Policy M6 (ii), through Planning Agreements.

6.6.10 **Avenue Road, Seaton Delaval, (Existing; uses permissible defined in Policy W1)**

Proposal WP7 proposes that the large factory at the edge of Seaton Delaval, on the A190, should be properly screened. This is in recognition of the fact that it overlooks the sensitive corridor of open land (proposed Green Belt), between Seaton Delaval and Seghill, and is very visible. There is also a need to seek advance planting along the boundary between the rear of the site and the adjoining residential area.

6.6.11 **Double Row, (Designated under Policy W1)**

Proposal WP8 seeks a continuation of environmental and traffic flow improvements at Double Row. Specifically, it will be sought to eliminate any need for on-street parking by securing a more satisfactory layout of uses within the defined area gradually, through individual planning decisions (conditioned to ensure adequate off-street parking) or possibly by more direct provision. It is considered that there is adequate under-used land within the Double Row area to accommodate all future needs for local small workshop activity in Seaton Delaval, bearing in mind also that Seghill industrial area will provide ample opportunity for this just along the road.

6.6.12 **Seghill, (Designated under Policy W1)**

Proposal WP9 affirms the need to be vigilant about the types of uses permitted at the Seghill work activity area,[77] especially in terms of their traffic generation implications. If necessary traffic management or calming measures on the approach roads to the area will be requested by way of planning gain in association with applications. Where necessary, there should be additional buffer planting. The need is likely to be most acute along the boundary with the nearby new housing to the south-east.

77 *See also Policy W1 (iii) above.*

7. Movement

7.1 INTRODUCTION

So far, this Local Plan has examined a series of different categories of land use and set down policies for their geographical distribution across the Plan area.

Partly, the task of the Local Plan has been to look at the interaction of these land uses with the population and with each other over a period of time. The main dynamic of any populated area is the day to day movement of people and goods across an area (and between land uses). This has not been given specific attention. There have been passing references - for instance, in discussing access into residential or work activity areas - but no policies have so far been set out on how the infrastructure (which is after all a land use in itself) should be planned to optimum effect to assist the main aims of this Plan.[1] This is the purpose of this chapter.

A central theme which has run through the Plan has been the location of land uses so as to minimise the need for people and goods to travel further than necessary. Pivotal to this is the settlement policy set out in the General Development chapter,[2] in which no new settlements are planned, thereby optimising existing infrastructure and reducing the need for new. However, related to this is the need to control pollution.[3] Motor vehicles emit pollutants on a large and growing scale, with carbon dioxide emissions from car exhausts making a major contribution to the so-called "greenhouse" effect and global warming. This and other emissions (such as lead) have important local polluting effects.

Policy M1 sets the ground rules for this chapter of the Plan. This entails striking a sensible balance between different modes of transport and recognising that increasing the proportion of journeys made by public transport, bicycle, on foot etc. (instead of the motor car) and by rail (instead of road) can have a substantial pay-off in terms of the Plan's aims.[4] However it also recognises that planning affords relatively limited powers to implement such changes. It cannot change people's habits overnight, at best it can only help to facilitate change through land use decisions.[5] The chapter also acknowledges that, with a growing population and changing demands, there will be a need for some new transport infrastructure (aside from that within new development) and that, in certain instances, the construction of a new, short stretch of road can have a net positive benefit in terms of energy use, the environment and the local economy. It is accepted however that transport construction projects, regardless of size, can have a particularly devastating effect on wildlife, and efforts will be made to keep disruption to the flora and fauna to an absolute minimum.

The remainder of the chapter sets down the planning policies for each major means of movement as follows:

- **Non Powered Movement,** (i.e. Movement on Foot, by Pram or Pushchair, in a Wheelchair, by Bicycle or on Horseback);
- **Movement by Railway Train** (or other Separated Rail Transit);
- **Movement by Bus** (or other Multiple Passenger Carriers making use of Public Highways);
- **Movement by Motor Vehicle other than Public Transport** (including Heavy Goods Vehicles);
- **Movement by Water** (or other waterborne means).

Within each mode of transport, the movement of people is covered first and, where relevant, the transport of goods follows.

7.2 NON-POWERED MOVEMENT[6]

"Non-powered" movers is a convenient way of describing the traditional users of pavements and footpaths, i.e. pedestrians (of whatever mobility) including those pushing prams or pushchairs, and wheelchair users, as well as cyclists and horse riders.

These are the most vulnerable users of highways and other rights of way. The key to policies for these groups involves encouraging the use of these modes of transport by maximising accessibility, whilst minimising the distance needed to move between points and any conflict with other forms of transport.

Policy M2 seeks to move, during the period of the Plan, towards a comprehensive network for pedestrians, cyclists and other non-powered movers.

7.2.1 Footpaths

M2 (i) looks at ways in which the movement within settlements of pedestrians (whatever level of mobility), users of wheelchairs, prams and pushchairs can be assisted through the planning process.

1 *These aims are to protect and enhance the **environment** and to conserve **energy** whilst continuing to promote the development of the **economy**, (so far as land use decisions can allow). The aim of **equality** of accessibility is particularly applicable to this chapter because one way in which planning can assist equality of opportunity is through equality of **access**.*

2 *See Policies G1 to G5.*

3 *See Policy E22 on pollution control.*

4 *All proposals will take account of the needs of cyclists, pedestrians and the operators of public transport, and include suitable provision for people with disabilities.*

5 *At the time of adoption of this Plan, the Government is introducing an **integrated** approach to **land use and transport planning** with a view to **traffic reduction**.*

6 *It is recognised that wheelchairs can be assisted by a small motor. Nevertheless, these are categorised along with pedestrians for planning purposes.*

The first is through the incorporation of networks into new developments by means of master plans, planning conditions and planning agreements. In smaller developments, footpaths are normally required to be agreed before planning permission is granted or they are a "reserved matter".[7] In larger developments, where there are open areas and connecting roads outside the individual schemes,[8] it is now the practice to secure their provision through Planning Agreements.[9] The general approach to these networks is explained below under the "Cycle Routes" heading.

The second is to continue the policy of separating pedestrians from vehicles in the two main town centres, to create a pleasanter and safer environment for shoppers and other town centre users. This policy has been a great success in the past ten years or so.[10]

The final one is to provide additional links, other than within new developments, where there are "desire lines". Sometimes such demands are an indirect result of a new development, in which case provision will be sought through a Planning Obligation for off site works. Where the need cannot be linked to particular development, other sources of funding will be required.

7.2.2 **Cycle Routes**

M2 (ii) sets out the policy for cycle routes.

CRAMLINGTON

Cramlington has been planned to include segregated movement for both pedestrians and cyclists.[11] It is the intention that the footpath / cycleway network will be extended as an integral part of new developments extending retail and other community facilities in the town centre and, when appropriate, its northern expansion site. This provision will normally be sought through Planning Agreements. There is also a need to ensure the completion of the planned network of footpath cycleways in North-East Cramlington [12] and its extension into the South West Sector as development proceeds there.[13]

BLYTH

In spite of this, the greatest concentration of cycle trips currently undertaken in the Borough is within Blyth. The practice of including footpath / cycleway networks as part of new developments has recently been applied to the town for the first time. The West Blyth and South Beach Master Plans[14] incorporate such networks and their installation by developers has begun (under Planning Agreements). Cycle routes have also been installed as part of the South Newsham Road bypass.

Not surprisingly though, most of Blyth's cycle traffic is in existing areas - on Cowpen Road and elsewhere to the west of the town centre. It is many years since the need for links from these areas to Blyth town centre was first identified. With the construction of the West Blyth network more cycling will be encouraged in this area and it is entirely appropriate that the identified required routes should link in with those at West Blyth.

Two planned routes start from West Blyth and finish in Blyth town centre. One begins at the southern end of Tynedale Drive and reaches the town centre via Isabella Road and Marlow Street and is programmed for implementation at the time of adoption of this Plan. The second follows Cowpen Road. A further route will link into the first of the above routes via Albion Way and Bolam Avenue. Similarly, there has been a call to make more effective cycle links from South Beach, particularly with Wensleydale Middle School. A route has therefore been identified mainly following residential roads, linking through to the town centre.[15]

7.2.3 **Inter Area Connections**

Leading on from the above, it is important, for reasons of safety as well as the integration of communities, that pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable groups can cross freely between parts of towns which are severed in some way by a major transport route.[16] There are numerous examples of this within Blyth and Cramlington. Most can satisfactorily be handled by traffic management provisions within the highway (see

7 *See also Section 3.6 of Housing Chapter.*

8 *e.g. a housing estates or factory block built by an individual developer.*

9 *See also Policy G11.*

10 *See also Chapters 8 and 9. There is a specific proposal on this in Chapter 9 on Blyth Town Centre*

11 *In earlier phases of the new town, the footpath / cycleways (which are effectively double width footpaths, one half of which is marked out for cyclists) were fully segregated routes with their own system of subways and raised kerbs. More recently, they have been more modest links (e.g. with distributor roads crossed at grade).*

12 *See Chapter 10, Sub-section 10.2.3.*

13 *See Chapter 11, Sub-section 11.3.8.*

14 *See Chapters 12 and 13 respectively.*

15 *Most of the length of routes will be within existing highway land, either in the form of special lanes alongside main roads or following residential side roads. As such they will be outside planning control. Nevertheless implementation of all of them at an early date will be pursued with vigour through discussion with the Highway Authority and other interested parties.*

16 *The design of crossings (i.e.. bridge, underpass, etc..) will be dependent upon individual circumstance and discussion with the Highway Authority or appropriate statutory undertaker.*

Policy ***M 1*** *MOVEMENT GENERAL*

Movement of people and goods within the Plan area will be facilitated as far as possible through land use decisions but within the overall aims of this Local Plan.

In particular, in determining planning applications, it will be sought to:

- **minimise the need for additional journeys**
- **minimise the distances that will need to be travelled to, from and within any new development;**
- **make optimum use of existing transport facilities and infrastructure;**
- **increase, as appropriate, the proportion of movement which takes place:**
  - **on bicycles;**
  - **on public, as opposed to private transport;**
  - **on rail, as opposed to road;**
- **maximise accessibility to public transport;**
- **ease movement for pedestrians, people in wheelchairs, prams and pushchairs, cyclists and horse riders;**
- **minimise conflict between the categories in the above bullet point and other forms of transport;**
- **minimise the environmental impact of traffic**
- **realise within the Plan period, the construction of limited new transport infrastructure, where it is considered that there will be a net benefit in environmental terms; and**
- **avoid disruption to wildlife caused by transport proposals.**

separate section below). However there are some where the provision of possibly costly infrastructure will be the only way to solve the problem; and, because they are on the edge of areas, there may be a temptation to dismiss them as peripheral and not necessary for incorporation in the planning of an area.

M2 (iii) identifies the main examples. Firstly, it will be necessary to link Cramlington town centre with land to the north of Station Road if that becomes developed for town centre related facilities. On the assumption that the East-West Link Road would be built in tandem with any such development, a safe, segregated link will become especially important.[17] [18] The eastern section of the proposed East-West Link would sever an existing footpath-cycleway between the Eastfield and Mayfield areas and this connection would need to be restored. As North-East Cramlington is completed, the need for a proper crossing point on the dual carriageway of the A192 is needed to link the area to the facilities of East Hartford.[19]

At Blyth, the South Beach Development is progressing westwards. Even when the district centre is in place, the new residential community will rely on certain facilities across the railway line at Newsham. Similarly, residents in the South Newsham area may wish to take advantage of the District Centre once built. A footbridge across the railway is proposed in the chapter on South Beach.[20]

The existing goods line to the new part of the Port of Blyth Development Area separates both Newsham and the Poets Estate at Isabella from the Avenues Estate. An informal path is used but scope for providing a safer route will be investigated.

17 *See Policy M9 below.*

18 *The link forms part of Proposal CC3 within Chapter 8 which seeks a north-south pedestrian link between the existing town centre and any development to the north.*

19 *Another major requirement will be to link Cramlington High School and its on-site facilities with the South-West Sector which will rely on its services. A pedestrian and bicycle link will eventually be taken via the Lancastrian Way road Bridge. An upgrading of the existing public right of way would be needed even if a road link at Lancastrian Way is not built.*

20 *This forms Proposal SB3 (c) within Chapter 13.*

Policy ***M 2*** *NON-POWERED MOVEMENT: ROUTES AND LINKS*

It will be sought to move towards a comprehensive network of routes for pedestrians (whatever their mobility), people in wheelchairs, prams or pushchairs and cyclists during the Plan period so as to maximise their access to local services and the countryside by the following means:

i Seeking to achieve as tight a network as possible of safe links for pedestrians, people in wheelchairs, prams or pushchairs and cyclists, involving:

- **a comprehensive footpath networks in the major areas of housing development, incorporating the footpath / cycleway networks described in ii (a to f) below plus complementary links not designed to accommodate cyclists as well;**
- **b the segregation of pedestrians and vehicles in the centres of Cramlington and Blyth, including Proposals BP3 and BQ4 (f);**
- **c the seeking of additional footpath links where a need has been identified and resources allow;**

ii Seeking an extension to the network of cycle routes, with a particular view to linking schools, other community facilities, town centres and work places with residential areas in general. This will involve:

- **a the extension of the footpath / cycleway network to provide access to new community facilities in Cramlington Town centre and the northern expansion site in accordance with Proposal CC2.;**
- **b the completion of the footpath / cycleway network in the north-east sector of Cramlington in accordance with Proposal NE5;**
- **c the extension of the footpath / cycleway network into the South-West Sector of Cramlington, in accordance with Proposal SW8;**
- **d the implementation of the footpath / cycleway network which forms part of the West Blyth Development, in accordance with Proposal WB3 (d) and, as resources allow, the seeking of further cycleway connections to Blyth Town Centre;**
- **e the implementation of the footpath / cycleway network which forms part of the South Beach Development (later stages), in accordance with Proposal SB3 (b) and, as resources allow, the seeking of a cycleway connection to Blyth Town Centre via Wensleydale Middle School;**
- **f the implementation of a programme of cycle lanes or paths, mostly along the main highway network, with the aim of providing links between the settlements within Policies G2 to G5.**
- **g other cycleway links where a need is demonstrated and as resources allow;**

(continued....

Policy ***M 2*** *continued* — *NON-POWERED MOVEMENT: ROUTES AND LINKS*

iii The seeking of individual small scale connections between adjacent areas which are physically separated by roads, railways or other obstacles, where this would assist in providing important links and minimising possible conflicts. In particular the provision of:

- **a a separated link across the proposed East-West Link Road and Station Road to Cramlington Town Centre with the northern town centre expansion site as part of Proposal CC3;**
- **b a separated link across the proposed East-West Link Road to maintain the connection between Porchester Drive and Tangmere Close;**
- **c a safe pedestrian connection across the A192 to connect the North-East Sector of Cramlington with East Hartford;**
- **d a separated overbridge across the Ashington to Newcastle railway to connect South Beach with the area to the west in accordance with Proposal SB3 (c);**
- **e an improved link between Newsham Road and the Avenues Estate in Blyth;**

iv Traffic calming measures in accordance with Policy M6.

v Seeking to retain existing public access where considered under threat. In particular, this will be sought along parts of river and seaside areas and where there is a history of public access;

vi The gradual implementation of the countryside network strategy, in accordance with Policy L3 (ii), and including the implementation of part of Proposal WP1, which will also be aimed towards the benefit of horse riders.

Where any of the above are necessary as a result of a planning application, permission will be conditioned as appropriate or the provision will be secured through the signing of a Planning Agreement under Policy G11.

7.2.4 Traffic Calming

M2 (iv) takes traffic calming as another way in which pedestrian movement can be eased. The full policy on traffic calming is contained within M6 below.

7.2.5 Retention of Existing Access

M2 (v) aims to retain existing access to the network of routes for people wishing to walk or cycle. A route may not be a public right of way in the statutory sense, but may nevertheless have been accessible historically and, more to the point, be a route that people still wish to follow. In particular, this applies to the riverside and seaside areas within the ownership of the Blyth Harbour Commission. Retention of access will be sought through negotiation with the Harbour Commissioners.

7.2.6 Network Strategy

M2 (vi) deals with the achievement of a comprehensive network of routes outside built-up areas, (to supplement the strategic inter-settlement links referred to above), by simply referring to the Countryside Network Strategy.[21]

Clearly, the nature of many of the rights of way in the countryside precludes access for wheelchairs, prams, pushchairs and generally less mobile pedestrians. Nevertheless, one of the aims of the network strategy is to maximise the length of route to which these groups could have access.

Another aspect of the network strategy of importance in this context is that it seeks to provide good connections for pedestrians between the countryside and the built-up areas.

21 *This is the subject of Policy L3 (ii) in the chapter on Leisure and Visitor Activities.*

Policy ***M 3*** — *NON-POWERED MOVEMENT: STATIC FEATURES*

Static features, such as ramps or public seating, to meet the needs of pedestrians, people in wheelchairs, prams or pushchairs and cyclists will be sought, where appropriate within new development, through planning conditions or the negotiation of Planning Agreements under Policy G11, involving:

i Seeking the provision of sufficiently wide and, where necessary, ramped access in association with all new development where pedestrian access will be required, including all new housing areas, community facilities and work places;

ii Seeking, as appropriate, the provision of pedestrian crossing points and/or other pedestrian related safety measures on main roads adjacent to new developments where significant pedestrian access will be required;

iii Seeking the provision of cycle parking facilities in association with development of community facilities and work places as advised by the Highways Authority;

iv Seeking the provision of pedestrian seating at appropriate locations within new development;

v Ensuring, usually by arrangement with the Highway Authority, that there is safe lighting along all pedestrian routes within any new built-up area, which would be required to be used during hours of darkness, whether or not they are close to housing areas.

7.2.7 Static Features for Pedestrians and Cyclists

Policy M3 seeks the provision of certain features which are not part of a cycle or pedestrian route, nor are necessarily automatically planned into new developments.

ACCESS POINTS

M3 (i) relates to access points and other "pinch points" in the pedestrian route network such as gates and footbridges. These should be sufficiently wide to accommodate wheelchairs and, if a change of level is involved, should be ramped wherever possible.

PEDESTRIAN CROSSING POINTS

M3 (ii) looks at the situation where a development in a particular location would be likely to cause large numbers of people to cross a main road to reach it. In such a case it may be appropriate to seek, through Planning Agreement with the developer, the installation of a pedestrian crossing point of some description.[22] Other measures such as roadside barriers may also be appropriate for pedestrian safety.

CYCLE PARKING

M3 (iii) seeks parking facilities for cyclists at any major new community facilities or places of work.

SEATING

M3 (iv) recognises that comfort as well as convenience is an important factor in the encouragement of journeys made on foot. As such, in granting permission for new development, particularly where there is a civic or community dimension, consideration will be given to the scope for pedestrian seating.

LIGHTING

M3 (v) covers the safety angle. Within built-up areas, adequate lighting will be sought whether or not the pedestrian route concerned is close to housing.[23]

Features mentioned under M3 (iii) to (v) above, as well as other street furniture, are prominent aspects of the urban landscape. A degree of co-ordination will be sought along with general good design, in discussion with the Highway Authority and / or their agencies.[24]

22 *Most usually, this would be a Pelican Crossing or even a central refuge, but occasionally a grade separated crossing point could be required.*

23 *See also Policy H21 (iii) on Crime Prevention measures in new housing areas.*

24 *See also Section 1.6, (on the Built Environment), in the Chapter on Environmental Protection above, and the Traffic Management section below.*

Policy ***M 4*** *MOVEMENT BY RAILWAY TRAIN*

It will be sought to increase the proportion of movement of people and goods which takes place on railways rather than roads, while seeking to minimise and alleviate any environmental conflicts which may arise along the routes of the railway lines concerned, through the following means:

i Facilitating improved local passenger services on that stretch of the electrified main East Coast Railway which passes through the Plan area by encouraging, through negotiation, the retention and improvement of local rail services at Cramlington station and by safeguarding land for possible future station sites as shown on the Proposals Map at the following locations:

a immediately west of Cramlington town centre, incorporating Proposal CC4;

b at South Cramlington (Damdykes);

ii Facilitating the reintroduction of passenger services on that part of the Ashington to Newcastle railway line which passes through the Plan area through negotiation and by safeguarding land for possible future station sites as shown on the Proposals Map at the following locations:

a Bebside;

b West Blyth, which relates to Proposal WB12;

c Newsham;

d New Hartley;

e Seaton Delaval, which relates to Proposal SD1;

f Seghill;

iii Giving favourable consideration to the land take implications of any proposal to extend the Tyne and Wear Metro into the Plan area or construct another form of rail system so far as other policies and environmental considerations permit;

iv Encouraging the movement of freight along railway lines within the Plan area, through negotiation and agreement and by giving favourable consideration to any proposals for transfer stations in association with particular activities alongside the railway lines, subject to suitable safeguards, other policies and amenity considerations.

7.3 MOVEMENT BY RAILWAY TRAIN

An intricate pattern of railways[25] used to exist within the Plan area in direct association with the mining industry which it served. Many small branches have long since disappeared but the two main north-south spinal routes remain. The westerly route carries the electrified passenger services from London to Edinburgh and passes through Cramlington. The easterly north-south route, now just a freight line, used to take passengers from Blyth and other South-East Northumberland towns to Tyneside. No line goes to the centre of Blyth any more but the old Bates Colliery branch line was reinstated in the late 1980's with a view to moving coal to the Port of Blyth for export.

Imminent changes to the way the rail network is organised and the increasing urgency of environmental problems associated with road traffic increase the possibility of a shift of passenger and goods traffic from road to rail during the Plan period. Blyth Valley, with a substantial mileage of railway track intact (relatively speaking), is well placed to contribute towards such a move and reap the undoubted environmental benefits that would accrue.

Policy M4, with the above context in mind, aims for a relative shift of both passengers and freight from road to rail during the next decade or more.

7.3.1 East Coast Main Line

M4 (i) concentrates on the existing main East Coast Railway. In the past, the two tiers of local government have provided support for the maintenance of local

25 *This Section also takes in movement by other methods Separated Rail Transit, such as trams.*

services in the knowledge that good rail links with Tyneside will attract potential residents and employers alike to Cramlington. North Tyneside Council is also promoting a long term public transport corridor along the same line.

In spite of this, the car oriented nature of Cramlington, good bus services and the precedence taken by the inter city services on the line have conspired to reduce the service. The policy of seeking to retain and improve on the existing service will continue.

Recognition must be given to the possibility of new local services on the line. It is considered that that the benefits of any new service,[26] would be maximised if there were two station sites at Cramlington, one serving south Cramlington and the other at the town centre. Recent and current development of the town centre westwards suggest that a new location would serve the centre better than the current one, although office or related development on the northern site might be quite well served by the existing site. Consideration will be given to the alternatives and, in the meantime, sites are safeguarded for new stations at Cramlington Town Centre and at the southern end of the South-West sector of the town.

7.3.2 **Ashington to Newcastle Line**

M4 (ii) supports the reintroduction of passenger services on the Newcastle to Ashington freight line which runs through the Plan area. There will need to be a joint approach between Councils and other agencies to achieve this.[27] It would allow for a possible loop service via Morpeth linking with local services on the main East Coast Railway, a possible interchange with the Tyne & Wear Metro,[28] or, in the long-term, possible connection to the north-south public transport corridor as safeguarded in the North Tyneside Unitary Development Plan. With this in mind, six station sites are safeguarded: at Bebside (where it may be appropriate also to set aside land for car parking for possible park and ride), West Blyth, Newsham, New Hartley, Seaton Delaval and Seghill.[29]

There have previously been discussions about introducing tourist steam trains along the same line, as part of a link from the Woodhorn Colliery museum in Wansbeck to the Stephenson Railway Museum in North Tyneside. This could be supported so long as it does not prejudice the introduction of a full timetable of passenger services.[30]

7.3.3 **Additional Railways**

M4 (iii) takes account of the outside possibility that entirely new railway lines could be proposed and favours them subject to environmental safeguards and other policies. The extension of the Metro to Sunderland is a major project and it cannot be ruled out that this could be mirrored by additional railway routes north of the Tyne in the future.[31]

7.3.4 **Freight Movement by Rail**

M4 (iv) encourages the movement of goods by train rather than lorry. There is little that planning can do in practice to achieve this end other than encourage loading & transfer facilities in association with uses alongside railways. Although existing railway lines pass by industrial areas at Cramlington, Bebside, Double Row and Seghill, there are few locations where this could be achieved without unacceptable environmental disruption.

7.4 **MOVEMENT BY BUS**

In spite of the foregoing section, railways have accounted for the daily journeys of a very small proportion of the population. Public transport provision in the Plan area has been largely concentrated on buses. It is anticipated that this will continue to be the case during the Plan period.[32]

Bus services have undergone major changes during the late 1980's and early 1990's. The opening up of services to competition has increased the number of firms operating in Blyth Valley. The absence of truly rural areas means that, on the whole, most routes have survived the changes.[33] However, growth in car ownership is likely to increase the chances of a real decline in the level of service.[34]

Planning cannot affect these trends directly but it can aim, through land use policies, to facilitate the continuation and (hopefully) the improvement of services.

In drawing up **Policy M5**, great weight has been given to the fact that, at present, the users of buses tend to be

26 *For example, one linking all settlements between Morpeth and Durham.*

27 *A feasibility study, supported by Blyth Valley Borough Council, Wansbeck District Council & Northumberland County Council, was initiated in November 1995 to investigate the potential for reintroducing a passenger service onto the line. The findings of this report will be used to further promote proposals within this Policy.*

28 *A new Metro Station is proposed in the North Tyneside UDP.*

29 *There may be a case for varying the number of stations from the six allocated sites.*

30 *It could assist the visitor strategy outlined in Chapter 5.*

31 *Subject to discussion with NEXUS and North Tyneside Council.*

32 *In order to be comprehensive, this section also takes in other multiple carriers making use of public Highways. Trolleybuses, trams etc. are among forms of transport being reintroduced to the Highways of certain towns and cities.*

33 *Although less profitable late night and Sunday services have been trimmed.*

34 *Car ownership has been growing steadily with a narrowing of the gap between national and local levels of ownership. It must be assumed that there is a corresponding, steady decline in the use of (or reliance on) buses. Reduced use leads to reductions in services, encouraging still more journeys to be made by car and so on.*

the more vulnerable or low income groups in society - children, non-earning mothers and pensioners to name but three. Even if their household has a car, these groups would not necessarily have access to it for their day-to-day activities. Concessionary fares schemes currently in operation and co-ordinated between districts, encourage patronage by low income and less mobile groups. There is little doubt that the levels of service currently enjoyed owe much to the operation of such schemes.

The policy must allow for the possibility that changing circumstances will widen the range of people making use of the system. It tries to make the fullest possible provision for the growing likelihood that public transport will be turned to as an alternative to the motor car in the medium to long term.

7.4.1 **Existing Bus Routes**

M5 (i), in line with the overall settlement strategy, has the aim that new development should be well related to the existing bus (or other public transport) route network. The maximum distance that most people are readily willing to walk in order to reach a bus stop is 400 metres (about a quarter of a mile). If any part of a relevant development proposal lies beyond this distance from an existing route, then it must be ensured that the development has the physical capability of being served to this level and is well situated to be so served.

7.4.2 **Routeing**

M5 (ii) deals with those situations where the 400 metre criterion is not met. Local authorities, under provisions of the 1985 Transport Act, have the power to secure by competitive tender socially necessary bus services which would not otherwise be provided. However in most cases this authority will still try and negotiate a solution with bus operators. Diverting existing routes may suffice but there will be a point where routes become so tortuous that it becomes sensible to seek the introduction of an entirely new service. The wider use of minibuses has helped, feeding into longer haul routes. However larger buses, which are more energy efficient if well used and maintained, should still be regarded as the norm.

7.4.3 **New Housing Areas**

M5 (iii) looks at an area where planning can have a greater influence - i.e. new housing areas. Where a development is large enough to require a new length of distributor road, it will be ensured that full size buses can enter and leave the area, even when it is only partially complete, through the incorporation of roundabouts (or other forms of turning area) at regular intervals. Special bus stopping areas should be included at nodal points, if anticipated traffic levels warrant this. These should be well connected to the pedestrian system, applying criteria in Policies M2 and M3 above.[35]

7.4.4 **Development near Nodes in the Network**

M5 (iv) recognises that building land close to nodes within the public transport network, may prove to be an increasingly attractive proposition. The affordable housing and residential care home policies within the Housing Chapter favour sites in this type of location, with the former policy pointing to the advantages of higher density development.[36]

7.4.5 **Prioritisation of Buses**

M5 (v), like M5 (ii), sets down an aim which is not directly achievable through planning decisions but which can be realised through negotiations in association with them. It relates in part to the traffic management policy below (M6). This is the prioritisation of buses or similar vehicles within the highway network. The most obvious opportunities for this are where an existing length of urban road is bypassed. The new length of the South Newsham Road at Blyth was completed in 1994, however the bypassed Laverock Hall Road runs through the middle of a residential estate and buses continue to be allowed along its length, even though through access to cars has now been restricted.[37] This will also be true of Station Road, Cramlington, once the East-West Link Road is completed, unless there is reason to close the road all together.[38]

In the longer term, less orthodox approaches to prioritisation of public transport within the road system may be tried.[39] From the current perspective, it seems unlikely that a high degree of prioritisation would be needed in Blyth Valley as there is not a great volume of commuter traffic interfering with bus flows. However the possibility is there, and suitable adaptations are supported within the policy framework of this Local Plan, should the situation arise.[40]

35 *See Panel H-P1 and Policy H21 relating to facilities and design requirements in new housing areas.*

36 *See Policies H14 and H16 respectively.*

37 *See Chapter 14.*

38 *See Policy M9 and Chapter 8.*

39 *Trams have been reintroduced in some British cities. In Manchester, the new system runs along the highway where there is room but leaves the highway at certain points. A less expensive and more easily implemented solution is the guided bus way, which consists of two parallel raised guides into which buses can latch, (so long as they are fitted with additional side wheels), and travel at speed to the exclusion of other traffic.*

40 *Bearing in mind that overhead wire systems for trams or trolleybuses can be visually intrusive in sensitive areas.*

7.4.6 **Bus Stations etc.**

M5 (vi) notes that attractive bus station / stopping facilities are always a factor in encouraging bus use. Proposals for Blyth Town Centre include an area within which future redevelopment may be favoured. It includes the existing bus station. The intention would not be the removal of the bus station, but the incorporation of an improved facility within any new shopping or other provision.[41] At Cramlington a full bus station may not be the answer but better facilities for terminating (and through) buses are undoubtedly required. Some Proposals are contained within the Chapter on Cramlington town centre. Bus interchange facilities at Cramlington Railway Station and any other railway stations that may open for passenger use[42] must also be capable of accommodation.

7.4.7 **Bus Garaging**

M5 (vii) acknowledges that the increasing number of operators of bus services are likely to mean a growing demand for small to medium bus garaging facilities. The only way to cope with this satisfactorily is to make a general allowance for their location within industrial estates, subject to land availability and site specific factors.

7.4.8 **Bus Stop / Layby Facilities**

M5 (viii) recognises that the routeing of bus services through development areas necessitates the provision of ancillary facilities such as bus stops, shelters and possibly laybys. The intention will be to seek this provision in asscіation with adjoiningdevelopments.



At the Bus Station, Blyth Town Centre, (view towards Blyth Library)

41 *Further details are given within Chapter 9.*

42 *See Policy M4 above.*

Policy ***M5*** *MOVEMENT BY BUS*

The use of buses, minibuses and other multiple passenger carriers which make use of public highways will be encouraged through the following measures:

i **Taking account of the existing bus route network in assessing planning applications for new development of housing, work activity, community or other uses requiring public access with the aim of ensuring such new developments are either within 400 metres of existing bus services or capable of being easily served by bus operators;**

ii **Encouraging, through negotiation with bus operators (and, where appropriate, developers), the routeing of buses to meet demand which has been demonstrated or is anticipated as a result of new development;**

iii **In determining planning applications for new housing or other development, where this is away from existing bus routes or is a large development served by a distributor road, ensuring that the layout is designed to allow full size buses to enter and leave the area, having regard where appropriate to Policy H21, including:**

- **a roundabouts or other turning areas at regular intervals; and**
- **b bus stopping areas at nodal points with good pedestrian links;**

iv **Applying Policy H14, on affordable housing, where land becomes available for housing development close to public transport nodes, and having regard to Policy H16 where residential care homes are proposed in such locations;**

v **Seeking priority measures if considered appropriate, through negotiation with the Highway Authority and public transport operators, to include:**

- **a the maintenance of bus only links on urban routes once by-passed by general traffic, including Station Road, Cramlington, in accordance with Proposal CC5;**
- **b guided bus ways or tramways, possibly deviating from the existing highway, should this prove necessary or feasible during the Plan period, subject to strict safety and environmental criteria, including the avoidance of overhead wires in Conservation Areas.**

vi **Making allowance in planning decisions for the eventual improvement of bus station facilities at Blyth town centre, as part of Proposal BP2, the accommodation of organised bus stopping facilities at Cramlington Town Centre in accordance with Proposal CC5 and the accommodation of bus interchange facilities at passenger railway stations proposed in Policy M4;**

vii **Normally granting planning permission for suitably housed bus garages within those work activity areas listed in Policy W1, subject to other policies for those areas;**

viii **Ensuring that any necessary bus stop/layby facilities are provided in association with developments, securing these through negotiation of Planning Agreements in line with Policy G11, where they are off-site.**

7.5 MOVEMENT BY OTHER MOTOR VEHICLES

The above sections apply planning measures to make the more environmentally friendly forms of transport more attractive as a way of meeting the overall objective of sustainable development. Overlaying and largely influencing the achievability of this approach is the existing road network.

It is convenient to look first at the road network within the built-up area separately before going on to examine inter-urban links.

7.5.1 Road Network within Built-up Areas

A very significant part of the land area of any town is devoted to vehicular movement.

THE INFLUENCE OF ROADS ON LAND USE PATTERNS

The shape of most of today's built-up areas began to be determined in the 19th Century. This was an era of great engineering and architectural feats as well as public health reforms and railway travel. All this contributed towards the spreading out of urban areas, complete with wide streets[43] which effectively gave the motor car a head start.

Throughout the twentieth century, towns have expanded in a way which has assumed that the occupants of each dwelling will own at least one car. The car has been encouraged to penetrate every part of the urban fabric and has assumed precedence and right of way over pedestrians, bicycles and other traditional road users in many areas. The car has been a key factor in the dispersal of community and work functions, in turn making car ownership more of a necessity. Newer towns have been planned very much with the motor car in mind.

SOLUTIONS TO CONGESTION - NEW ROADS OR TRAFFIC CONTROL?

Large cities began to experience traffic congestion in the 1960's. Solutions were initially limited to new roads but soon expanded to **traffic management** measures.[44]

In Blyth Valley, car ownership has lagged behind national trends, but in recent years problems of congestion have started to emerge, particularly at peak use times, within older parts of the urban fabric. New road building and traffic management have been selectively applied as solutions.

A good illustration of this two pronged approach has been at Blyth, where there are two main routes into the town from the west. One, South Newsham Road is a recently constructed bypass, taking traffic away from what used to be a "bottleneck" within a residential area. Its construction should have removed traffic from the other route, Cowpen Road, one of the most congested roads in Northumberland in terms of peak time flows. An extensive programme of traffic management has also been introduced on Cowpen Road [45] to complement the bypass.

Essentially these sorts of measure are designed to smooth the flow of traffic into and through the urban area towards its destination, but this is only one side of the urban traffic management equation. The other involves restricting it from areas where it will cause conflict - in essence, preventing, or discouraging traffic from using streets where it need not go (except for purposes of access). This is achieved through **traffic calming** measures. Recent changes in Highways legislation have made the implementation of traffic calming measures less onerous from both a legal and a practical point of view and calming schemes are beginning to blossom in many areas. Within Blyth Valley a comprehensive approach has been taken at Cowpen Quay, Blyth, where a particular problem of "rat running" was identified.

THE GENERAL APPROACH ON ROADS IN BUILT-UP AREAS

The approach adopted in this Local Plan is a continued acceptance that motor vehicles will wish to penetrate the built up areas of Blyth Valley in order to reach homes, workplaces, shops, and other destinations, but to control possible conflicts by:

- Defining a clear **hierarchy** of roads;
- Continuing to encourage and facilitate the introduction of **traffic calming** measures especially on roads in the lowest tier of the Highway Authority's defined hierarchy, while seeking to plan traffic calming measures into new developments;
- Continuing to encourage and facilitate **traffic management** measures with minimal danger and minimal adverse environmental effects and seeking to plan traffic management features into new developments where appropriate;
- Seeking to **control heavy goods vehicles** where appropriate;
- Having a sound policy on **car parking** provision, including the possibility of park and ride;
- Only in **exceptional circumstances** seeking the construction of stretches of **new road** - where their development has net environmental benefits (i.e. is sustainable).

43 *Even when they were still being built for the horse and cart.*

44 *Traffic management is essentially a means of accommodating more traffic on the same surface area of highway and/or to maintain traffic flows.*

45 *This has actually involved a narrowing of the carriageway.*

7.5.2 **The Road Hierarchy**

The Highway Authority has defined a four tier road hierarchy consisting of principal, secondary, local distributor and access roads. The upper two tiers correspond to the "A" and "B" roads in the national classification. Local distributors are just that - they take traffic from the main road system and distribute it within a town or to a particular village. They are not normally through roads although they may loop back onto the main road system. The lowest of the tiers defined by the Highway Authority is "Access Roads". This Local Plan subdivides this category for the purposes of policies in the Community Facilities Chapter (which looks at certain facilities according to whether roads have to be crossed to reach them). For this purpose estate distributor roads are treated as a separate sub-group from the majority of streets within housing areas.

Map M-M1 shows the upper three tiers of the Highway Authority categorisation.

Some of the problems with the existing main road network within the two main towns have been touched upon previously. In brief, the main causes of traffic problems within the built-up parts of the Plan area are:

- the limited number of access points into Blyth (three in total) from the national trunk road network. (The town is limited by being bordered by water on two sides);
- limitations in the ability of the existing road network to distribute traffic around Blyth town centre;
- the incompleteness of the road system planned for Cramlington.



Gates regulate Goods Traffic Entering Blyth Town Centre

7.5.3 The Control of Traffic Movement within the Built-up Areas

Policy M6 sets out the role of traffic controlling measures in minimising conflict between motor traffic and other road users and in alleviating the adverse environmental effects of road traffic. It involves traffic calming measures in the lower tier roads and traffic management measures in the upper three tiers of the road hierarchy.

TRAFFIC CALMING

M6 (i) seeks an expanded programme of traffic calming.

Traffic calming measures have the advantage that they retain direct access on many roads at the same time as discouraging through-traffic by the use of measures such as road humps, "rumble strips", chicanes and 20 m.p.h. zones.[46] However the introduction of any traffic calming measures will be designed so as to take into account the needs of bus operators, to ensure the smooth operation of services.

As already mentioned, Cowpen Quay is the first area to be treated comprehensively from a traffic calming point of view.[47] However, problems which call for a traffic calming solution have been identified in various other parts of the Borough. Some are individual streets, but there are concentrations in certain localities which would benefit from a comprehensive approach. No list is presented in this document as additional situations where this type of solution would be beneficial are regularly identified and prioritisation will change during the plan period to reflect this. Efforts will be made to tailor and, if necessary, accelerate the programme of traffic calming schemes to match this evolving situation.

Sometimes when a planning decision is made which involves changing the character of an area, the potential for conflict increases and it is as well to include traffic calming measures from the outset. Pit Lane, Seghill, is one area where measures may be required, with an industrial approach road passing straight through a residential area.[48]

M6 (ii) deals with a situation where planning decisions can directly affect the introduction of traffic calming measures. Many new developments are now planned to include traffic calming measures [49] In some cases the traffic calming measures expected will be set down in a Master Plan. Otherwise, they will follow guidance set down by the Highways Authority.[50]

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

M6 (iii) seeks traffic management measures as appropriate within the existing highway. The purpose of traffic management measures is normally to achieve a smoother and more efficient flow of traffic; but there are other reasons - most notably road safety, and whilst initiatives are not usually implemented for purely environmental reasons, environmental benefits often result. The traffic management proposals in this Local Plan all take environment and safety into account, alongside traffic flow. Site discussions will also try and minimise the amount of signposting, etc. involved in traffic management schemes.[51]

Blyth Town Centre

The first proposal relates to access to Blyth town centre. The period of implementation of the Blyth Town Centre Local Plan in the 1980's saw the implementation of a number of measures which aimed to minimise conflict and adverse impact while continuing to afford vehicle access to the town centre. The keys to this approach were the construction (in part) of an inner circle by-pass and the provision of substantial off-street car parking.[52] However the third and complementary element has been the traffic management measures undertaken:

- **pedestrianisation** - at Commercial Road & part of Regent Street;
- the creation of "**pedestrian priority areas**" where access is restricted to certain types of vehicles at certain times, (Market, Bowes and Church Streets);
- **the closure of certain junctions** with Waterloo Road and Bridge Street.

However in spite of these measures, problems of pedestrian / vehicle conflict persist. The vast majority of motorists appear to access the town centre via Waterloo Road, resulting in a great deal of congestion on a street which is necessarily punctuated by a series of traffic lights (to allow safe pedestrian movement). Drivers have tried to avoid these delays by taking short cuts through the Community Hospital grounds, the adjacent superstore car park or the pedestrian priority area in order to reach what has now become the main destination - the car park at Keel Row Shopping Centre.

46 *Older areas of Blyth and elsewhere were designed on a grid iron pattern of roads so that traffic could pass through the areas not just on main roads, but on any number of parallel residential roads. Such was the case at Cowpen Quay.*

47 *During the 1970's, Cowpen Quay was classified as a General Improvement Area so that special funding was available for environmental and housing improvements. Measures taken, typical of that time, involved closing roads, physically blocking them for through traffic with features such as planting boxes. This had a degree of success in dissuading drivers from cutting through streets unnecessarily but it inconvenienced local residents by preventing direct access and parking for a significant proportion of houses; and it still left some roads (notably back lanes) open so that through traffic "rat running" continued.*

48 *See also Proposal WP9 in the previous chapter.*

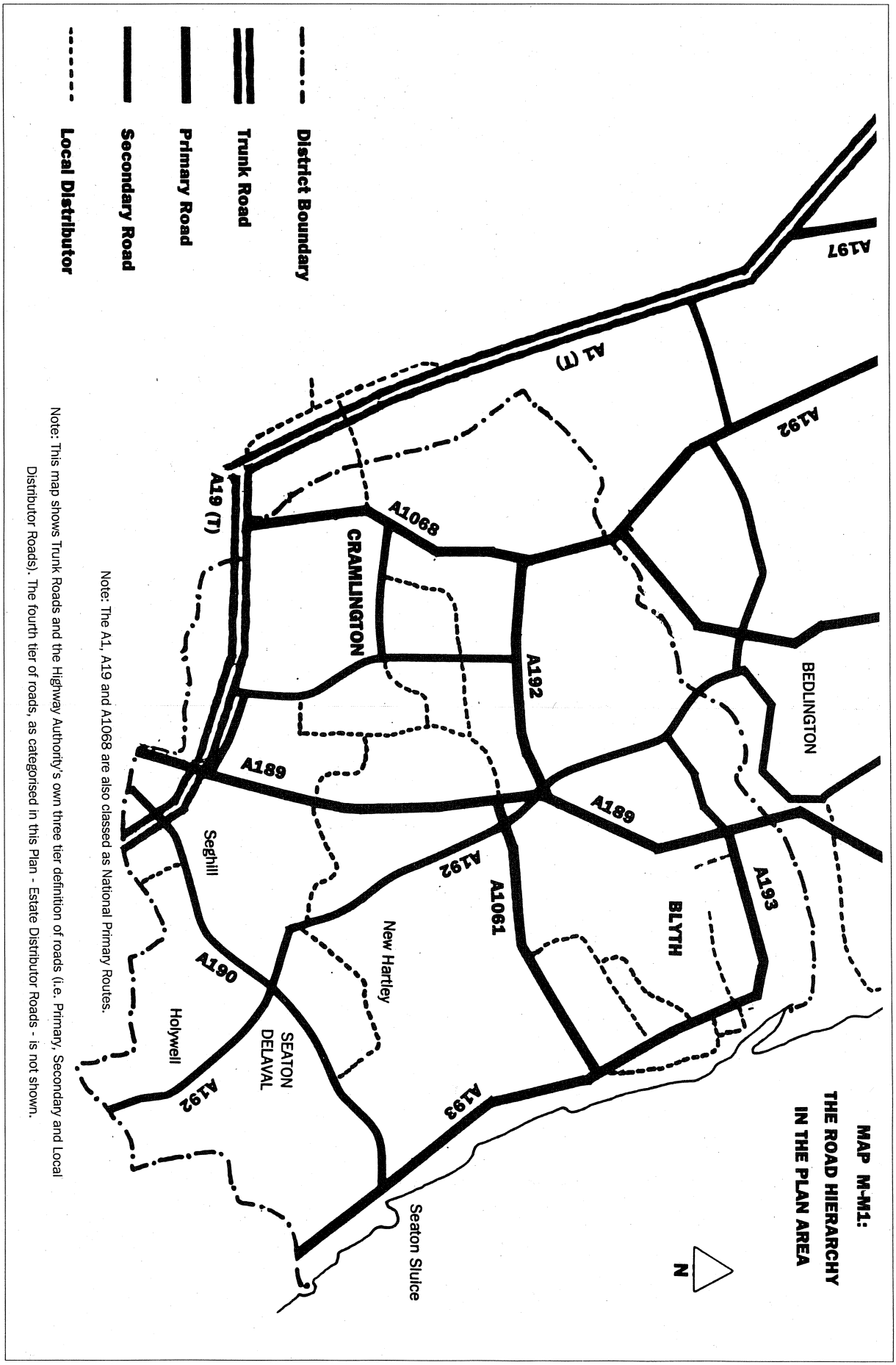
49 *Culs-de-sac are effectively a calming measure since they preclude through traffic. Shared surfaces, possible towards the extremities of culs-de-sac where only a few houses are being served, also act in this way so long as their start is clearly marked in order that drivers know that they are sharing the roadway with pedestrians, children playing etc.. At present, new developments tend to be designed on this basis, although other types of layout and correspondingly different ways of calming traffic may come into favour as the Plan period progresses - see also Policy H21.*

50 *Residential Roads and Footpaths in Northumberland, 1980.*

51 *This would be for visual reasons and would be in line with Policy E17.*

52 *See also section on car parking below.*

MAP M-M1:
THE ROAD HIERARCHY
IN THE PLAN AREA



Note: The A1, A19 and A1068 are also classed as National Primary Routes.

Note: This map shows Trunk Roads and the Highway Authority's own three tier definition of roads (i.e. Primary, Secondary and Local Distributor Roads). The fourth tier of roads, as categorised in this Plan - Estate Distributor Roads - is not shown.



Traffic Calming, Albion Way, Blyth

The solution, which will be sought, is to use traffic management measures to direct traffic into the town centre via other, more appropriate routes.[53]

Based upon the network of main and local distributor roads which has already been defined, (see Map M-M1), a primary town centre feeder road can be traced from Links Road via Wensleydale Terrace, Belgrave Terrace, Ridley Avenue, Bridge Street, the Inner Relief Road and Regent Street to Hodgsons Road and its junction with Cowpen Road.

Many of the improvements would only involve minor works - e.g. signposting. However changes will be necessary at the junction of the Inner Relief Road with Regent Street to prioritise traffic flows between Regent Street (North) and the Inner Relief Road.

Waterloo Road would still act as a secondary feeder route. Investigations will be made into the possibility of introducing further traffic delaying / calming measures along its length, although care will need to be taken not to prejudice the smooth running of bus services.

Plessey Road will also act as a secondary access into the town centre but some improvements are needed to its junctions with Beaconsfield Street / Park Road and Wellington Street to ensure a direct and clear route.

Cowpen Road

Cowpen Road has already been touched on from the point of view of traffic management measures undertaken. The fact that the road sometimes operates close to capacity has also been mentioned. Traffic generators are still being introduced along Cowpen Road and will continue to grow as the development of the site of the former Bates Colliery occurs.[54] Some has been diverted to the South Newsham Road bypass. Improvements to junctions have also helped reduce congestion. However the problem of heavy traffic along the road has not disappeared. The scope for further traffic management measures should therefore be investigated. The creation of the proposed new cycleway along Cowpen Road will help.[55]

Other Proposals - Traffic Management

Where a bypass to a residential road is proposed it is necessary to introduce measures to discourage traffic from using the bypassed road as a through route. This has already been successfully applied in Blyth, where the South Newsham Road diversion bypassed the Laverock Hall Road. It is hoped that there will be the opportunity at an early date to divert through traffic from Village, High Pit and Station Roads in Cramlington with the completion of the East-West Link Road.[56]

There is also a history of conflict at Seaton Delaval, not only between pedestrians and traffic, but also between traffic passing through the village and that stopping at its facilities. There are management measures being taken in the vicinity of the Avenue Head Roundabout.[57]

PLANNING OBLIGATIONS AND THE MANAGEMENT / CALMING OF TRAFFIC

M6 (iv) deals with situations where a new development would cause a significant increase in traffic on an existing road outside a planning application site. In such cases Planning Obligations will be sought so that the developer(s) fund the installation of appropriate traffic management or calming measures.[58]

53 *Chapter 9, on Blyth Town Centre, explains that up until now a line has been reserved for a western leg of the Inner Relief Road, but, for various (mainly environmental) reasons, the land will no longer be safeguarded for this purpose.*

54 *See Proposal WP2.*

55 *See Policy M2.*

56 *See Policy M9.*

57 *See also Policy M8, below (on car parking). The situation at Avenue Head is fully explained in Chapter 15.*

Policy ***M 6*** *TRAFFIC CALMING AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT*

Efforts will be made, through planning decisions and appropriate discussions, to ensure that access for motor vehicles within built-up parts of the Plan area remains as convenient as possible but seeking to minimise potential conflict with other road users (especially those categories defined in Policy M2 above), as well as adverse environmental impact, through a series of controlling measures. In particular, the following will be sought:

i The implementation of an accelerated programme of traffic calming schemes on existing sections of highway in the lower two categories of the road hierarchy, with priority given to:

- **a areas where a specific problem has been identified;**
- **b heavily trafficked areas where residential or other sensitive uses are being introduced;**

ii Only granting planning permission for housing, or other developments that incorporate new sections of access road, where the Planning and Highway Authorities are satisfied that suitable traffic calming measures have been included, having regard to Policy H21 (ii) where housing is proposed;

iii Seeking traffic management schemes within the existing highway, through discussion with the Highway Authority and/or developers, including:

- **a the establishment through necessary junction improvements and signposting of a two tier system of access routes to Blyth town centre from the A193, as indicated on the Proposals Map:**
  - **a Primary Town Centre Access Route via Hodgsons Road, Regent Street, the Inner Relief Road, Bridge Street, Ridley Avenue, Belgrave Crescent, Wensleydale Terrace and Links Road;**
  - **Secondary Town Centre Access Routes via Waterloo Road and Plessey Road, the latter requiring changes to junction arrangements at Plessey Road / Park Road / Beaconsfield Street and Plessey Road / Wellington Street;**
- **b further improvements along Cowpen Road in Blyth, as shown on the Proposals Map;**
- **c measures to discourage the use of High Pit Road and Village Road as a through route between the A189 and Northumbrian Road, once the East West Link Road (East) is constructed, (in line with Policy M9), as indicated on the Proposals Map;**
- **d measures, if appropriate, to discourage the use of Station Road as a through route once the East West Link Road (West) is constructed, (in line with Policy M9), in accordance with Proposal CC6, as indicated on the Proposals Map;**
- **e the better management of traffic at Avenue Head, Seaton Delaval in association with parking improvements referred to at Policy M8 and Proposed as Proposal SD3;**

iv Seeking off-site traffic management or traffic calming measures relating to planning applications through the signing of Planning Agreements, in line with Policy G11, where the Highway Authority considers that the traffic implications of the proposed development justify such measures.

58 *This is in line with Policy G11.*

Policy ***M7*** *HEAVY GOODS VEHICLES*

It will be sought specifically to control the movement of heavy traffic within the built-up areas, where justified, by appropriate signposting and other traffic management measures, but specifically:

i At Blyth Town Centre where traffic delivering goods to retail premises will be controlled in accordance with Proposal BP4;

ii In relation to the Blyth Port Development Area, with a view to restricting heavy goods vehicles to environmentally suitable roads and minimising the impact of such traffic in the commercial and residential areas adjoining the port by:

a limiting access for heavy goods vehicles to the Quayside and South Harbour to no more than four points: Quay Road, East Park View and/or Wellington Street East and South Gate;

b requiring that, in expansions of port activity within the Port Development Area, sufficient land is devoted to achieving adequate internal circulation for road vehicles where practicable.

7.5.4 Controlling Heavy Goods Vehicle Traffic

The general presumption in favour of retaining access for motor cars wherever possible within the built-up area (at the opening of Policy M6), reflects the reality that the car will continue to be widely used and regarded by many as a necessity during the Plan period, (in spite of strong policies favouring the development of public transport and other modes earlier in this chapter).

However this general presumption does not extend to heavy goods vehicles. These vehicles should be excluded from the built-up areas except where access is required. Within the road system they should be encouraged to use the main roads accessing industrial areas, town centres, etc., and they should be kept out of residential areas as far as practicable. It is recognised that all streets need to be accessible to heavy vehicles at some time or another - e.g. fire appliances and removal lorries - nevertheless traffic management, calming measures and road layouts can discourage them from entering areas unnecessarily.

Policy M7 deals with the subject of HGV's within the urban environment and refers to two areas where particular controlling measures will be appropriate - both in Blyth.

One, (**M7 (i)**) is the town centre, where service access to retail premises is limited.[59]

The other area is the Port of Blyth. One of the main environmental impacts of port development is considered to be heavy lorry traffic, particularly in adjoining residential areas. It is aimed to contain as much short-haul port traffic as possible within the Port area itself and to confine use of public highways to routes acceptable in engineering as well as environmental terms.

The Blyth Renaissance strategy [60] for the regeneration of the Quayside area includes a number of proposals designed to improve the four access points to be used by heavy goods vehicles in the following ways:

- the construction of an alternative access road that widens and extends Wellington Street East from Bridge Street onto Quay Road;[61]
- the stabilisation of Quay Road along its length with the River Blyth to prevent further erosion;
- the upgrading and resurfacing of a currently unadopted highway to bring it up to an acceptable standard for adoption; and
- implementing surface and hard landscaping improvements along Low Quay to improve its visual appearance.

The achievement of this strategy, particularly the Wellington Street East link, will reduce the need for lorry traffic to use the residential streets of Bath Terrace and East Park View.

However, in the long term, all port movement within and between Wimbourne Quay/South Harbour should ideally be on an internal system with access on public roads limited to either end - at Regent Street and Links Road. This may not be possible in the Plan period, but discussions will continue in association with planning applications.

59 *The detailed proposals for this are contained in Chapter 9, on Blyth Town Centre.*

60 *Blyth Renaissance is a comprehensive strategy for the regeneration of Blyth which is seeking to develop a united community with residents, businesses and agencies going forward to create a vibrant, expanding local economy for the town within a safe, clean and healthy environment where the people of Blyth have the opportunity to achieve their maximum potential.*

61 *See Policy M9*

Policy ***M 8*** *CAR PARKING*

In relation to car parking requirements, it will be sought through planning decisions to minimise the area of land devoted to their use while:

- **normally adhering to adopted car parking standards for new developments, as set out in column A of Appendix XVII;**
- **safeguarding existing provision to the extent that the supply of spaces continues to meet standards and demands.**

Column B of Appendix XVII will applied in those circumstances where there are no adverse implications for road safety or traffic management, public parking is available in close proximity to the proposal, and there is good access to public transport routes.

The above will be sought throughout the Plan area but, in addition, the following proposals will apply:

PROPOSAL	IN ACCORDANCE WITH
Provision at the two town centres of Blyth and Cramlington	Proposals BP4 and CC1 respectively
Improvement of off street car parking in the vicinity of Avenue Head, Seaton Delaval, as shown on the Proposals Map	Proposal SD3 and in association with the traffic management measures proposed at Policy M6
Improvement of provision of off-street car parking at Double Row, as indicated on the Proposals Map,	Proposal WP8
Improvement of parking facilities at Seaton Sluice, as indicated on the Proposals Map, and in association with the development of visitor attractions at Blyth Quayside and the Links and Foreshore	Policy L2

In addition to the above:

i **The possibility of providing park and ride facilities, particularly at Blyth, will be investigated in land use terms;**

ii **Modest, concealed off-street car parking surfaced with natural materials will be permitted in association with countryside visitor attractions and within the landscape criteria set out in Policies E3 and E4;**

iii **Where possible, measures will be taken to ensure that car park areas are well landscaped and safe for pedestrians.**

Where off-site parking improvements are necessary to a development, then a Planning Agreement will be sought under Policy G11.

7.5.5 **Car Parking**

Considerable efforts have been made to improve car parking provision within the Plan area.[62] Traffic growth has required increased off-street parking, especially at central places, workplaces and foci of community activity. Strict parking standards are now applied to new development, summarised at Appendix XVII to this Written Statement.

Policy M8 has a long term aim to minimise the total land devoted to car parking. While this may seem contradictory, the overall sustainable approach of the Plan would be departed from if this was not included as an aim. The more land that is devoted to car parking, the more spread-out a place becomes, inconveniencing pedestrians. Avoidance of this becomes most crucial at central places. There are ways in which car parking can be accommodated using less land, an example being the incorporation of car ports within buildings.

When considering new development, existing standards will continue to be applied. When considering proposals which involve removing existing off-street parking, before granting permission, it will be ensured that the remaining provision would continue to meet standards, both in relation to the new development itself and in relation to existing uses that surround the site.

62 *References to car parking also encompass two wheel motorised vehicles such as motorcycles, scooters, mopeds etc.*

PROPOSALS

A number of areas are referred to where there are specific proposals:

- At the two main **town centres**, general levels of car parking provision now existing, (plus that proposed in association with development that has planning permission), are of the right order for present day needs. The two town centre chapters make clear that this situation will be kept under review as developments proceed.[63]
- Problems need to be addressed at **Seaton Delaval**. To an extent, these refer back to traffic management measures referred to above in relation to the Avenue Head area.[64]
- However there is also a parking problem within the **Double Row** work activity area.[65]
- Further improvements to car parking are proposed in relation to **visitor attractions**.[66] There is a need to give it adequate consideration in relation to the main proposed visitor attractors at the Quayside and Blyth Links.[67] At Seaton Sluice, the intention is not to increase the total number of spaces available; it is more to improve incidental footpaths, signing etc. in order to encourage visitors to park where spaces are available at Fountain Head Bank car park, rather than concentrating in the limited spaces available immediately next to the Harbour.

PARK AND RIDE

M8 (i) recognises the contribution that can be made by park and ride facilities. However this may be more appropriate to implement at Blyth rather than Cramlington, due to access difficulties already mentioned.[68]

CAR PARKING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

M8 (ii) relates to countryside pursuits and the increasing likelihood [69] that motorists will seek to park on roadside verges closest to the object of their visit, unless separate parking is provided. The policy permits the development of off-street car parking to be undertaken so long as landscape factors are taken into account. Three simple criteria are set out in relation to resulting car parks: they should be modest in scale, concealed and surfaced with natural materials (if at all).

THE ENVIRONMENT WITHIN CAR PARKS

M8 (iii) recognises that, where car parks are at surface level, alongside the buildings that they serve, the incorporation of pedestrian friendly measures within them (as well as a strong landscape structure) will be important.

7.5.6 **Road Construction within Built-up Areas**

The approach to new road construction within the built-up area is to avoid it wherever possible and, if feasible, seek some other way to alleviate traffic problems or else reduce or exclude it all together. This topic has been dealt with extensively above.

Road construction must be seen as a last resort and, if proposed, should be a scheme which has clear net benefits in terms of its environmental effects, as well as the other three aims of this Plan.[70] Within the built-up parts of the Plan area new stretches of road proposed will serve one of two purposes:

1 they will relieve traffic congestion while alleviating problems of conflict; or
2 they will provide access to new development areas.

The County Highway Authority has traditionally been responsible for programming construction projects relating to main roads in Blyth Valley.[71] Funding is in part from the DETR, the European Community or other outside sources. More recently, the costs of the lower tiers of the road hierarchy, e.g. estate and local distributor roads, have been directed towards the developers of the areas which they serve.[72] [73]

Policy M9 sets this approach down in terms of the general criteria and specific proposals.

ROADS IN NEW DEVELOPMENTS

M9 (i) deals with roads associated with new development.

The West Blyth and South Beach areas require the continuation of phased estate distributor roads.[74]

At the South-West Sector of Cramlington, development will proceed in a phased manner in accordance with Planning Agreements. This includes the provision of off

63 *See Chapters 8 and 9.*

64 *Although limited, there is some scope to increase off-street parking through selective road closures and associated landscaping, (see also Chapter 15 on Seaton Delaval).*

65 *See Chapter 6, Sub-section 6.6.11.*

66 *The role of these three locations as visitor attractions is explained in Chapter 5, on Leisure and Visitor Activities.*

67 *Detailed proposals for the Quayside and Links areas are set out in Chapters 16 and 18 respectively.*

68 *An experimental Park & Ride scheme, operating between Blyth Civic Centre car park and the town centre, has been undertaken. Similar schemes may be introduced during peak periods of demand in the future.*

69 *Reflecting increased visits to the area - see Chapter 5 on Leisure and Visitor Activities.*

70 *i.e. energy consumption, the development of the local economy and equality of opportunity - in this case equality of access.*

71 *This excludes the A19 which, being a trunk road is the responsibility of Central Government.*

72 *See also Section on Planning Obligations in the General Development Chapter, (Sub-section 2.6.5).*

73 *At the time of adoption of this Plan, the rules governing the funding of the upper tiers of the road hierarchy are being reconsidered and developers may well be asked to foot the bill of main roads within the urban area too.*

74 *Details of these are set out in Chapters 12 and 13 respectively.*

site works including the main access routes into the Sector.[75] The preferred road network involves the completion of the "Inner Box" of local distributor Roads for the town of which Northumbrian Road, Nelson Drive and Lancastrian Way are the other components. This would mean that Beacon Lane would eventually have to be extended to meet Lancastrian Way via a new bridge over the railway line. Further access points, (from Fisher Lane), will be required in order to serve part of the housing area as well as the proposed work activity area.

At the Quayside, Blyth, the rationalisation of access, to achieve the local environmental aims there, necessitates the construction of a short stretch of road at Wellington Street East.[76] Although this road is not identified as needed by the Highway Authority at this stage, this improved connection is considered to be an important part of the economic and environmental regeneration of the Quayside area.

Within the North-East Sector of Cramlington, there is a need to provide a more convenient link for local traffic wishing to gain access to the A192 without negotiating the more circuitous route via the A189 interchange. This has become more acute as the eastern parts of the Northburn and Hartford areas have been developed for housing and it may still be that a suitable realignment can be sought in relation to development in this area.[77]

SEPARATE ROAD PROPOSALS

M9 (ii) concentrates on schemes within urban areas which are being proposed not directly to serve new development, (although, in one case, the early construction of part of the road could be brought forward by development).

Cramlington

Travelling across Cramlington between the A1171 and B1505/A189 is currently problematic as two stretches of essentially residential distributor road (Station Road and Village Road) are carrying substantial through traffic which they were never designed to accommodate. In order to provide a more direct route, two separate sections of road need to be constructed.

This East-West Link Road scheme is included in the Highway Authority's Transport Policy and Programme as a long term scheme. However, should development come forward on land to the north of the Station Road section, the traffic so generated will lead to the need for sections of the road to be constructed in parallel. This will be the responsibility of developers.[78]

Blyth

The limited number of entrances into the town of Blyth has been discussed above. The hope is that a greater proportion of traffic entering the town from the Spine Road will use the more southerly of the two links to the Spine Road, (i.e. the A1061 Laverock Hall Road), thus relieving the pressure on the more northerly route, (the A193 Cowpen Road).[79]

With the traffic growth predicted during the Plan period by the Highway Authority, there is some doubt as to whether this system of roads will continue to be able to cope indefinitely.

Policies in this Plan express the aim of moderating traffic growth through land use decisions and the encouragement of other modes. In reality, the ability of planning decisions to slow long term traffic growth, on roads within the area, is strictly limited.[80]

Taking account of the above, it is necessary to accept that a further road link or links may eventually be needed.

In the past it has been acknowledged that the scope for providing a major new link is strictly limited because of land use constraints. Environmental and engineering factors would make a riverside route and/or a new bridge across the Blyth to Sleekburn particularly expensive.

This only leaves the option of finding an alternative way of routeing traffic through the built-up part of the town. A line is safeguarded in the Blyth Valley East Local Plan, which follows Princess Louise Road westwards from Broadway Circle, then forks right following a former waggonway to the west via the residential Ogle Drive.

The Highway Authority takes the view that this would be the best way of relieving the pressure on the existing road system within the town. A new road along this line would not be a main road, (equivalent to Cowpen Road or South Newsham Road) but a Local Distributor Road, (the same as Albion Way and Wensleydale Terrace, for instance).

This line will continue to be protected from development on the above basis, no alternative being available.

Should the Southern Development Area of West Blyth come forward for development within the Plan period, the construction of this local distributor road will become necessary and will almost certainly also fall within the Plan period. The prospective developers of the Southern Development Area will have a responsibility for its

75 *See Chapter 11*

76 *See Chapter 16.*

77 *See Chapter 10, on Cramlington North-East Community Development Area.*

78 *See Chapter 8, Proposal CC2.*

79 *The only other way into the town for motor vehicles is via the A193 Seaton Sluice Road.*

80 *The aim of slowing long term traffic growth may be assisted by national changes in the relative use of transport modes and travel patterns. In addition, it is thought to be the case, at least in towns, that the availability of road space increases the inclination of people with access to motor cars, to use their vehicles for journeys for which they would otherwise have used a different mode or which they would not have made at all.*

provision, the level of which will reflect negotiations with them, as detailed in Proposal WB12.

Should the link ever need to be built, then appropriate mitigation measures will be required to protect the many residential properties that would be affected. These measures will need to be considered at an early date.

It would be the intention to discourage as much through traffic as possible by the judicious use of traffic calming techniques.

The overall scheme will involve two junction improvements. The first, at the western end of the section by-passing Station Road would mean the enlargement of the existing roundabout taking in land not currently part of the Highway.[81] The second junction redesign requirement concerns the point where the eastern part of the East-West Link Road meets the A189 South-East Northumberland Spine Road. This would remove as much traffic as possible from local roads, including Village Road, without slowing the flow of vehicles on the Spine Road itself. One option is for a full, grade separated junction. The second option to be investigated is for a junction at grade, involving left in / left out slips only. It can be assumed that this would remove part but not all of the traffic from local roads that would be removed if the fully grade separated junction were to be built. The solution chosen, as well as being the subject of a traffic impact study, will be not be built without the satisfactory outcome of a full environmental assessment. A noise study should be incorporated into the assessment, and any necessary acoustic fencing and planting specified. The assessment may also need to address the effects which remaining pit shafts might have on land subsidence, so that any adverse effect on properties can be avoided.

Again, this junction could be put in independently and in advance of the link itself as it may also provide access for the development of the Sports Park site and could be part funded by any developer there.[82]

Clearly, while these roads will assist in removing problems or providing essential access, there will be some localised adverse effects here and there. In relation to part (i) of the Policy, the relevant area specific chapters detail some of the problems envisaged. In all such cases, suitable mitigation works will be required.

7.5.7 Road Construction Outside Settlement Limits

In providing for movement of traffic outside built-up areas, there are fewer instances of conflict with other road users. However this is not to say that these conflicts do not occur. In particular, cyclists and horse riders are vulnerable.[83]

Blyth Valley and south-east Northumberland in general have inherited a very good system of road links from the period of heavily subsidised modernisation that followed the closure of most of the remaining coal mines in the 1960's.[84] The main change that this brought was the superimposition onto this pre-existing network of two main dual carriageway roads. One of these is the only road within the Plan area on the national network of trunk roads - the A19(T), linking Teeside and County Durham with the A1 via the Tyne Tunnel. The other is the A189 South-East Northumberland Spine Road, which passes by most of the important settlements in SE Northumberland and links them to Tyneside, and improvements to which are currently underway. Further dual carriageway roads have been built defining the other two edges of the new town of Cramlington. The old road network of roads onto which all this was superimposed, has largely been integrated into the new.[85]

The attitude taken in this Local Plan to the inter-urban road network in the Plan area, is that on the whole, it is adequate and will remain so for the whole of the Plan period. With this in mind, as well as the policy position, set out above, favouring the development of other modes of transport (as part of the sustainable development approach), the Local Plan does not seek or promote any major road building. Schemes to be supported are all moderate upgradings or relatively minor changes to the existing system.

Policy M10 tabulates those schemes which will be supported for implementation during the Plan period. It mentions safeguards, additional works and other provisions that will be sought generally, as well as particular ones pertaining to the individual schemes.

In formulating Policy M10 and its constituent proposals, it is recognised that not all of the works suggested would result in a net environmental gain in purely local terms, (the criterion being applied to road proposals within towns). This is because road improvements in open areas are not bypassing residential areas nor (usually) removing conflict with pedestrians. Also they usually take at least some land and vegetation. (Many existing

81 *Although the East West Link is considered to be important to implement at an early date, in a sense the roundabout improvement is more urgent. It is immediately adjacent to the town centre expansion which is currently underway and has a consistently bad accident record, (which minor improvements to the approach roads in the past have failed to ameliorate). Like the East-West Link Road, the proposal is in the Transport Policy and Programme as a long term scheme. Also like the remainder of the scheme, it will be a requirement for implementation in parallel with any development of land to the north.*

82 *See Policy L4 in the Leisure and Visitor Activity Chapter, (Chapter 5).*

83 *Many of the issues relating to the movement of pedestrians, cyclists and horses in the open countryside are covered in the Countryside Network Strategy, (see subsection 5.5.2 of Chapter 5).*

84 *Before that, the shape of the road system was largely dictated by the railways and other artefacts of the industrial age. This typically gave a pattern with many "dog leg" bends.*

85 *Some parts have been improved under previous schemes; some parts of the have become obsolete (and "returned to nature").*

Policy ***M 9*** — *ROAD CONSTRUCTION WITHIN BUILT-UP AREAS*

Road construction within the settlement limits defined under Policy G6, outside the existing Highway, will normally only be granted planning permission under the following circumstances:

i Where the roads concerned provide access to new areas of development including:

	PROPOSAL	IN ACCORDANCE WITH
a	The extension of the distributor road at West Blyth, in association with housing allocations H10 (i to iii)	Proposals WB3 and WB12
b	The extension of the estate distributor road at Sandringham Drive, South Beach in association with housing allocation H10 (iv)	Proposal SB3 (a)
c	The construction of Local Distributor Roads and access roads in South-West Cramlington, in association with housing allocation H7 (iii) and work activity allocation W2 (i) (a)	Proposal SW7
d	a new section of road adjacent to and to the south of Wellington Street East at the Quayside, Blyth	Proposal BQ4

And in addition the improvement and realignment of the road connecting Shankhouse with Boghouses will be sought in association with development still proceeding in the near vicinity of North-East Cramlington.

ii Where the roads concerned will remove problems of conflict between motor traffic and other road users and so long as it is considered that there would be a net environmental benefit overall. In particular it will be sought that the following sections of road are constructed and their lines, as indicated on the Proposals Map, will be protected from development:

- **a both sections of the East-West Link Road at Cramlington;**
- **b the improvement of Station Road Roundabout, Cramlington in tandem with or in advance of (a) above;**
- **c the construction of a junction at the point where the East-West Link Road meets the A189 in tandem with or in advance of (a) above;**
- **d the construction of a link between the West Blyth Distributor, proposed in (i) above, and Princess Louise Road, via Ogle Drive;**

Where any of the above Proposals are considered likely to have an adverse environmental impact on their immediate surroundings, they will only be implemented in association with suitable mitigation works to include necessary safety measures and suitable safeguards to protect access to, and residential amenity of existing housing alongside the routes, including mounding and planting strips where appropriate.

roadside verges have developed as important wildlife habitats in their own right).[86]

Nevertheless, there are important benefits to be gained from the addition of these moderate schemes to the road network - for example:

- where they serve to complete and fill some of the last remaining gaps in the planned network there are clear economic development benefits;
- where difficult traffic flow situations are being addressed, and a clearer road layout results, the potential (or actual) safety related benefits must be recognised.

It is quite possible to seek measures in association with schemes, (usually at a fraction of the financial cost of the scheme itself), which will serve to tip the balance towards a net environmental benefit too.[87] Policy M10 and its proposals, attempt to do just this.

SCHEMES TO BE PURSUED IN PLAN PERIOD

M10 (i) consists of schemes, the implementation of which, though not on the short term Transport Policy and Programme, are considered important to implement at an early date for reasons of local environment or amenity.

86 *See also Chapter 1, Sections 1.2 and 1.3.*

87 *One such situation would be if a road is being bypassed, the old stretch of road could be developed as a publicly accessible wildlife habitat.*

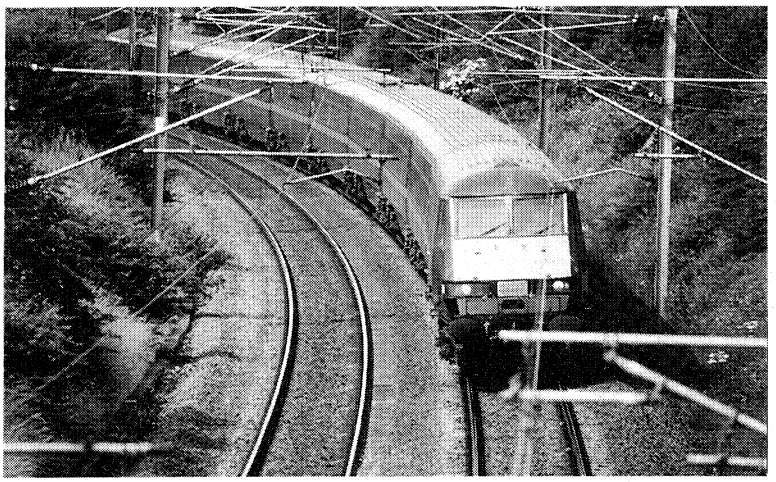
(a) B1332 Backworth Lane

One of the main roads in the Borough is the A190 which links Seaton Delaval and Seghill to Newcastle via the Spine Road. However for those wishing to use the A19 southbound, or visit parts of North Tyneside, the shortest route for residents of Seaton Delaval, Seghill etc. is to use Backworth Lane, a Secondary Road running south from the A190. The upgrading of the section between the A190 and the County boundary will be sought as a matter of priority. In pursuing its improvement it is important to make sure that as much of the existing hedgerow is retained.

(b) Access to New Hartley from East

At New Hartley, as with all the satellite villages of Seaton Delaval, it has been decided to put a freeze on the further housing development, over and above infill development and existing commitments - hence the tight settlement limits proposed in the General Development Chapter. Even so, the village has grown considerably in the recent past, and the tortuous approach to the village from the east is considered to be below the standard that would be ideal to serve the village. It is therefore proposed that the upgrading of this road is sought during the Plan period although not as a priority. Protection of existing hedgelines would need to be maximised in such an eventuality.

The only trunk road in the Plan area, A19(T), is an important link which may require improvements for traffic or safety reasons requiring the take-up of small amounts of additional land during the Plan period. The important junctions at Moor Farm and Seaton Burn (the whole of the former and part of the latter falling within the Plan Area) carry large amounts of traffic and it is reasonable to anticipate that improvements may be needed if there are further large scale developments along its corridor between the A1 and the Tyne Tunnel.



An Edinburgh to London Train Passes through Cramlington

LINES TO BE SAFEGUARDED WITH SCHEMES TO BE PURSUED ONLY IN CONNECTION WITH DEVELOPMENT

Some schemes are not seen as priority in environmental terms, although their merits from a traffic point of view are recognised. In these cases, set out in **M10 (ii)**, the line of the proposed scheme is safeguarded from other development during the Plan period. However, in each case, development of the road concerned *will* be required within the Plan period if certain, specified development in the adjoining area goes ahead before the end of the period.

(a) A1068 Fisher Lane

The existence of dual carriageways around the perimeter of Cramlington has been mentioned above. Collectively, these are known as "the outer box". The box serves to take traffic not needing to enter the town, around its edge. In fact, the system is not quite complete.[88] There is a short section of the A1068, (Fisher Lane) towards the southern end of the western side of the box, which remains as single carriageway. The gradual development of the South-West Sector which is anticipated during the Plan period will make the dualling of this section necessary in order to provide safe and efficient access to the proposed work activity area and part of the housing area. A dualling scheme will be sought in association with the development of the sector.[89] The richness of the landscape in the vicinity means that a careful assessment will need to be made before an exact line for the new carriageway is chosen.

(b) B1326 East Cramlington Road

Another Secondary road which is used as a strategic connection, is that linking Seaton Delaval with Cramlington via East Cramlington. There is a longstanding proposal to provide a direct link eastwards from East Cramlington to the A192. It is accepted that such a link may become necessary should a major use be found for the "Sports Park Site" requiring access direct from this secondary road.[90] For this reason, the line of the link continues to be safeguarded in this Local Plan and its construction will be sought in that event. Should the road be built, there would be significant displacement of maturing reclamation woodland.[91] An equal or greater area of planting nearby would be sought (by agreement) on a nearby site to be agreed.

88 *See also Diagram SW-D2 for an explanation of the box system of roads.*

89 *See Chapter 11.*

90 *See Policy L4 in Chapter 5, on Leisure and Visitor Activities.*

91 *See also Policy E5 (ii).*

Policy ***M 10*** *ROAD CONSTRUCTION OUTSIDE SETTLEMENT LIMITS*

Improvements to the road network outside the main built-up areas will be supported as set out at (i) and (ii) below. Where the scheme involves a diversion, widening or realignment which includes land outwith the existing statutory Highway, the land concerned will be protected from development and planning permission will be granted conditional upon:

- **Environmental safeguards, particularly in relation to conservation of the landscape and the natural history;**
- **the maintenance of access for adjoining users;**
- **additional works considered necessary including:**
  - **provision as appropriate for the movement of pedestrians (of whatever level of mobility), wheelchair users, prams and pushchairs, cyclists and people on horseback, wildlife, farm animals and farm vehicles;**
  - **appropriate landscape and/or nature conservation measures, in accordance with Policies E6 (iii), E5 (vi) or E2 as applicable.**

Where works are entirely within Highway land, the same safeguards and additional works listed above will be sought through negotiation with the Highway Authority.

i The following schemes will be pursued for implementation at the earliest possible date during the period of this Local Plan, on the basis that there are environmental problems associated with the existing section of highway:

	PROPOSED SCHEME	SUBJECT TO THE SAFEGUARDS ETC. LISTED AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS POLICY, AND:
a	The completion of improvements to the width and alignment of B1322, Backworth Lane	The retention of as much as possible of the existing hedgerow
b	Improvements to the width and alignment of the road linking the eastern end of New Hartley with the A190	Maximisation of the retention of existing hedgerows

ii The following schemes will have their alignments safeguarded from built development during the period of this Plan but will only be pursued for implementation during that period if made necessary by additional development, as specified below:

	SAFEGUARDED ROAD LINE	TO BE IMPLEMENTED WITHIN PLAN PERIOD IF	SUBJECT TO THE SAFEGUARDS ETC. LISTED AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS POLICY, AND:
a	The dualling of the remaining single carriageway section of the A1068 Fisher Lane	Development of part of the North Moor area within South West Cramlington comes forward in accordance with Proposal SW2 (b)	Alignment of the new carriageway to minimise impact on the landscape and atural history
b	The realignment of the B1326 East Cramlington Road, close to its junction with the A192	Any major use of the Sports Park Site comes forward, that involves access off the B1326, as proposed at Policy L4 (ii)(a)	The entering into a Planning Agreement for the replacement in kind at a suitable nearby location of an equal or greater area of trees and shrubs as that displaced by the proposal

The above schemes will only be implemented where it can be demonstrated, through detailed traffic impact analysis, that such improvements are necessary in association with new development in the Plan period. In each instance, the Local Planning Authority will seek to negotiate an appropriate Section 106 Agreement with developers in relation to funding.

Policy ***M 11*** *PIPELINES*

Proposals to carry goods by pipeline will normally be permitted provided that their routes and the design and location of above ground facilities do not:

- **adversely affect the environment, particularly archaeological interests; or**
- **conflict with other Policies in this Local Plan.**

7.6 MOVEMENT BY WATER

Most movement by water relating to Blyth Valley takes place out at sea from the Port of Blyth. There is also limited movement of small vessels to and from Seaton Sluice Harbour. Insofar as planning has an influence, it will be sought to avoid situations where a land based activity subject to planning control could interfere with the free movement of shipping.[92]

BLYTH FERRY

The ferry across the River Blyth between Anns Row and North Blyth, ceased to operate in 1997 after a long period of decline and subsidy. In line with its previous policy, and the general approach on shortening travelling distances set out in this document, the Council would support any future proposals to reintroduce a ferry service across the river.[93] [94]

7.7 PIPELINES

Pipelines are an efficient means of transporting liquids which might otherwise be moved by road and rail and are therefore in line with the general environmental objectives of this Local Plan, helping to keep down the number of vehicles on the road. However, if they are badly routed, pipelines can adversely affect the environment, disrupt agriculture and sterilise the development of land. Even where fully underground, pipeline routes have the capability of causing environmental damage - e.g. to archaeological remains. **Policy M11** therefore makes clear that the Local Planning Authority will work, wherever practicable, with developers in the selection of routes so as to minimise possible underground damage and the impact of above ground facilities on the surrounding environment.[95]

92 *See also sub-section 5.4.1 of Chapter 5 on Leisure and Visitor Activity and Chapter 18 on The Blyth Links and Surrounding Area.*

93 *See also Chapter 16 on Blyth Quayside.*

94 *Wansbeck District Local Plan allocates land at North Blyth and Cambois for future employment initiatives which could increase the potential for ferry use.*

95 *The Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1995 permits certain statutory undertakers to lay pipelines without the need for planning permission. Above ground buildings up to a specific size are similarly exempt from planning permission if they are connected to the undertaking. However the Council will encourage dialogue with all statutory undertakers to help reduce potential problems of conflict of interest.*

Area Specific Proposals: INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The preceding seven chapters contain Policies which will be applied throughout the Plan area or where it is appropriate to do so within that area. They are intended to be comprehensive:

- They provide a framework for dealing with **individual planning applications** or for reacting to **opportunities** that arise to achieve something positive on the ground;
- Some set the approach in relation to **specified types of area / land use**, such as built-up areas, the open countryside, housing areas etc.;[1]
- Others clarify the line that will be taken within areas which are already **designated areas**, such as Conservation Areas, Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- Yet others propose **additional designations** within which certain controls will henceforth be applied, through this Local Plan or other legislation; these include the Green Belt and Areas of High Landscape Value etc.;
- There are the policies which **allocate land** for a particular use or mixture of uses, the main example being housing;
- Finally, there are the **proposals**.

PROPOSALS

The Policy Dimension

Proposals are site specific. They are **the means through which policies can be implemented in a positive way on the ground**. Where this is the case, site specific proposals have been listed within policies.[2]

The Area Specific Dimension

However, there is another dimension to Proposals within this Local Plan; that is the **area-specific dimension**. A majority of the proposals relating to particular sites or exact locations are grouped and are concentrated within a relatively small number of definable areas - nine in all.

The concentration of proposals within these zones reflects one of three main aims:

I The strengthening the role of the two **town centres** through a combination of the concentration of and control of activity there.

II The creation or completion, as communities, of those areas within which the majority of housing development will be concentrated during the Plan period.[3] Such areas are termed **Community Development Areas**.

III The achievement of solutions and/or defined planning aims in areas where there is a concentration of problems and/or opportunities and where a comprehensive approach would be especially beneficial. Such areas have been classified as **Local Areas for Action**.

Town Centres

The two Town Centre chapters are:

- **Cramlington Town Centre** Chapter **8**
- **Blyth Town Centre**[4] Chapter **9**

Community Development Areas

Six areas are treated as "Community Development Areas", with a chapter devoted to each, as follows:

- **North East Cramlington** Chapter **10**
- **South West Cramlington** Chapter **11**
- **West Blyth** Chapter **12**
- **South Beach** Chapter **13**
- **South-West Newsham** Chapter **14**
- **Seaton Delaval** Chapter **15**[5]

Local Areas for Action

There are three localities which warrant treatment as local action areas due to a concentration of local problems together with a range of opportunities.[6] Again, each is the subject of a chapter:

- **Blyth Quayside** Chapter **16**
- **Crofton Mill** Chapter **17**
- **Blyth Links** Chapter **18**

1 *N.B. Four policies are specific to Blyth Town Centre and are contained within Chapter 9, below.*

2 *The Proposals Map Key cross refers to the Policy Chapters and Proposals therein. It is therefore a comprehensive listing of Policies that contain site specific Proposals. Where possible, the Proposals Map also makes direct cross reference to the site specific chapters, where these are relevant. However, in some instances, it will be necessary to refer to the Written Statement and find the cross references as necessary.*

3 *See Introduction to Housing Chapter.*

4 *N.B. This Chapter contains four policies in addition to Proposals.*

5 *This deals with aspect of the wider role of the village centre, in the sense of the two town centre chapters above. However, the main purpose of the chapter is community development related.*

6 *All four are in Blyth, partly reflecting the accumulation of problems that can typically develop over an extended period in an older, more established town. Another, High Pit, does not warrant its own chapter but is dealt with briefly below.*

Proposals not within Town Centres, Community Development Areas or Local Action Areas

Proposals which do not fall within (or entirely within) defined Town Centre, Community Development or Local Areas for Action are, generally speaking, not part of a comprehensive, area-specific approach. Such proposals have already been expanded upon, (to the extent that this is necessary), within the policy related chapters, at the point in the text where the policies themselves have been explained and justified. There is one exception to this: that is, specific Proposals for **Work Activity Areas**, which are not themselves an integral part of a Community Development or Local Action Area. These have their own section at the end of Chapter 6 on Work Activity.[5]

Other Settlements

The smaller settlements in Blyth Valley, **Seghill**, **Holywell**, **New Hartley**, **Old Hartley / Seaton Sluice**, **East Cramlington**, and **East Hartford** are not the subject of many positive development proposals. For this reason, they do not feature in their own chapters. **Chapter 2, Section 2.2** sets out the general approach to be taken to development proposals settlement by settlement. Within these settlements, there will be a general discouragement of larger scale development proposals, in favour of the larger settlements. In terms of **housing**, infill development is favoured [6] and there is a need to find scope to accommodate affordable housing.[7] There is also a recognition that there is a need to ensure the retention of essential local services in these places. This is one of the subjects dealt with extensively in the Community Facilities Chapter - in particular in relation to local shops.

Other Problem Localities

Clearly, there is a range of other problem localities within the Plan area, which do not feature in their own chapters because the scale of their problems does not warrant this level of individual treatment. Nevertheless, to the residents who live there, the local land use related difficulties are just as important. The aim is that the range of policies and safeguards in the main body of the Plan will be sufficient to address the situations presented, so far as planning decisions can over the period of the Plan. This does not preclude resources being found separately to deal with them more positively and comprehensively.[8]

There are other local problem areas which do not warrant a separate Chapter but which have problems, often associated with traffic passing through a built-up area. References to these are made at various points throughout the seven main topic chapters. An example is the A193 corridor, passing along Cowpen Road and through the settlement of **Bebside**. within these areas, there will need to be a continued reliance on individual development control decisions avoiding an exacerbation of the existing problems.[9]

One locality which has experienced a concentration of local problems, due largely to conflicts between traffic and the particular mixture of surrounding land uses, is **High Pit** area of Cramlington. It is not the subject of a separate chapter because planning is unable to offer a comprehensive package of solutions. While there will continue to be a reliance on individual development control decisions, some longer term solutions are offered in the form of Policies within the preceding chapters of the Plan. In particular, there is the possibility that at least some of the through traffic will be diverted from High Pit if the East-West Link Road is built.[10] There is also some scope for retail development to be diverted from the main street.[11]

5 *See Section 6.6.*

6 *See Chapter 3, Policy H4.*

7 *See Chapter 3, Policy H14.*

8 *See, for instance, Chapter 1, Policy E19.*

9 *See in particular the Movement Chapter for Policies relating to the Cowpen Road corridor. Also, Policy E19 on environmental improvements refers to Bebside.*

10 *See Chapter 7, Sub-section 7.5.6.*

11 *See Chapter 4, Policy C17.*

8. Cramlington Town Centre

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Cramlington town centre has been planned as the focus of activity in the new town of Cramlington. Its location was chosen to be physically central to the town. It is close to the village of Cramlington which provided the historic nucleus around which the new town was formed.

Unlike many older town centres, (including Blyth), Cramlington town centre was planned with a view to making it as accessible as possible for car-borne visitors, both in terms of the road system and the car parking. This puts it in a position to fulfil the role of sub-regional attractor as well as providing services for the population of the town itself.

With the town being a regional creation without the additional driving force of a government sponsored Development Corporation, (as in other new towns)[1] the town centre's development has relied heavily on the joint collaboration and co-operation of the local authorities and the single landowner. While boasting a reasonable array of retail facilities, the central area still lacks certain key elements which would be expected in a self-contained town of the same size.[2]

8.2 THE PROPOSALS

Although incomplete, recent years have seen an acceleration in the development of the town, to the extent that there remains in the town centre, as originally defined, little land without any sort of commitment or proposal.

The task of this chapter is therefore twofold.

- To propose any adjustments to **existing patterns of land uses and activities** that are appropriate for the efficient operation of the town centre.
- To look at the more strategic, **long term needs** of the town centre.

A topic based approach is taken, beginning with shopping, commerce and townwide community facilities, then dealing with patterns of movement within the town centre before, finally, looking at the scope for environmental improvement.



Medical Centre, Cramlington Town Centre

1 *See also Chapter 2, Section 2.2 on Settlement policy.*

2 *See also Chapter 4, Section 4.8.*

Proposal ***CC 1*** *CENTRAL SHOPPING AREA*

The vitality and attraction of Cramlington town centre will continue to be protected and enhanced within the Central Shopping Area, defined at Policy C14 (i), and its immediate environs, as follows:

a Should development proposals be put forward for further additions to the central shopping area, detailed permission will only be granted if the development is physically well related to the existing facilities, in particular for those on foot;

b Seeking, in association with further retail development in the Central Shopping Area, at an early stage within the Plan period, the creation of a central square adjacent to the superstore at the western end of Manor Walks and Concordia Sports Centre, in line with Policy C7 (i); and

c Determining applications for development so as to safeguard the existing car park provision to the extent that the supply of spaces continues to meet standards and demands;

d Applying Policy C14 (i)(b) in considering applications for non-retail use.

8.2.1 Shopping, Commerce and other Central Land Uses

MANOR WALKS AND THE RETAIL PARK

The Manor Walks Shopping Centre forms the commercial focus of Cramlington. The covered precinct has been built in a series of phases together with civic buildings such as the leisure centre, police station and library as the population of the new town has grown. A major retail park and other facilities have been added. As a result of recent development, the level of retail floorspace is now approaching the level that would be expected in a town the size of Cramlington and is comparable with that found at the town centre at Blyth.[3]

Proposal CC1 recognises that, while considerable progress has been made towards the completion of previously planned shopping facilities, there remains scope for further expansion. It also covers amenity considerations and safeguards that may be required.

CC1 (a) deals with the approach to be taken if further additions to the Manor Walks complex come forward. Any proposed development should, depending on the mix of uses, be built as a further phase of the Manor Walks Centre or otherwise well related to the existing complex physically as well as functionally.

CC1 (b) identifies the only other remaining plot of land within the town centre - between Concordia Sports Centre, the new extension to Manor Walks and the hypermarket - for a central square. This will consist of a formal seating area with appropriate landscaping where shoppers can congregate either to meet others or simply to stop for a rest. This feature will be laid out at the expense of developers of remaining retail areas at Manor Walks, (which includes an area that has permission adjacent to the town square site).

With central locations in the new town at a premium, a net loss in car parking provision needs to be avoided in the present context.[4] This could change as the Plan period progresses [5] and the Proposal, in **CC1 (c)**, is therefore simply to ensure that development does not result in a net change in the level of provision of spaces that would leave standards and demands prevailing at the time not being fully met.

CC1 (d) refers to the need to control non-retail uses along the main frontages.[6]

THE NORTHERN EXPANSION SITE

Various sections within this Local Plan have identified townwide needs for Cramlington, the best locations for which would be central. These are, in summary:

- identifying land for a major office use which has the access advantages of a town centre location;[7]
- recognising that the town lacks certain community facilities which are normally present in similar size towns, and allowing for this in land user terms.[8]

3 *See also Chapter 4, Sub-section 4.8.2.*

4 *In this present context, an ample supply of free spaces is regarded as a major attraction of the centre and its popularity would suffer if time restrictions or charges had to be introduced. See also Policy M8.*

5 *For example, markedly improved public transport could reduce the numbers of cars entering the town centre.*

6 *See Chapter 4, Section 4.8.*

7 *See Chapter 6, Section 6.4.*

Proposal **CC 2** — *NORTHERN EXPANSION SITE*

Land is allocated to the north of the town centre, henceforth referred to as the Northern Expansion Site for proposals within Use Classes B1, C2, D1 or D2 provided that the nature, scale, phasing, design and layout of any proposal are considered appropriate in terms of:

- **the role of the site for town centre expansion purposes;**
- **the relationship of the site with the existing town centre;**
- **its prominent position in relation to the road and rail system;**

having regard, as applicable, to Policies C18, C19, C10, W7 or other Policies in this Plan.

The Local Planning Authority will seek to negotiate with developers to secure Planning Obligations under Policy G11 for off-site access arrangements, where such Obligations are necessary to the granting of planning permission and reasonably related to the development proposed. Possible items could include:

- **necessary improvements to the Station Road roundabout;**
- **the construction of that part of the line of the East-West Link Road, which connects the Station Road roundabout with the southern end of Newlyn Drive;**
- **the construction of the spur road linking points"CCx" and "CCy";**
- **the footpath/cycleway connection between the northern end of the existing part of the Central Park and point "CCy", including its crossing of the proposed East-West Link Road to adopted standards;**
- **the footpath/cycleway connection between the northern end of the existing part of Central Park and Westwood Grange; and**
- **the laying out of the extension to Central Park for public open space in line with Policy C7 to a specification detailed by the Local Planning Authority.**

These various elements to be phased in negotiation with the developers of the various land allocations as the details, scale and timing of the development become known.

Proposal CC2 refers to an area of land north of Station Road and the proposed East-West link road [9] This area is identified for a combination of the above uses.[10]

The town is only two thirds complete and identified in the County Structure Plan as a strategic growth point. Additional land for health related, leisure or more general business or community uses relating to the town centre needs to be reserved.

It is important to stress that the existing town centre will be the primary consideration in relation to this land. Any development of the land should not be at the expense of either the existing town centre or of the satisfactory completion of remaining sites there.

Furthermore, the Northern Expansion Site is the last area of undeveloped land remaining, within close reach of the existing town centre and therefore should not be released unless the nature and scale of the proposed uses is fitting to that purpose. Small scale, individual proposals, taking up only a small proportion of the total site, will be resisted.

Any development will also have to respect the relationship of the site with the town centre, not just through its design, but also through the provision of appropriate links - a subject which is covered in the Policy in terms of off-site Planning Obligations, (see below). The site is at the central road junction within the town and visible from the main railway line. This will be another reason for exercising careful control over its design.

Adding to this factor, could be the severance of the site from the town centre by the proposed East-West Link Road,[11] but with the provision of safe footpath / cycleway routes, it is close enough to form an integral part of the existing town centre facilities.[12]

8 *See particularly Chapter 4, Sub-sections 4.9 and 4.10.*

9 *See also Sub-section 3.2.2 below for references to this road scheme*

10 *The land comprising this allocation was previously known as the "RA-Off site" because of its designation for residential and office use in the original Development Plan for the town.*

The list of possible uses for the land is defined in terms of the Use Classes Order, as use classes B1, C1, D1 and D2.

Any proposal on the community side should, ideally, have a townwide benefit. It could, for example, be a community hospital or a building housing some sort of cultural facility. Should a proposal along these lines emerge, requiring a Cramlington town centre location, this site should be considered as the first option.

At present, the town centre has approaching 10,000 square metres of office floorspace. While more is in the pipeline, the vacancy rate is likely to stay low and, in any case, much of it caters for "A2" rather than "B1" offices. Thus, within the northern expansion site, it will be ensured that there is scope for office proposals of the size and category which could not be absorbed into the area south of Station Road. This could include an office complex for an organisation wishing to establish a regional or national headquarters in a parkland setting.

The site may eventually have merit for retail uses, as long as any severance by Station Road or the future East-West Link Road is minimal and no more than 300 metres separates retail floorspace from the nearest shops in the town centre for pedestrians. It will, in any case, be necessary to review the situation in the light of factors that may apply beyond 2006, (including retail trends), at the time that the Local Plan is reviewed.

OFF SITE WORKS NECESSARY

There are certain principles which will need to be adhered to, regarding the off-site access arrangements as the area's development will generate a general increase in the level of traffic and pedestrian movement at the heart of the town's road system.

The necessary footpath and cycletrack connections will also need to be made with a suitable crossing of the East-West Link Road provided and the remaining length of footpath / cycleway connecting to Westwood Grange constructed.

Finally, subject to further investigation, funding for the laying out of the northward extension of Central Park will be sought.[13]

These various off-site works will be phased in negotiation with the developers of the various land allocations as the details, scale and timing of the development become known.

8.2.2 **Movement**

The vast majority of people travelling to the town centre do so by car. This pattern has been emphasised with the opening of bulky goods stores.

PEDESTRIAN / CYCLE ACCESS

With the above in mind, it is doubly important to ensure that non-powered movers are catered for in the layout of the town centre. **Proposal CC3** identifies a number of measures that seek to improve the pedestrian / cycling environment of the town centre thereby encouraging greater access by these modes of transport. An emphasis is placed on establishing safe pedestrian links through the town centre area as at present the connections tend to terminate once the car parks are reached and there is no provision made for when the shopping centre is closed.

Special attention also needs to be paid to Forum Way where pedestrians currently ignore the subway provided and persist in crossing the busy highway.



New Superstore at Eastern End of Manor Walks, Cramlington Town Centre

11 *See Chapter 7, Policy M9.*

12 *See also Chapter 7, Sub-section 7.2.2.*

13 *See also Chapter 4, various sections, and Chapter 10, Sub-section 10.2.4.*

Proposal **CC 3** — *ACCESS ON FOOT, BICYCLE ETC.*

The current provision made for pedestrians and cyclists within the town centre will be enhanced, in line with Policy M2, by seeking the implementation of the following measures:

a **The creation of a safe east-west footpath link connecting through from the site of the relocated railway station, proposed within Policy M4, with Cramlington village, with particular attention paid to the route taken through the car parks when the shopping centre is closed, and also applying Proposal CC4 below;**

b **The creation of a safe north-south footpath link connecting the proposed Northern Expansion Site north of the line reserved for the East-West Link Road to the Whitelea estates with particular attention paid to the crossing of Forum Way;**

c **The provision of a cycleway in association with (a) thereby establishing a cycle link between the proposed railway station site and the western entrance to the Manor Walks shopping centre;**

d **The provision of secure cycle parking facilities at the library, the town square and the eastern end of Manor Walks, in locations that are visually prominent and convenient, in line with Policy M3; and**

e **The introduction of traffic calming measures, in line with Policy M6, to reduce the speed of cars within the car park areas.**

Proposal **CC 4** — *ACCESS TO RAILWAY STATION SITE*

Development will not be permitted which would preclude convenient access to the alternative railway station site, safeguarded under Policy M4, for pedestrians, cyclists or related groups, or for buses, or which would prevent suitable vehicle parking arrangements relating to the station.

RAIL FACILITIES

In spite of being on the main East Coast railway line connecting London and Edinburgh, passenger trains stopping at Cramlington are relatively infrequent local services providing links with Morpeth and Newcastle. The exact frequency, though higher than 30 years ago, has declined in recent years. The station facilities themselves have likewise suffered, with most of the original buildings demolished and replaced with perspex shelters and there are no ticket or information facilities. Policy M4, in the Movement Chapter, seeks the retention and improvement of local rail services in Cramlington.

The present station site is somewhat removed, in terms of pedestrian links, from the central area of the town and hence the main public transport connections to other parts of the town. It is also sited in a cutting and obscured from view by a road bridge. The overall impression is one of remoteness and isolation, deterring passenger use and attracting vandalism.

An independent feasibility study was undertaken in early 1994, to consider the future siting of the station. The study examined five possible options, (including retention of the existing site), but finally recommended relocation to Westmorland Way.

An alternative station site, based on the above findings, is therefore safeguarded under Policy M4 in the Movement Chapter.

Proposal CC4 seeks to ensure that no development occurs which would block good pedestrian, cyclist and bus access to the new station site. It is also important to ensure that parking close to the station would be possible.

Proposal **CC 5** — *BUS RELATED FACILITIES*

The facilities within the town centre for travelling by public bus will be enhanced, in line with Policy M5, by seeking the implementation of the following measures:

a The provision of sufficient shelters and travel information at the two main bus stop areas on Forum Way and Dudley Lane whilst ensuring where possible that buses halting to pick up or drop passengers are off the highway;

b The retention and extension, if appropriate, of a bus lay-by in front of the hypermarket for use by the town mini-bus services;

c The safeguarding of a mini-bus parking area within the town centre car parks to allow drivers to wait between service runs.

Proposal **CC 6** — *ENVIRONMENT OF STATION ROAD*

The possibility of enhancing the residential environment of Station Road will be fully investigated on completion of the western stretch of the East-West Link Road. Measures to be considered between the two town centre access points "CCy" and "CCz", on the Proposals Map will include:

a The creation of an access only link, in line with Policy M6;

b The provision of a bus-only route, in line with Policy M5; and

c The introduction of pedestrianisation either entirely or partially.

BUSES

All bus services operating in the town stop in Forum Way and Dudley Lane. Any improvements to the latter would seek better pedestrian crossing facilities. Additionally, the town mini-bus services move through the western car park to a bus lay-by in front of the hypermarket. **Proposal CC5** identifies measures that seek to enhance the operation of these facilities particularly in terms of improving the level of travel information available to prospective passengers.

STATION ROAD AND THE EAST-WEST LINK ROAD

Station Road to the north of the town centre is essentially a residential street. However, as it provides a cross-town route linking the Spine Road and the major industrial estates and acts as a main access point to the town centre car parks, the level of traffic using the street far exceeds that normally associated with a residential area. The completion of the East-West Link Road,[14] which will be funded via proposals within Proposal CC2 above, will however vastly reduce the traffic flows on Station Road. **Proposal CC6** identifies those measures that will be fully investigated to enhance the residential environment of part of Station Road, as indicated.[15] Full consultation will take place with all interested parties on the preferred option once new road, (or sections of it), open and the reduced levels of traffic on the residential road are ascertained.

14 *See Chapter 7, Policy M9.*

15 *See also Chapter 7, Sub-sections 7.2.1 (on Footpaths), 7.2.2 (on Cycle Routes) and 7.2.4 and 7.5.3 (on Traffic Calming).*

Proposal ***CC 7*** *OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENTS*

Environmental enhancements and improvements will be undertaken as opportunities arise, in line with Policy E19, with particular emphasis placed on continuing the implementation of landscaping schemes within the open space fringe to the town centre, within both existing and proposed car parks, along Forum Way and on the land severed by the proposed East-West Link Road.

8.2.3 **Environmental Improvements**

Proposal CC7 indicates that wherever possible, landscaping and planting schemes will be introduced in order to soften the impact of new developments. This will relate in particular to the open space fringe round the town centre, the large expanses of car parking and to the rather bleak Forum Way. Some work is now underway in this area.

A significant tree belt will also be planted on the land severed by the proposed East-West Link Road as part of the road proposal. This will help to minimise the visual intrusion of the new road to residents of Station Road and to enhance the corridor to road users. It is anticipated that this landscaping will be undertaken some years in advance of the road construction in common with other schemes throughout Northumberland.

9. Blyth Town Centre

9.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter has demonstrated that, even where a town centre has been entirely planned from the start, as Cramlington has, problems and constraints can nevertheless accumulate over the years to the extent that a partial rethink is required. It has shown that, although the land set aside for the town centre was thought to be sufficient for the purposes of the projected population, this may prove not to be the case due mainly to to unforeseen developments in retailing, leisure activities and other factors.

Blyth town centre, on the other hand, has evolved over the period of the town's substantial history, with no "end population" in mind, but simply to serve the population of the town as it has stood at a particular time. As with most towns that have grown in this way, expanding town centre functions have simply spread out to occupy houses and other buildings close to the town centre with redevelopment occurring where necessary or where the opportunity arises. More recently, the successful planning of the town centre, in its role as the main service centre for its catchment population, has relied on making the best use of opportunities available and seeking to minimise problems.

9.1.1 Evolution and Recent Planning of the Town Centre

The central focus of Blyth town centre was originally close to the Quayside.[1] Blyth was divided from Cowpen by a stream known as "The Gut" which was eventually bridged. Cowpen had had its own, separate centre which became focused on the railway station at Regent Street.

Needless to say, the two centres gradually migrated towards each other and eventually merged but the feeling of a town centre without a strong single core persisted well into the latter part of the twentieth century. Town centre functions continued to follow a linear pattern stretching along Bridge Street, Waterloo Road and Regent Street, the very streets that bore the bulk of increasing through traffic, including heavy goods vehicles.

The Market Place, itself a focus of activity, was severely constrained. There were a number of derelict sites and buildings and the general environment left much to be desired. Parking problems were becoming acute.

Faced with this situation, the planning of Blyth Town Centre took priority and it was the first area within the



St Mary's Green

1 *See also Chapter 16 below.*

new District of Blyth Valley to be the subject of a comprehensive Local Plan.

The single most important opportunity that presented itself to planners was in fact the closure of the railway station and associated lines during the 1960's. The land freed as a result ran around the top of the town centre. First of all, this allowed the construction of one of the new generation of large supermarkets with its own car park, off Regent Street. Land to the west of this eventually became the site of the main health centre for the town and the Community Hospital. To the east, the line of the railway which ran from the station to the Port of Blyth, became the route of the Inner Relief Road.

The last of these allowed a substantial area of the town centre to be freed of much of its traffic. This in turn enabled the town centre to be planned much more positively for the shopper or other service user - and particularly for those on foot. A Pedestrian Priority Area was created. The focus chosen for this town centre unification process was the market place. Selective demolition of mostly disused buildings enabled an enlarged "Market Square" to be created.

Having achieved a unified, pedestrian friendly centre by the latter part of the 1980's the main task remaining was to gain a fuller representation of high street shopping names and secure for the town, a modern, covered shopping area. Both these aims were achieved by vigorously promoting a redevelopment scheme east of the Market Square through land assembly and the securing of interest from the private development sector. The resulting Keel Row Centre provides a mall between the Market Square and the bus station.

Other success stories of the past few years have been the provision of considerable off-street parking and the securing of the construction of purpose-built office accommodation, (the latter at Freehold Street).

9.1.2 **The Position Today**

The attraction that Blyth town centre now represents, following the changes outlined above, is finally being recognised. Blyth as a whole is gradually being seen as a more attractive place to live and visit.

Blyth town centre is the largest single shopping area in Northumberland, now with in excess of 200,000 square feet net of retail floorspace plus the thriving street market.

It is also an office centre with most such premises focused in the Stanley Street / Bridge Street / Freehold Street area. These commercial activities combined with such facilities as the community hospital, the bus station and the cinema, mean that Blyth town centre is visited for many different reasons.

In spite of the successes described above, there is a need for Blyth to maintain its position - to remain vital and viable - throughout the Plan period. In view of the existence of expanding facilities elsewhere, including regional facilities within the Tyneside conurbation, as well as those at nearby Cramlington, this may involve some further expansion of services within the town centre, (where no further major investments are planned in the near future), in addition to preserving and enhancing those existing already.

9.1.3 **The Way Forward**

The emphasis in this Plan period will be to consolidate the service role of Blyth town centre while undertaking small scale improvements to, among other things, the present parking and access arrangements.

Three policies in particular, from the topic related chapters of this Local Plan, will play a key role in the achievement of these aims. They relate to:

- the application of design guidance to improve the form and appearance of **shop fronts** thereby influencing the character and quality of the shopping environment;[2]
- the adoption of a general **presumption against** granting planning permission for **large scale retailing** in locations **beyond the easy reach of the town centre** so as to minimise potential threats to its vitality and viability;[3]
- an emphasis on **traffic management** as a way of minimising problems of traffic flow around the town centre, by redirecting traffic bound for the town centre to using certain existing roads, (with some improvements), redesignated as primary and secondary feeder roads, thereby providing direct access to the main town centre car parks.[4]

This chapter identifies several other measures which will be introduced within the Plan period in order to maximise and broaden the appeal of Blyth town centre. These include:

- imposing **controls on the location of non-retail outlets**;
- undertaking further **environmental improvements**;
- identifying an area into which **town centre services** could **expand** in the longer term;
- encouraging **freer pedestrian movement**;
- addressing the **future car parking needs** of the centre;

The Quayside area and its planned regeneration also has a part to play in seeing the town centre's role as the principal commercial centre in Northumberland retained.[5]

2 *See Chapter 1, Sub-section 1.7.2.*

3 *See Chapter 4, Section 4.8.*

4 *See Chapter 7, Sub-section 7.5.3.*

5 *This area is the subject of Chapter 16.*

TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT

Within this framework, it is important that the routine day-to-day operations of the town centre are undertaken and managed in a way that will not undermine policy objectives for the area. Litter, pavements cluttered with uncoordinated street furniture and opportunities for car crime are just some of the factors that can discourage people from making use of a centre. The Local Authority will therefore, throughout the Plan period, strive to bring together all the interested parties so as to provide an integrated approach to the effective running of the centre. This will be based on dialogue between all the agencies involved with the possibility of a degree of financial co-ordination.

9.2 A POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR SHOPPING, COMMERCE AND HOUSING

As in the other area specific chapters of this Written Statement, this chapter sets out a number of specific proposals which cross refer back to the policy framework set out in Chapters 1 to 7. In the case of Blyth town centre, the complexities of the area mean that it is first necessary to set out an intermediate policy framework for general distribution of retailing, commerce and other uses.

Blyth Town Centre has long been looked at for planning purposes, in terms of a core "Central Shopping Area" and a peripheral "Secondary Commercial Area". It is appropriate to continue this two tiered way of looking at activities in the town centre, although there is a case for defining afresh the areas themselves. This inevitably has implications on housing and it is necessary to consider carefully the effects of its displacement by shopping and commerce. Conversely, a positive policy for housing in the town centre is devised in the form of "Living over the Shop".

9.2.1 The Central Shopping Area

The Central Shopping Area is defined as part of Policy C14 in Chapter 4 and shown on the Proposals Map. It comprises three elements as follows:

a A significant focal point formed around the **Market Square**;

b A concentration of **small shops and offices** operated by local businesses in the largely car-free environment of the **Commercial Road / Bowes Street** area and the **Havelock Street / Parsons Street** area; and

c Four important and strategically located customer attractors in the form of two major free-standing **supermarkets**, a large **department store** and the 20 unit **Keel Row** Shopping Centre.

It is important to make strong efforts to keep a concentration of shops in town centres.[6] One element of this is the presumption against out of town shopping.[7] The other element is maintaining and strengthening retailing as the dominant element in a defined core area.

The Community Facilities Chapter pointed out that any major expansion of shopping in Blyth town centre would almost certainly have to rely on further redevelopment or refurbishment.[8] This would mean a significant investment and is unlikely to happen in the foreseeable future.[9] This lack of scope for new retail developments means that it is necessary to define carefully the Central Shopping Area, within which controls have to be placed on those uses which will be permitted.

Policy B1 sets the planning framework for development proposals within the Central Shopping Area. Inside the defined area, non-retail uses such as banks, building societies, amusement arcades and betting shops will be controlled by the application of a Retail Frontage Policy. The main reason for needing to control the non-retail uses is that they fail to stimulate passing trade in the manner of a conventional shop and tend to have facades which do not consist of traditional shop windows with displays.

Blyth town centre is characterised by the possibility of taking any of several different routes on foot through the shopping area in order to reach the key attractors identified above, it is important that stretches of street are not sterilised by the grouping of non-retail uses and pedestrian movement prejudiced.[10]

It is appreciated however that such uses do require central locations so, rather than excluding them all together, Policy B1 seeks to spread them throughout the Central Shopping Area and, where appropriate, beyond. Users of the town centre will therefore have easy access to all the facilities associated with such an area but equally "dead frontage" areas will be avoided and the visual interests of the streets retained.[11]

6 *Planners in this country have long been mindful of the situation in the United States where, retailers abandoned town centres in favour of suburban locations.*

7 *See also Chapter 4, Section 4.8.*

8 *See Chapter 4, Sub-section 4.8.*

9 *See also Proposal BP2 below.*

10 *Such a problem is not apparent in Cramlington, for instance, where the key attractors are located along a single linear walkway with the pedestrian offered no alternative route.*

11 *See also Policies E20 on the visual interest of shop fronts.*



Market Square

RETAIL FRONTAGE POLICY

The retail frontage policy itself takes a tiered approach. **B1 (i)** excludes all non retail uses from the key frontage along Market Street.[12] [13]

The next most important area to retain in retail use is considered to be the new covered link through from the Market Square to the Bus Station - i.e. the ground floor of Keel Row Shopping Centre. **B1 (ii)** looks for at least a 90 per cent retention of retail use there, in floorspace terms

B1 (iii) defines a number of separate "Principal Shopping Blocks". These are coherent areas of the town centre in terms of its functioning and the townscape. Within these areas, it will be sought that at least 80 per cent of the frontage of each block remains in retail use.[14] Where vacancy rates on a particular frontage are high and long term, there may be a case for a slight relaxation of the Policy. However each such case will be examined in the light of local factors and the proposal on the table.

B1 (iv) concentrates on the two large supermarket stores. It would be difficult to incorporate these into the Principal Shopping Blocks. Geographically speaking, these stores are on the periphery of The Central Shopping Area. Their movement out of the retail arena would therefore not leave major holes in the shopping streets that people move along. However, the introduction of non-retail uses into these units will not be encouraged unless their prolonged vacancy is considered to be causing a negative effect on the vitality and viability of the town centre, which could be improved by the building coming into use for non-retail purposes.[15]

B1 (v) looks at those situations within the Central Shopping Area, where non-retail uses can be allowed. Here, it will be the aim to retain or have provided, shop style window displays.[16]

12 *See also Policy B2 below, on the Market Square.*

13 *A separate policy on hot food takeaways is contained in the Community Facilities Chapter - see Sub-section 4.13.*

14 *One of the blocks contains the town's only large department store. It is a unique facility within the town centre, which, like the two large supermarkets, acts as an important customer attractor. It faces onto the Market Square. Although it is not possible through planning means to prevent its closure, it is possible to refuse non retail uses along most of its ground floor frontage. This should discourage applications for non retail use in the whole building.*

15 *The existing supermarkets make an important contribution towards the totality of Blyth Town Centre's retail floorspace. They represent major shopper attractors that generate pedestrian circulation and movement. In present circumstances, their disappearance as supermarkets would seriously reduce convenience shopping floorspace in the town centre of Blyth, possibly threatening its vitality and viability; but it should be recognised that other supermarkets could be established or retail trends could change and it would be unreasonable to try to retain them specifically as supermarkets; it would be sufficient to aim that they stay in retail use.*

Policy ***B 1*** — *RETAIL FRONTAGE CONTROL POLICY*

Within the Central Shopping Area for Blyth Town Centre defined in Policy C14, the extent and location of non-retail uses, which is taken to mean uses not falling within Class A1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order, 1987, will be controlled by applying a Retail Frontage Control Policy, as follows and as shown on the Proposals Map:

i **All non-retail uses will be excluded from Market Street;**

ii **Within the ground floor of Keel Row, as defined on the Proposals Map and listed at Appendix XXV, the proportion of floorspace in non-retail use will not be permitted to exceed ten per cent of the net retail floorspace;**

iii **Principal Shopping Blocks are defined as shown on the Proposals Map and listed in Appendix XXV. Within each of these, the proportion of ground floor frontage in non-retail use will not be permitted to exceed twenty per cent of the block's total ground floor frontage, unless the vacancy rate in any individual block exceeds twenty per cent. In such cases, consideration will be given to increasing the permitted proportion of ground floor frontage in non-retail use by a further ten per cent;**

iv **Substantial non-retail uses in the two free-standing stores on Bowes Street and Regent Street, shown on the Proposals Map will not be permitted unless it is considered that prolonged vacancy of the units would have a greater adverse effect on the vitality and viability of the town centre than would their occupation by a non-retail use;**

v **It will be ensured that, in cases where a change of use, to non-retail use is permitted, a window display is retained or provided.**

Policy ***B 2*** — *THE MARKET SQUARE*

The Market Square, defined by Market Street, Church Street, Regent Street and Waterloo Road will be retained as an open space, with no commercial redevelopment. Its appearance and functional use on non-market days will be enhanced through the implementation of a programme of soft and hard landscaping measures, in accordance with Policy E19, and access restrictions, without prejudice to the operation of the market.

THE MARKET SQUARE

The Market Square is the open space at the heart of the town centre with the market providing a lively, if congested, focus of activity for two or three days of the week. The creation of the enlarged Market Square has been mentioned already. This has involved its complete repaving and linkage with the pedestrianised area of Regent Street. Planting boxes and seating areas have been inserted whilst the market stalls are now removed on non-market days.

Policy B2 recognises that the Market Square represents an important attraction for Blyth town centre that needs to be retained and, where possible, improved in order to further its appeal. Particular emphasis will be placed on implementing projects that enhance the open square on non-market days but do not impede the operation of the full market on Fridays and Saturdays. This includes a reassessment of the current landscaping, seating and access arrangements.

16 *See also the policy on the design of shop fronts, (Chapter 1, Policy E20).*

9.2.2 **The Secondary Commercial Area**

As mentioned above, the town centre functions on a wider base than the Central Shopping Area defined in Policy B1. A secondary area of commercial activity extends east along Waterloo Road and Bondicar Terrace; south to include Croft Road and Union Street; west along Bridge Street and Stanley Street; and north to take in King Street and Station Street. The uses found in this area are mixed. They include:

1. Offices in the category of **Professional and Financial Services.**[17] These include the solicitors' and financial advisors' offices in Stanley Street;
2. Other offices - in the category of **Business** Offices.[18] An example would be Bridge House, Bridge Street;
3. **Small purpose-built factory units** in Burt Street;
4. **Surgeries** of vets, doctors and dentists etc. (e.g. in Beaconsfield Street);
5. **Hotels and guesthouses**.

Policy B3 firstly defines the Secondary Commercial Area. The area defined abuts the Quayside area and it is recognised that there will be a continuity between them.

In defining the Secondary Commercial Area it is recognised that there are reasons behind the physical clustering together of the services listed above - for instance because of the need for the public to have easy access to the professional and financial services. There is therefore a need to allow for their possible expansion within the area where many of them are currently located; otherwise there is a danger of parts of the business economy stagnating within the town centre and choosing to move elsewhere.

There is also a policy to attract visitors to central Blyth and scope should be allowed for the further conversion of residential properties to visitor accommodation.[19]

B3 (i) states that the area will be an exception to the criteria applied to residential areas in the Mixed Use policy [20] The aim is to identify a sufficiently extensive area of properties to allow for anticipated expansion of these types of function but, at the same time, trying to spread their impact sufficiently widely so that they do not have an unacceptable effect on areas which have previously been predominantly residential.

B3 (ii) therefore sets a compromise whereby it will be acceptable, within the defined Secondary Commercial Area, to move away from predominantly residential towards a mixed character. However, in the area broadly south of Carlton Street and east of Union Street, where residential is the predominant use, proposals will be assessed very carefully in relation to any adverse effects on the residential amenity of the area. Excess on street parking will also need to be avoided.

9.2.3 **Living Over The Shop**

Housing in and adjoining the town centre plays a valuable part in the local housing market. It provides a variety of choice in house type, price and tenancy, conveniently situated for shops, services and employment. Unfortunately, the Policies above inevitably mean that more housing units will be displaced from in or close to the town centre. In addition, the scope for new housing within the town centre area is limited as preference has to be given to the land requirements of other activities that demand central locations.

Opportunities to convert the upper floors of existing commercial premises however do exist. These are often empty and underused by existing owners largely because they are unwilling to jeopardise the value of their property by granting residential tenancies which invariably give security of tenure to the tenant and tie the upper floors to residential use.

The 1988 Housing Act granted registered housing associations new powers to own part-commercial property. As these associations are companies, this means that they can lease surplus upper floor accommodation from the owner using a business tenure which guarantees vacant possession on a specific date.

Once such a fixed-term lease (covering at least five years) is entered into, the housing association carries out the necessary renovation works, (including the provision of separate access), and lets the completed flats to those on its waiting list using Shorthold Tenancies.[21]

17 *Use Class A3 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987. See also Chapter 6, Sub-section 6.4.1.*

18 *Use Class B1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987. See also Chapter 6, Sub-section 6.4.2.*

19 *See Policy L1 (ii) in Chapter 5.*

20 *Policy W8 in Chapter 6.*

21 *The housing association is also then responsible for all aspects of the residential management, including rent collection, repairs and re-housing at the end of the term. In return, the owner receives the net rental income after deduction of management and maintenance costs. The Local Housing Authority may be involved where renovation grants or Housing Association Grants (HAG) are required to fund the renovation works.*

Policy ***B 3*** — *SECONDARY COMMERCIAL AREA*

A Secondary Commercial Area for Blyth Town Centre is defined, as shown on the Proposals Map. Within this area:

i Changes of use to suitable business purposes, particularly those falling into Classes A2, C1, D1 and D2 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, will be permitted to a level beyond that which would normally be permitted in a residential area under criteria set out in Policy W8;

ii Where, within this area, a street or part thereof is predominantly residential in character, proposals falling within the Uses defined in (i) above, or other suitable uses will be permitted, even if the overall effect is to replace the residential character with a more mixed use character. However applications will be assessed carefully in terms of any negative effects on access, on street parking, and residential amenity.

Policy ***B 4*** — *LIVING OVER THE SHOP*

The provision of housing in the underused upper floors of commercial properties throughout the town centre will be encouraged, taking into account the aims of policy H14, and subject to environmental safeguards and traffic considerations. Where there are difficulties providing the level of off street car parking that would normally be required for residential properties of the type proposed, the possibility will be investigated of counting towards necessary provision, nearby off street car parking spaces.

The operation of such a system could provide a valuable contribution towards meeting affordable housing needs in Blyth.[22]

Policy B4 seeks to encourage the greater use of these upper floors for residential use.

In order to give as much encouragement as possible to this process, it will be investigated to what extent it may be possible to relax control criteria that are normally applied when new residential units are created. In particular, the existence of off-street car parks, (for shoppers and others), close to many of the properties with "living over the shop" potential, provides an opportunity to relax off-street parking space criteria.

22 *See Section 3.4 within the Housing Chapter.*

9.3 THE PROPOSALS

In Blyth town centre, as elsewhere, there are particular sites and buildings where existing or potential problems or opportunities call for a specific proposal, within the policy framework set out above and elsewhere in the Local Plan,.

9.3.1 Development Site Adjacent to Inner Relief Road

Within the secondary commercial area, the site of the former Borough Council offices in Seaforth Street is acting as a temporary parking overflow for the Keel Row car parks.

Proposal BP1 acknowledges the accessibility of this site by motor vehicle in relation to the main access roads into and around the town centre.[23] The land is allocated for a development related to the motor industry or for a use involving the sale the sale of bulky goods of the type which would generally necessitate collection by motor vehicle. Also acceptable would be Class A1 retail or ancillary use, if suitably integrated, physically and functionally with Keel Row or some other part of the Central Shopping Area

9.3.2 Area for Possible Expansion of Town Centre Uses

The Chapter on Community facilities referred to the possibility that, as the Plan period progresses, there is more than an outside possibility that there will be renewed pressure for expansion within retail market and, if this is the case, it would be desirable for all or most of this to be accommodated at the existing town centres. There is a virtual absence of undeveloped land at Blyth town centre, (unless the large areas of car parking are counted as such). The site referred to in Proposal BP1, above, is about the only site where development is being actively encouraged.

Proposal BP2 is based upon the assumption that there will be a need to absorb a significant expansion of retail facilities on a single site.[24] It therefore looks for the best way in which such an expansion could slot into the existing town centre, bringing with it the maximum possible net benefit for town centre users.

Land to the north and east of the Keel Row Shopping Centre, bounded on its other sides by the Inner Relief Road and the rear of properties on Bridge Street is the area identified. Currently the land is occupied by a gasholder and associated workings; the large property in Rink Street formerly a cinema and currently a bingo hall; a fine terrace of three storey properties forming part of the Heritage Conservation Area;[25] and the bus station and its associated depot.

The advantages of this site over other parts of the town centre for shopping and associated expansion are:

a It adjoins Keel Row shopping centre, the bus station and many other town centre facilities;
b Any car parking associated with it could be directly accessed from the Primary Town Centre Access Route;[26]
c It provides an opportunity to bridge the gap between two Conservation Areas, by incorporating buildings of sympathetic design;
d Its redevelopment in total or in part would afford the opportunity for an improvement to the bus station facility.

Clearly, at present, the whole area is in use. It must be stressed that the proposal is intended for the longer term and it is not the intention in any way to blight the current uses.

From the present perspective, it is nevertheless necessary to state in the Policy that the bus station facility must be retained at or close to its current location, possibly in a modified form. Those properties in Bridge Street that are within the Conservation Area will also be retained. Indeed this together with the fact that the defined area lies between the existing retail hub of the town centre and the Quayside, (where regeneration is sought), is significant in terms of the eventual form of development that may be sought.

The other main requirements will be that any new development is well linked with the existing fabric of the town centre for pedestrians and the other groups identified in Policy M2 and includes sufficient car parking space to accommodate generated traffic. This latter point is particularly pertinent in view of the parking demands currently being witnessed in the town centre.[27]

As far as acceptable uses are concerned, **BP2 (a)** states the main aim, which is to facilitate retail expansion if it is needed. **BP2 (b)** makes allowance for other uses appropriate to the town centre, including certain types of commercial leisure related operation, on part of the site either as part of an overall redevelopment scheme or separately. If the latter applies, this should not prejudice the possibility of retail expansion contiguous with the existing town centre.

23 *See also Chapter 7, Policy M6 on Traffic Management.*

24 *Retail trends are so unpredictable that, even if new capacity is called for, it cannot be automatically assumed that the market will require this to be met in the form of a major addition to floorspace. Instead, for instance, incremental additions to existing floorspace may be the future way; or home shopping may finally take off. However, the Local Plan must take account of the widest possible range of scenarios. See also Chapter 4, Sub-section 4.8.2.*

25 *See Chapter 1, Sub-section 1.6.1.*

26 *See Policy M6.*

27 *See Proposal BP4, below.*

Proposal ***BP 1*** *DEVELOPMENT SITE ADJACENT TO INNER RELIEF ROAD*

The site of the former Borough Council offices in Seaforth Street, is allocated for a car show room, a petrol filling station or Class A1 retail use. In the case of Class A1 uses permission will only be granted if the retail use sells bulky goods necessitating collection by motor vehicle or if the use is physically and functionally connected with uses within Keel Row or other parts of the Central Shopping Area.

Proposal ***BP 2*** *AREA FOR POSSIBLE EXPANSION OF TOWN CENTRE USES*

Within the area bounded by Bridge Street, Union Street and the Inner Relief Road, as defined on the Proposals Map, the expansion of town centre activities will be favoured particularly in the longer term. This will involve:

a Redevelopment, in part or as a whole for retail purposes;

b Other activities appropriate to the town centre location, particularly commercial or leisure related uses, although permission would not be granted for these uses prior to retail development, if they were to occupy sites which would preclude the possibility of subsequent retail development being successfully integrated, physically and functionally, with Keel Row or other adjoining part of the Central Shopping Area and/or the Bus Station;

The above may involve the redevelopment of the bus station site but will be subject to the retention of appropriate provision for the bus station to continue its operation.

Any redevelopment will retain those properties in Bridge Street that lie within the Heritage Conservation Area and facilitate the relocation of the existing pumping station if affected

Any expansion of town centre activities into this area should be well linked with the existing shopping centre for pedestrians and related groups and will include sufficient car parking spaces to accommodate generated traffic.

9.3.3 **Traffic Circulation and Management**

Up until now, there has been a long term proposal to construct a continuation of the Inner Relief Road, which would skirt around the north and west of the town centre between Maddison Street and Thoroton Street. The Movement Chapter sets out a number of criteria against which new road proposals within the built-up areas will be assessed.[28] In simple terms, roads which involve land take outside the existing highways will not be favoured if the environmental gains are considered to be outweighed by the environmental costs. The Maddison Street / Thoroton Street link is not considered to meet this requirement and has been dropped as a Local Plan proposal. In particular, the diversion of traffic along Maddison Street would considerably reduce the environmental quality for residents on that street.

This sub-section identifies specific traffic management measures that will, together with the implementation of Policy M6 establishing a series of preferred approach roads, help remedy many of the access problems in Blyth town centre.

Proposal BP3 seeks the implementation of small-scale initiatives within the existing Pedestrian Priority Area, (redefined on the Proposals Map). These are intended further to deter motorists from entering the area of restricted access. They will include the use of traffic calming methods to slow traffic flows, the placing of one way and/or no waiting restrictions as deemed appropriate,

28 *See Chapter 7, Sub-section 7.5.6.*

consideration of extending the priority area into Regent Street and the imposition of tighter controls as to when service vehicles can enter the area.[29]

BP3 (a) takes account of the fact that these initiatives will potentially reduce the level of access currently permitted to disabled drivers who park within the Pedestrian Priority Area. In order not to disadvantage this group and others with restricted mobility, the provision of taxi ranks and parking bays specifically for disabled badge holders will be investigated in relation to the retail attraction of the two food supermarkets and the department store. Such provision is already made in the Keel Row Centre car park.

BP3 (b) aims to retain service access in a sensible way. By restricting the hours during which vehicles can enter the pedestrian priority area, the servicing arrangements of individual shops is likely to become concentrated into short periods of time at the start and end of each working day. For this reason, the back lanes are to be regarded as the principal service areas.

In order to ease circulation, traffic flow in these back streets is already one way. However in many instances the lanes are not wide enough to allow a medium-sized commercial vehicle to enter and park for unloading purposes and still allow a similar sized vehicle to pass by. The minimum dimensions needed between the face of the buildings to accommodate such an arrangement is 5.5 metres. Little change can be anticipated in the short term but there may be scope in future for new developments or refurbishment schemes to incorporate appropriate increases the width of back lanes.

Traffic circulation problems are not restricted to the Pedestrian Priority Area. The Movement chapter [30] illustrated the need to examine the traffic priorities at the junction of the Inner Relief Road and Regent Street. The intention of this would be to direct the bulk of traffic onto the Inner Relief Road, a small proportion to Station Street car park via Maddison Street and only delivery vehicles onto Regent Street South.

9.3.4 **Car Parking Provision**

Proposal BP4 deals with the topic of car parking within the town centre.[31] In the period of implementation of the Blyth Town Centre Local Plan total of 560 additional off street car parking spaces were provided at various locations throughout the town centre including the Keel Row (338 spaces) and Freehold Street (130 spaces). It is considered that the overall level of parking provision in the town centre is about right, although the gap between the supply and demand for spaces remains a narrow one. (Some temporary provision on the former Council offices site is proposed for removal - see Proposal BP1). Recent traffic surveys illustrate that problems remain in terms of directing vehicles successfully towards the off street parking spaces. It is hoped that the traffic management proposals in Policy M6 will assist considerably in this process.

As with Cramlington town centre, a net loss in car parking provision should be avoided in the present context.[32] This could change [33] and the Proposal is therefore simply to ensure that development does not result in a net change in the level of provision of spaces that would leave standards and demands prevailing at the time not being fully met.

BP4 (a) recognises that greater emphasis will have to be placed on ensuring that the most efficient use is made of available spaces.

A particular problem identified by the surveys is that certain residential streets around the town centre - particularly to the south - are still regularly used for parking by visitors to the town centre albeit less so than in the past. **BP4 (b)** aims to protect these streets by encouraging small scale traffic calming / management measures.

BP4 (c) aims to take advantage of the scope within the existing car park areas to re-examine the landscaping provision particularly in the larger open areas where there is little cover from the wind and other elements. Any measures would have to take account of potential security problems of additional tree and shrub cover.[34]

9.3.5 **Public Transport**

All bus services in Blyth terminate at Blyth Bus Station, the busiest in Northumberland. For this reason, the bus stances spill over onto the public highway with two laybys in Bridge Street. This causes localised traffic congestion and some road safety problems particularly when buses need to double park to pick up or drop passengers.

Proposal BP5 seeks to keep the bus station as accessible as it already is for pedestrians but acknowledges that some rationalisation is required, especially from the point of view of bus access and its general layout. Improvements would possibly be in association with the wider redevelopment of the area.[35]

29 *See also Policy M7.*

30 *See Chapter 7, Sub-section 7.5.3.*

31 *See also Chapter 7, Policy M8.*

32 *In this present context, the supply of free spaces is regarded as an attraction of the centre.*

33 *For example, markedly improved public transport could reduce the numbers of cars entering the town centre.*

34 *See also Chapter 1, Section 1.3.*

35 *See Proposal BP2 above.*

Proposal **BP 3** — *TRAFFIC CIRCULATION AND MANAGEMENT*

The possibility will be investigated of introducing traffic regulatory initiatives within the Pedestrian Priority Area defined on the Proposals Map, in order to enhance the pedestrian environment and minimise the potential conflict with vehicles. Within this overall intent it will be sought to retain vehicle access opportunities as follows:

a To meet the parking needs of town centre users of restricted mobility, through the provision of taxi ranks and parking bays specifically for "disabled badge holders" at locations on the edge of the Pedestrian Priority Area and associated with the main retail attractions and other town centre facilities; and

b To meet the servicing needs of the retail outlets within the Pedestrian Priority Area. Additionally, any new development having access onto rear service lanes behind Bowes Street and Market Street will only be permitted if it allows for the back lanes to be retained at, or widened to 5.5 metres, as appropriate, between the face of buildings.

Proposal **BP 4** — *CAR PARKING PROVISION*

In relation to car park provision within Blyth town centre, applications will be determined for development so as to safeguard the existing car park provision to the extent that the supply of spaces continues to meet standards and demands, with existing car parks being enhanced, in line with Policy M8, by:

a Regulating the use of parking spaces by time restrictions in order to ensure the availability of short-term parking for shoppers and others in the most central locations;

b Protecting the residential areas around the town centre from extraneous parking by users of town centre facilities, including traffic calming / management measures; and

c Seeking the implementation of landscaping schemes, in line with Policy E6, that enhance and soften the car park areas whilst retaining good visibility in the interests of security.

Proposal **BP 5** — *PUBLIC TRANSPORT*

Permission will not be granted for development that would displace the current bus station facilities within Blyth town centre to a location that is less accessible for pedestrians using town centre facilities. Improvements will be sought to the access arrangements for buses, plus the layout and landscaping, as considered appropriate, possibly in association with the implementation of Proposal BP2.

10. North-East Cramlington

10.1 INTRODUCTION

The North-East (residential) sector of Cramlington marks the second phase in the expansion of the new town following on from the initial development of the South East sector.[1] Over the last two decades or more, its expansion has progressed gradually north from the town centre with most residential areas now complete.

This development was initially guided by the Cramlington Comprehensive Development Area (CDA) Plans approved in 1963 and 1970 and the subsequent "1974 Agreement" signed in partnership between Blyth Valley Borough Council, Northumberland County Council and the private housebuilders Leech and Bellway.

In the early 1980s, however, a major reorganisation of the land use pattern took place following a review of the planned road layout.[2] As a result, a series of informal policy statements for the sector were agreed by the three partners. They covered issues such as housing, shopping provision and public open space.

These policy statements guided the growth of the sector through the 1980s. The principle that the developers' responsibilities extended to constructing footpath / cycleways, the grading and seeding of public open spaces, the planting of woodland strips outside the highway verge and to the provision of sewers and drainage as appropriate was retained from the 1974 Agreement.

As residential building progressed, it became clear that a significant element of public open space provision, the footpath-cycleway system and community facility construction all remained to be finished. On this basis, a new legal agreement was signed a few years ago with the aim of ensuring the satisfactory completion of the sector, with all works finishing in tandem.

One major land use change has been the decision that there is no requirement for a second High School for Cramlington which means that the future use of the land previously held for this purpose in the North-East Sector needs to be reassessed together with the distribution of other sites within the sector held for educational purposes.[3]

Against this background, this Local Plan details the preferred land use allocations for each remaining parcel of land.



Public House at the Brockwell Centre

1 *See General Development Chapter for explanation on the evolution of Cramlington*

2 *These revisions deleted a number of proposed dual carriageways and grade separated junctions.*

3 *At present, land is also reserved for an additional First School and Middle School. The Education Authority review of future school provision for the town as a whole, (see also the section on Education in the Community Facilities chapter), means that land, reserved in the North-East Sector for a second High School for Cramlington since the approval of the CDA Plans in the early 1970s, is no longer required. Following a detailed re-assessment of the anticipated future demand for school places, the Authority has concluded that the existing Cramlington High School, located in the the South-East Sector of the town, is of sufficient size to cope with the anticipated future school rolls with some displacement to surplus places outside the town.*



Recent Housing, Northburn Green

10.2 THE PROPOSALS

The proposals below treat the area in a comprehensive way. Although the sector is well on its way to being finished, its completion as a true community in its own right is, as the situation stands at present, somewhat more distant. The proposals below are therefore weighted towards providing the missing pieces of the jigsaw, necessary to achieve its transition from a residential suburb of a new town into the community of North-East Cramlington.

10.2.1 Housing

In terms of general housing provision by the private housebuilders, the sector is nearing completion. Policy H6 in the housing chapter above has the aim of ensuring, through phasing policies, that the residential development of the sector or indeed its development as a fully functional community are not abandoned in the face of the opening up of the South-West Sector.

GENERAL HOUSING

Proposal NE1 refers to the remaining important housing development area in the sector, as allocated in Policy H7 (i) in the Housing Chapter.

Land lying between the expansion site for the town centre, a housing estate called Westwood Grange and the Brockwell Centre was in part previously reserved for a high school.The site was originally chosen for school use, (with its large playing field element), because the ground conditions precluded large sections of it from being built upon. With the recent advances in construction methods, it is now considered that buildings can, with certain precautions, be safely accommodated on the western and eastern edges of the land.

Housing is ruled out on the eastern fringe due to access difficulties and the desire to retain this strategic site for community related facilities, (see below). However residential development next to Westwood Grange will help reduce the isolation of this estate from the rest of the sector. The southern part of allocation H7 (i) was part of a site previously reserved for a combination of residential and office development, much of the remainder of which comprises the Cramlington Town Centre Northern Expansion Site. (See Proposal CC2 in the chapter on Cramlington Town Centre).

Special Design Sites

Proposal NE2 recognises the importance, in an area where private builders predominate, of providing a variety of housing in terms of design, layout and density thereby establishing a genuine mixture of occupancy groups. For this reason, a number of sites, each occupying prominent positions on the edges of main roads, footpath / cycleways and major areas of public open space, have been identified many of which are now developed. The features of special design incorporated into these estates do not necessarily preclude the use of standard house designs provided that the estate layout represents a departure from those surrounding or that dwellings of a different style and density are mixed in with them. As explained in the Housing Chapter, self-build development may be an acceptable way of achieving the diversity sought through the special design status.[4]

Land adjacent to Northburn Glade is bounded on two sides by housing estates of semi-detached, two storey dwellings, regard will need to be paid to the layout and design of the housing scheme for this site. Planning permission will only be approved where the layout and aspect of the new proposal takes full account of that of adjoining houses and the topography of the site in relation to them. It should be noted that access is likely to be from Northumbrian Road and not via the existing housing estates. This should help to give the new sites a separate identity.

4 *See Chapter 3, Sub-section 3.6.2.*

Proposal ***NE 1*** *GENERAL HOUSING SITES*

Land allocated for general housing under Policy H7 (i), adjacent to Westwood Grange, shall be developed to include the insertion of a landscape structure in accordance with Proposal NE7 below and the provision of footpath / cycleways as identified in Proposal NE5 below. Vehicular access shall be provided from Yarmouth Drive.

Proposal ***NE 2*** *SPECIAL DESIGN HOUSING SITES*

Special design elements will be sought, in accordance with Proposal H21 (vi), where appropriate. In these cases, the Council will seek development which is distinct from surrounding housing areas. Securing agreement on the form of design will be dependent on negotiation with developers on matters such as layout, density, building heights, materials and fenestration. self-build development may be acceptable as a means of achieving special design. This will include land adjacent to Northburn Glade (H7 ii) where detailed permission will be dependent on the design and layout taking full account of the topography of the site and the layout and aspect of existing surrounding houses.



Recent Housing close to Horton Burn

Proposal ***NE 3*** *AFFORDABLE HOUSING SITES*

The land allocated for housing under Policy H7 (ii) adjacent to Northburn Glade shall have sufficient land set aside for an indicative target of 50 affordable units in line with Policy H14.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Special design housing is intended to differ from general housing primarily by virtue of its design. However, there will also be an aim within the North-East Sector to establish a more representative cross-section of the population thereby enhancing the sense of community mentioned earlier.

This will be achieved by the inclusion of affordable housing, which will contribute towards meeting the considerable need for such provision in Cramlington as a whole, identified in Section 3.4 of the Housing Chapter.

Proposal NE3 again refers to allocation H7(ii), land adjoining Northburn Glade - a site considered ideal for providing an element of affordable housing, mainly because of its closeness to the retail and health facilities at the Brockwell Centre and to the public transport links afforded by Northumbrian Road. An indicative target for the numbers of units to be sought is given in the Proposal. It is envisaged that these would be located on that part of the site closest to the Brockwell Centre.

10.2.2 **Community Facilities Provision**

The Brockwell Centre lies at the heart of the North-East Sector and acts as the main focus for local facilities. A medium sized supermarket facility has been added.[5] Adjacent is a parade of smaller retail units as well as a busy health centre and doctor's surgery, (which draw patients from throughout the town). A public house has been built and the area is well served by segregated public transport links and footpath-cycleways. There is also ample car parking provision.

A number of small sites remain vacant around the Centre. This can give rather a bleak outlook to users of the facilities. The surrounding area also becomes untidy with overgrown grass and wind-blown litter. These factors detract from the Centre and may reduce the propensity of local people to visit it.

Planning consent has already been given to two separate proposals on land to the east of the Centre; one for a nursing home and the other for special needs housing. **Proposal NE4** safeguards the remaining two sites for community uses. It is hoped that all these designations taken together will remove uncertainty that previously existed as to what uses would be acceptable on these sites.

NE4 (a) accepts that as the sector grows both in population size and composition, greater pressures will be placed on the existing health care facilities particularly if there continues to be no hospital provision in the town.

The land immediately to the rear of the Brockwell Centre forms part of the area previously reserved for the Second High School (see above). **NE4 (b)**, however, retains part of the area for educational purposes. The Education Authority consider it prudent to reserve a site for a First School.[6] The reserved area is also capable of accommodating a further Middle School thereby retaining a degree of flexibility in Middle School provision and the possibility of a very long term replacement for Parkside Middle School.[7]

This reserve area represents a relocation from two separate reserve sites, previously held for educational purposes, elsewhere in the sector which have moved to other uses

Should future assessments of Cramlington's educational provision render the relocated reserve site surplus to requirements, as is anticipated, this location next to the Brockwell Centre could be used in the long term to provide sports and/or community related facilities either independently or in association with the existing Brockwell Middle School.

Any buildings erected on this site will be located at the northern end in close proximity to the rear of the existing Centre. This will create a sense of enclosure and will maximise the accessibility for residents of any community facilities, including any that may be available for dual use within the school sites.

5 *This is the type of facility acceptable where there is a shortage of local shopping provision in suburban locations - see Chapter 4, Section 4.8.*

6 *There remains a possibility that the long term forecast of pupil numbers will prove to be on the low side and that a further Church Aided school could be required*

7 *Parkside Middle School may require replacement following an Education Authority review.*

Proposal ***NE 4*** — *BROCKWELL CENTRE: REMAINING PLOTS*

The remaining plots of land next to the Brockwell Centre are identified for:

a An extension to the existing health centre facility, in line with Policy C18 (iv); and

b Educational purposes to accommodate a First School and Middle School in line with Policy C10 (ii); (should this land become surplus later in the Plan period, it will be assessed for its potential for sport or community use, applying Policy C11).

Proposal ***NE 5*** — *FOOTPATH / CYCLEWAYS*

The segregated footpath-cycleway system for the sector will be completed in line with Policy M2, by:

a ensuring that provision is made, by the developers of adjoining housing areas, through conditioning or through Planning Agreement under Policy G11, for the following links, as shown on the Proposals Map, including at grade crossing points where footpath cycleways meet local and estate distributor roads:

- **Horton Drive to Crowhall Lane via Northburn playing fields;**
- **Westwood Grange to A1171;**

b seeking, as resources allow, the construction of the following:

i a safe, at-grade connection across the A192, in line with Policy M2 (iii), to link the North-East Sector of Cramlington with East Hartford and the public rights of way network that provides recreational access to the River Blyth;

ii a new footbridge across the Horton Burn which makes use of the existing weir structure within Horton Park, and is capable to take bicycles, wheelchairs, prams and pushchairs.

10.2.3 **Footpath-Cycleway Network**

With the recent completion of Horton Drive including the bridging of Horton Burn, in conformity with a previous planning consent for housing, the local distributor road network through the sector is now in place. Access roads within each estate will be inserted by the housebuilders as part of the residential development.

The new stretch of highway proposed to serve the affordable housing sites next to the Brockwell Centre will necessitate the crossing of a footpath-cycleway as will the new access road to the reserved school sites to the rear of the Centre. This will inevitably occur where a number of access roads and footpath-cycleways converge at a particular node. In the main however the extensive network of footpath-cycleways within the sector is completely segregated from vehicular traffic.

The network has developed through time in association with neighbouring housing estates. **Proposal NE5** ensures that this feature will continue across the areas which remain to be developed.

NE5 (a) identifies the footpath-cycleway links to be inserted as part of adjoining residential development proposals, in order to complete the segregated network. This includes several stretches of new path. Road crossing points including across the A1171 will be clearly signposted and demarcated on the highway. The Master Plan will define the phasing of these connections by linking their construction to specific estate developments.

NE5 (b) identifies two strategic crossing points that it would be difficult to require in association with particular housing or other development sites, but which nevertheless need to be provided in order to facilitate:

- links between East Hartford village and the town centre;
- the Hartford estates of the town with both the Brockwell Centre and the town centre; and
- the whole town to informal recreation opportunities afforded by the River Blyth corridor.

10.2.4 Public Open Space: Contribution towards Playing Space, Parkland and Nature Conservation

At present the North-East Sector of Cramlington is served by five distinct areas of public open space:

- **Central Park**, close to the town centre, provides an area of informal recreation at present, although the southern half will, in the future, accommodate a cricket / hockey facility. The northern section takes the form of an unmanaged, wild area which extends north through the area formerly reserved for a second High School to Northumbrian Road.
- **Westwood Park** represents a remnant from past coal mining operations. It takes the form of a grassed hill with a small "kick-about" area on the south side.
- **Eastfield Park** is an extensive expanse of playing fields and pitches complete with a small changing room facility.
- **Horton Park** is laid out as a parkland area with a formal garden, children's play area and extensive landscaping.
- **Northburn Playing Fields** is still under development but has been levelled and seeded with a view to accommodating a combination of playing fields, pavilion, nature area and children's play facilities.

The majority of the land occupied by these parks was considered inappropriate or unsuitable for built development.

While there is a certain amount of existing playing space within the Sector, shortfalls have been identified in Cramlington as a whole.[8] There is also the opportunity to extend and/or improve the area devoted to public open space to provide a linked green corridor, in a north-south direction, with a nature conservation, as well as public benefit.

Proposal NE6 aims to meet these dual aims by putting forward additions to playing space and improvements to the existing public open space areas, together with extensions as appropriate onto adjoining land.[9] Any costs incurred in implementing the provisions of this proposal will be met either via Planning Obligations associated with an adjoining residential planning approval or from the Community Development Fund the operation of which will be detailed in the Master Plan.[10]

NE6 (a) identifies an area on the western edge of the sector to be known as Northburn Playing Fields for playing field use. It will contribute towards demand for outdoor sports facilities in the town as a whole. Small pavilions / changing room facilities together with the associated access and car parking requirements are proposed. It is also intended that Northburn Playing Fields will provide the location for an equipped playground for children to meet a local need for that area of the Northburn estates. The full extent of the proposed Northburn Playing Fields incorporates some land formerly reserved for an additional First School. This will provide additional parkland for the public and include an area in which the nature conservation value will be increased.

NE6 (b) relates to the recent northward extension to Horton Park following the line of a proposed footpath-cycleway. North of Horton Drive it compensates for the loss of openness that would have been provided by the deleted school site. It forms part of the north-south green corridor mentioned above and similar in form to the existing park. The northern end of Horton Park, north of Horton Drive will also provide the location for a further equipped playing space for children in the northernmost estates, (currently under construction) who currently do not have a facility within safe or easy walking distance, applying the criteria set out in Policy C4.

NE6 (c) makes proposals for an area to the north of the existing Central Park. At present, this is officially identified as being a derelict land site with some remains of past developments still present. However, in the absence of other use the land has gradually acquired considerable nature conservation interest.[11] The extension to Central Park will therefore seek to protect this special environment and indeed enhance it further by implementing a management plan for the area. In the short to medium term this management regime will extend onto the land reserved for educational/community facilities (see Proposal NE4), in order to maximise the flora and fauna interest and retain a degree of visual unity and confidence on this centrally located site.

Scope for additional sports pitches will also be retained on land immediately to the north of the proposed cricket facility at Central Park. Small pavilions / changing room facilities together with the associated access and car parking requirements are proposed. The completed Central Park will also form part of the north-south green corridor referred to above.

8 *See Section 4.3 of the Community Facilities chapter.*
9 *These extensions offset the increased requirements for public open space generated by the release of additional housing land in Proposals NE1, NE2 and NE3.*
10 *See also General Development chapter, Policy G11.*
11 *During early summer a swathe of orchids cover part of the site whilst sightings of foxes and short-eared owls are common.*

Proposal ***NE 6*** *PUBLIC OPEN SPACE / PLAYING SPACE*

Improvements to the level public open space provision will be pursued, as follows, in order to:

- **improve playing space provision**
- **provide corridors of open space, adding to parkland provision and bringing nature conservation benefits**

a At Northburn Playing Fields:

- **i the provision of playing fields in line with Policy C2(i);**
- **ii the northward extension of the park, in line with Policy C7 (i) to include an area of native woodland and meadow in line with Policy E2 (ii);**
- **iii the provision of a Local Equipped Area for Play for children, in line with Policy C4 (i);**
- **iv the provision of a pavilion complex and adequate off-street parking capable of serving the pitch provision identified;**

b North of Horton Park:

the provision of a Local Equipped Area for Play for children, to the north of Horton Drive, in line with Policy C4 (i);

c At Central Park:

- **i playing fields in the southern section, in line with Policy C2 (i);**
- **ii a parkland extension, in line with Policy C7 (i), if necessary to include the area proposed for playing fields under (i) above until such time as the playing fields are laid out;**
- **iii a managed area of nature conservation interest in the northern part of the parkland extension, in line with Policy E2 (ii).**
- **iv the provision of a pavilion complex and adequate off-street parking capable of serving the pitch provision identified.**



Northburn Playing Fields

Proposal ***NE 7*** *LANDSCAPE STRUCTURE*

The existing landscape structure of the sector will be further added to and enhanced through:

a The planting of landscaping strips along the major road corridors and the banks of the Horton Burn as a requirement of adjoining developments;

b The landscaping of existing public open spaces where it is considered that this would have benefits in terms of visual variety and/or nature conservation without prejudicing the purposes that they were intended to serve; and

c The retention of existing landscape features and their incorporation into the new works along with the use of native species of trees and shrubs wherever possible, having regard to Policy E5 (vi).

10.2.5 **Landscape Structure**

The establishment of an effective landscape structure has been one of the aims for the North-East Sector from the outset with the objective of creating the most pleasant environment possible for the incoming population. Significant belts of tree and hedgerow planting have already been established, (with varying degrees of success), along the southern verge of the A192 and on the mounded areas on the north side of Northumbrian Road / Durham Road. Significant blocks of woodland are also apparent in the road corridor north of Westwood Grange and the severed land next to Eastfield Lea.

Proposal NE7 has the dual intentions of extending the landscape structure concept across the remaining areas and identifying the extent to which further enhancement to the landscape structure can be provided in existing areas

NE7 (a) specifies those corridors of land where a substantial landscaping belt will be required to screen development and enhance transport routes. These belts will be provided by developers of related housing proposals as detailed in the Master Plan for the Sector.

NE7 (b) recognises that existing areas of development require softening with planting both for visual enhancement reasons and to provide some cover in the more exposed localities. Eastfield Park, Westwood Park and the environs of the Brockwell Centre are the clearest candidates for such improvements, although others may suggest themselves during the preparation of the Master Plan.

NE7 (c) takes account of the fact that North-East Cramlington continues to be developed on an existing landscape characterised in particular by hedgerows.[12] The aim will be, as has previously been the case, to incorporate these features into the design and layout of future developments.

12 *One is a hawthorn hedge adjoining Westwood Grange, protected by its omission from the area of housing allocation H7 (i).*

11. South-West Cramlington

11.1 INTRODUCTION

The South-West sector represents the last phase in the development of Cramlington New Town as originally envisaged. The role of Cramlington within the overall development of settlements in the Plan area and the place of the South-West sector within the evolution of the New Town have been well documented, reemphasised and, where necessary, redefined in Chapters 2 and 3 of this Written Statement.[1]

The initial draft for consultation of this Local Plan presented a set of proposals for the development of South West Cramlington in its entirety, involving the allocation for residential, employment or other uses of all the land available for those uses, although it acknowledged that a substantial proportion of the housing would not be built until beyond the Plan period. Since that stage, it has become clear that the Local Plan was overallocating housing land. This has led to a reduction in the proportion of potential South-West sector housing land likely to come forward in the Plan period, to the extent that it is only possible or necessary to allocate part of the sector for housing.[2] Large parts of the eventual residential area are therefore placed outside the settlement limits for this Plan period.

In spite of this, it is important that this Chapter addresses the comprehensive development of the whole area, even though the Proposals in bold print refer only to the allocated areas. To this end, a diagram showing approximately the intended, eventual layout for the whole of the South-West Sector of Cramlington, is included as Diagram SW-D1, later in the Chapter.

11.1.1 History

Around one thousand dwellings were built at Beaconhill in the northernmost part of the area now referred to as the South-West Sector during the 1970's, together with a limited range of local community facilities, a first school and areas of parkland. Extending south, the remainder continues to be open farmland, woods, Arcot Hall Golf Course and the Arcot Hall Grasslands and Ponds Site of Special Scientific Interest (S.S.S.I.).[3]

The Beaconhill development was guided by the Cramlington Comprehensive Development Area (C.D.A.) Plans approved in 1963 and 1970. These envisaged housing extending southward to the northern edge of the golf course with adequate provision made for schools. The eastern edge adjacent to the railway line would be public open space, the western fringe kept open; there would be no development beyond what was then the boundary of Seaton Valley Urban District.

Following the approval of the final version of the C.D.A. Plan in 1970, local government reorganisation (in 1974) redefined local authority boundaries to correspond more closely with the C.D.A.. The role of Cramlington as a population overspill area for the Tyneside conurbation is no longer as dominant. The town now acts as a "sub-regional focus for housing and employment development" within Northumberland.[4]

The completion of the North-East Sector is anticipated well within the Plan period, (see previous chapter) and developer interest in the South-West Sector has been gradually increasing. An initial response to this was made by Northumberland County Council with the preparation of "Guidance for Future Developments" for public consultation in Spring 1991. This prompted much discussion and helped define development principles for incorporation into this Plan.

Following this, some outline planning applications were submitted covering either all or part of the sector. Certain of these, though broadly in line with the guiding principles advocated by the Local Planning Authority, have never been fully approved due to the need to agree a Master Plan and enter into a Section 106 Planning Agreement. Discussions are recommencing at the time that this Local Plan is being adopted.



School Students walk home from School towards Beaconhill across Area of South-West Sector Housing Allocation

1 *See in particular Section 2.2 on Settlement Policy and Section 3.3 on Housing Land Allocations.*
2 *This is done in Policy H7 (iii).*
3 *See also Chapter 1, Panel E-P1.*
4 *See Chapter 2, Section 2.2.*

11.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

As already stated, it is vital not to allow the South-West sector to be developed in a piecemeal way. A comprehensive approach is required to ensure that all the land use needs of the future population are met. The new community will only function effectively if schools, community facilities, parkland and convenient transport networks are provided and phased in tandem with the proposed residential developments. These features will be paid for by the development which generates the need for them. In some cases, this will involve off-site works and enhancements. The Proposals section of this Chapter broadly indicates how this will be achieved. Further amplification will be contained in the Master Plan.

In addition, however, (and in contrast to the rest of the land upon which Cramlington has been developed), the South-West sector presents, at the outset, an environment of relatively high quality with many significant landscape features and an undulating topography. The protection and enhancement of these aspects will be fundamental to developing the sector.

This section identifies the key principles that will guide the location and siting of development within this landscape-based context.

11.2.1 Existing Landscape Character

The golf course, associated woodland and the adjoining open grassland area, interspersed with ponds, form the central core of high quality landscape within the sector. This is recognised by its designation as an Area of High Landscape Value.[5] Its heavily wooded nature is dominated by a block of woodland, prominent from most parts of the sector. In fact, the woodland provides a framework for a variety of open spaces enhanced by ecologically rich grassland. The largest of these areas - identified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, (S.S.S.I.)[6] - provides diverse vegetation and a spatial quality which, in conjunction with the water features, is particularly attractive.

The area to the south and west of the golf course and S.S.S.I. forms a belt of land which wraps around and acts as a buffer to protect the central core from the adverse effects of the A19 and Fisher Lane. It is characterised by generally flat, agricultural land which is semi-enclosed by woodland and substantial hedges. The area is visually prominent from the A19 and parts of North Tyneside with fine views of Arcot Hall in an area, essentially rural in nature.

The land on the eastern edge of the sector is characterised by a high proportion of significant hedgerows and tree lines which provide a feeling of enclosure to the pattern of fields. Beacon Lane is particularly important in this respect. Southern Stream also represents an attractive element of this area with its tree-lined banks and adjoining marshy areas cutting east-west through the area. However, the embanked railway line with its electrification cables represents a significant visual intrusion within the area.

The north-west part of the sector is characterised by open, intensively farmed arable land. Hedges are thin, gappy and poorly managed. The land also rises here to the highest point in the sector. The additional height gives the area a more exposed character. Two sets of electricity pylons also cross the area.

11.2.2 Sector-wide Landscape Structure

On this basis, a number of principles to guide the development of the sector can be identified:

- The **visual, landscape and nature conservation interest** of the golf course, associated woodland and adjoining SSSI will be **protected and retained** with no development permitted either within the area or along the immediate boundary edges.

- The **views into the sector** from the A19 and North Tyneside will be **retained** with land generally protected from development south of Arcot Lane. This will also ensure that the open aspect to Arcot Hall is protected. The housing development on the western fringe of the sector will be appropriately screened from Fisher Lane.

- The length of **Southern Stream** will be **enhanced as a visual feature** incorporating, where necessary, balancing ponds to accommodate run-off created within the attractive marshy area to the east of the SSSI.

- A **thick belt of trees** will be planted **along the eastern boundary** of the sector to minimise the intrusive impact of the railway line.

- The important and established **hedgerows** of the eastern half of the sector will be **retained** to the extent that layouts and road alignments will be determined so as to avoid disturbing these important features.

- **North-south corridors of open space** will be provided along the length of Beacon Lane and the strip of land beneath the electricity pylons to connect the development areas to Southern Stream and high quality landscape area beyond.

5 *See Chapter 1, Policy E4.*
6 *See Chapter 1, Panel E-P1*

Proposal ***SW 1*** *ENERGY EFFICIENT HOUSING*

Energy efficiency and energy conservation will be maximised in respect of residential development within the area allocated under Policy H7 (iii), in line with Policy H21. Before detailed planning permission is granted for housing schemes it should be demonstrated that all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that:

a Energy gain, afforded by the receipt of energy of the sun, has been maximised through the orientation of the dwellings, particularly their habitable rooms; and

b Energy loss, resulting from overshadowing and inadequate protection from the wind, has been minimised, through the appropriate siting of dwellings within the proposed layout and the introduction of landscaping.

When considering detailed planning applications for housing development, the detailed principles set out in Appendix XXVI to this Written Statement will be applied as comprehensively as possible, taking account of other layout issues such as design, vehicle access, road safety, crime prevention, amenity and landscape.

11.3 **THE PROPOSALS**

The development of the South-West Sector will see the completion of the town of Cramlington to the geographical extent that was envisaged in the original 1960's Plan. It is therefore important to consider the sector in the context of the town as a whole, to ensure that, as far as possible, a well balanced and serviced community is created.

This section adds detail to the broad land use allocations by incorporating a diagram, (Diagram SW-D1) of how the final layout of South-West Cramlington is expected to be and giving a detailed description of how this will be achieved. Clearly, the detailed analysis is concentrated on those areas which are allocated for development within the Plan period and the main Proposals, (in bold print), are entirely confined to these.

All detailed arrangements on layout, density, phasing etc. will be embodied in a Master Plan prior to development commencing and agreed with all the interested parties. A legal agreement will also be entered into with the relevant parties to ensure the provision and funding of infrastructure and community needs of the sector. The proposed funding arrangements are detailed at the end of the Chapter.

11.3.1 **Residential Development**

Although the South-West Sector of Cramlington is at the early stages of planning, it is important that proposals for the residential areas are as detailed as possible, in order to minimise uncertainty and maximise the opportunity to plan a complete and well-ordered community.

ENERGY EFFICIENT HOUSING

One of the main ways in which it will be sought to ensure a quality and consistency in residential building will be the application of energy efficiency and conservation criteria in accordance with Policy H21. While the overall policy on energy efficient housing sets out criteria against which any housing development can be judged, (if considered appropriate), in the case of South-West Cramlington, developers will be expected to demonstrate that energy efficiency and conservation issues have been considered within their residential proposals. In effect, this will be the pilot scheme for the Plan area as a whole. If successful, a review of this Local Plan will consider whether to apply the approach to residential development throughout Blyth Valley.

Proposal SW1 puts forward an energy efficiency framework within which detailed housing applications will be expected to be formulated. It is regarded as a proposal rather than a policy in that it forms part of the positive strategy for the development of the South-West sector rather than being simply a control. It is hoped that prospective builders will treat it in this light and put forward positive schemes which take the ideas and develop them further. The shape of the individual building areas themselves will be determined in the overall Master Plan and will be planned with energy considerations to the fore, having taken account of other layout issues.

The proposal contains the essential features that should be considered in all detailed housing proposals. Research has shown that around 20% of the energy requirements of a typical house can be met if careful attention is given to siting and orientation.

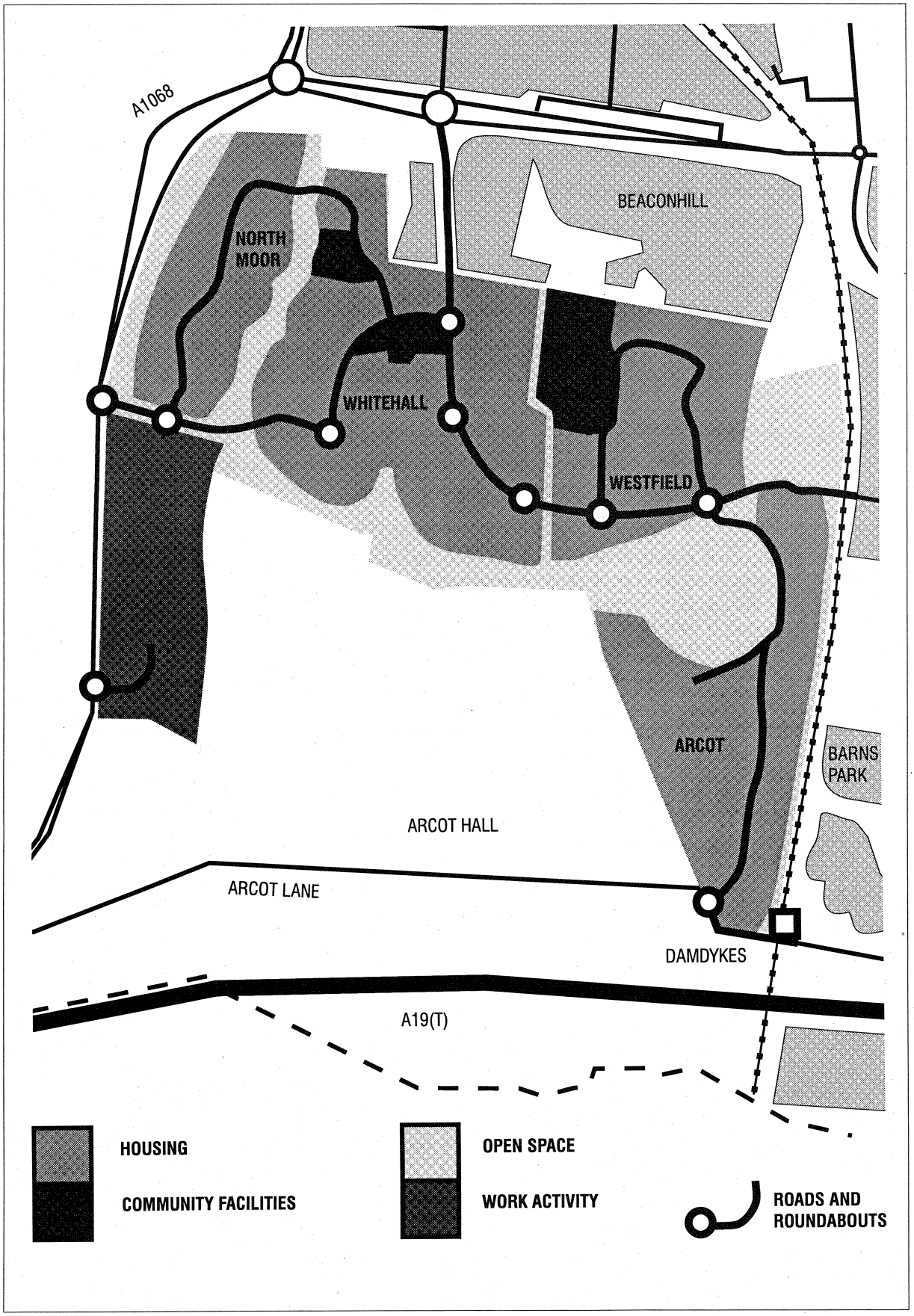


DIAGRAM SW-D1
Diagram illustrating Layout of Principal Land Uses proposed for Completed South-West Sector of Cramlington

While the principal justifications for this approach are environmental, it is considered that its implementation will have marketing advantages and the result will add to the quality and variety of the housing stock of Cramlington and Blyth Valley as a whole.

SW1 (a) seeks that the optimum use is made of passive solar energy through the careful orientation of dwellings. For example, as southern facades receive sunshine for most of the day, the main habitable rooms of a property should, wherever possible, have a southern aspect.

SW1 (b), conversely, seeks the introduction of measures that minimise energy loss. This mainly concerns the positioning of dwellings, landscape features, and other structures such as garages, in relation to each other. For example, the benefits of the passive receipt of solar energy will be lost if southern facades are overshadowed by other buildings.

The overall Master Plan for the sector will define a comprehensive range of energy principles that should be considered within the layouts of proposed residential schemes. In the meantime some of the principles that will be applied in all but the most exceptional circumstances, are set out at Appendix XXVI to this Written Statement.

THE DETAILED PHASING OF THE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

In Cramlington, the principle of developing a third residential sector is long established. It has also been clearly understood that development of this third phase in the south west would only commence on the virtual completion of the North-East Sector. Policy H6 in the Housing Chapter re-emphasised this intention, making clear that, insofar as is possible it will not be allowed that the South-West Sector is developed at the expense of the North-East Sector.

Phasing and the need to maintain a continuous supply of housing land over the Plan period are also important issues within the context of the sector's development. To this end, the residential area is subdivided by the proposed road and footpath/cycleway networks into four distinct land parcels as follows:

	Land Area	Dwellings	Area (ha.)
1	Central area focused on Whitehall Farm	1300	57
2	north-west corner adjacent to Fisher Lane	550	19
3	Land south of Beaconhill Glade	650	22
4	Land immediately east of Beacon Lane and adjacent to the railway line	300	27
	Total	**2800**	**125**

For the purposes of convenience, these land parcels are given shorthand names as follows: (1) The **Whitehall** Area; (2) The **North Moor** Area; (3) The **Westfield** Area; and (4) The **Arcot** Area. The location of these areas, together with the distributor road network planned for the sector, are illustrated in Diagram SW-D1.

As stated in the Introduction, it is not envisaged that this whole area will be developed within the Plan period; indeed the maximum proportion of sites developed is likely to be below half the total. Policy H7 in the Housing Chapter therefore only allocates the Whitehall and North Moor areas for residential development within the Plan period, although it is anticipated that a proportion of *these* sites will not be built upon until beyond 2006. The rationale behind the proposed phasing arrangements is to establish an orderly extension of the town from developed areas, subject to providing the necessary infrastructure.

Proposal SW2 sets out how the Whitehall and North Moor areas will relate to each other in terms of phasing and timing of development and puts down some initial criteria which will determine the course of their development.

The first main point is that no planning permission for residential development of any sort will be granted until a master plan for the development of the entire sector has been agreed, to include the whole of the main road layout, main infrastructure provision and a main landscape structure. Associated with this will be the signing of Section 106 Agreement(s) by all the participating owners, to include such matters as the phasing of development and the funding of all infrastructure works associated with the comprehensive development of the sector.

A sector-wide Master Plan document is bound to be generalised, particularly in relation to parts of the overall development with a later timing. Therefore, it is likely that more detailed development guidance - including sub-division into plots and the definition of specific sites for low density and/or special design housing - will need to be produced for individual parts of the sector, as construction progresses.

The following describes the stipulations which are set out for the two development areas expected to be initiated in the Plan period.

Area 1: The Whitehall Area

The Whitehall area is a large expanse of land - over 50 hectares - to which direct access will be provided via an upgraded Beacon Lane without the need to create any new access points into the sector. It is therefore readily developable from the outset and will almost certainly form the starting point for residential building within the sector.[7]

7 *Some upgrading of Beacon Lane will be required, (see Sub-section 11.3.5 below).*

The residential allocation forms a ring surrounding the area proposed for the district centre. As this will provide for the whole sector, not just the Whitehall area, it will be inevitable that some elements of it remain undeveloped until beyond the substantial completion of the Whitehall schemes.

It is estimated that the Whitehall area will provide close to half of the total eventual dwelling units that will be built in the rest of South-West Cramlington, (some 1,300 out of 2,800). As such, on a strictly statistical basis, it could on its own, accommodate most or all of the units required within the Sector in the Plan period. However, this does not allow for

- the necessary phasing of development between the Whitehall area and the adjacent North Moor area, (given access arrangements etc. on the ground);
- the necessary variety of sites;
- any additional provision to soak up extra demand that may be generated;
- the need for a five year supply of land to remain at the end of the Plan period.

For these reasons, the North Moor area has also been allocated within the Plan period. Nevertheless, it is assumed that much of the Whitehall area could be developed by the year 2006.

SW2 (a) *lists specific provisos relating to the development of the Whitehall area.*

The first ties the commencement of the first housing accessed from Beacon Lane, to the improvement of the existing stretch of Beacon Lane - off Station Road - plus any extension needed to serve the first housing areas.

The second refers to an overall strategy for the provision of low density housing, set out later in this sub-section. In line with this, a linear stretch of land along the settlement limit with an open southern aspect will be confined to low density housing, as defined in Policy H18 of the Housing Chapter. These dwellings will also have to be carefully designed and sited so as to minimise their visual impact on the Area of High Landscape Value immediately to the south.[8]

Area 2: The North Moor Area

The North Moor area is situated in the north-west corner of the sector alongside Fisher Lane. Like the Whitehall area, it will be an area for a mix of housing, although there may be less of an emphasis on high quality / low density development due to the lower occurrence of environmentally important open aspects. Provision will be made for an element of affordable housing, as described below.

SW2 (b) explains the North Moor development.

Firstly, phasing and access will require careful Planning, While road links into the area could be provided via Beacon Lane and the Whitehall Farm area, traffic flows are likely to increase to a point where this will not be acceptable. An access point from Fisher Lane will therefore be required in advance of any development. It will only be in very exceptional circumstances that access into the area could be permitted from the direction of Beacon Lane at an early stage.

Secondly, the dualling of Fisher Lane along the remainder of its length is a strategic aim of the Local Plan.[9] The volume of traffic generated by the South-West sector as a whole will warrant its construction particularly in terms of meeting DETR spacing requirements on junctions. Its construction will therefore be a requirement after a certain number of dwellings have been constructed.[10]

Low Density ("Executive") Housing

The quality of the existing landscape character in the South-West Sector of Cramlington affords the opportunity to provide 'low density ("executive") housing', as referred to in Chapter 3, Policy H18. During the Plan period, this will be achieved by only permitting development within the range five to fifteen dwellings per hectare on sites bordering the open aspect of Southern Stream within the Whitehall area.

As development progresses beyond the Plan period, the proportion of low density development will increase as more land with an open aspect over the Southern Stream and the land beyond becomes available. It is also envisaged that, in the future, this form of development will be strongly represented in the Arcot area due to the very high quality of the existing landscape and surrounding environment coupled with its relative isolated position within Cramlington.

Special Design Sites

Special Design Sites [11] could cover any of the housing types being proposed for South-West Cramlington, whether low density, general housing or affordable housing. They could also be meeting a special need

8 *See Chapter 1, Policy E4.*

9 *See Chapter 7, Policy M10.*

10 *This too will depend on consultations with the Highway Authority at the appropriate time. Previously, it has been assumed that around 1200 houses would trigger the need for the dualling.*

11 *See also Sub-section 3.6.2.*

Proposal **SW 2** — *HOUSING DEVELOPMENT*

Land allocated for residential development within the South-West Sector under Policies H7 (iii) will be granted outline planning permission as part of the comprehensive development of the south-west sector, such permission to be issued on the signing of the necessary Section 106 Planning Obligations. Following this, there will be a phased approach to the release of land and planning permission for individual sites will be granted in accordance with Policy H6, and subject to conditioning or further Section 106 Agreements covering:

- **the sub-division of the housing areas;**
- **matters of layout and design, including the definition of Special Design sites applying Policy H21 (vi);**
- **other aspects of this Proposal, set out below.**

More specifically:

a On Land Surrounding Whitehall Farm, indicated on the Proposals Map as "Whitehall Area":

i no development shall commence prior to satisfactory provision being made for the upgrading of the northern section of Beacon Lane from the junction with Station Road plus other access roads as may be required to allow the first residential development to take place - part of the requirement of Policy M9 (i)(c);

ii housing shall be provided at low density, in accordance with Policy H18 and indicated on the Proposals Map, along the southern fringes of the allocated area, adjacent to the settlement limit;

b On land at the northern end of Fisher lane, indicated on the Proposals Map as 'North Moor Area':

i no development shall commence until provision has been made for such access roads as may be required to provide access off Fisher Lane;

ii no development shall commence beyond a threshold to be determined followingconsultation with the Highway Authority, before provision has been made for the dualling of that part of Fisher Lane which is single carriageway.

Within the total allocated housing area, sufficient land shall be set aside so that an indicative target of up to 210 affordable housing units can be completed within the Plan period, in line with Policy H14. It will be sought that the majority of these units are placed in close proximity to the District Centre.

outside the normal definition of affordable housing, such as residential care homes.[12]

It is recognised that there is a role for specially designed housing other than accommodating a housing need. This is the introduction of variety into the design and appearance of an area. Therefore, within the categories of general, special needs/affordable housing, key sites will be identified in the Master Plan(s). These will occupy prominent positions on the edges of main roads, footpath-cycleways and major areas of public open spaces within the area to be built at a density of twenty to thirty dwellings per hectare.

Affordable Housing

The main policies on affordable housing provision are set down in section 3.4 of the Housing Chapter. A total of 210 affordable housing units will be sought during the Plan period. This broadly equates to 10 per cent of the total housing area earmarked for development in the Whitehall and North Moor areas of the sector.

12 *See Policy H16.*

11.3.2 **Work Activity Development**

The Work Activity chapter referred to the role of Cramlington as a sub-regional employment growth point where it is important to provide a range of sites to meet different requirements. **Proposal SW3** refers back to the allocation of land along Fisher Lane to meet the needs of firms seeking large single sites for major office or research and development uses standing in their own landscaped grounds.[13] A potential market for very high quality, low density sites could be met here, given the environment and location. The existing industrial areas within the town offer little scope for providing sites to this standard.

In order to safeguard the environmental quality of the area, the development of each site should satisfy the following criteria as set out in the proposal.

SW3 (a) emphasises the retention of the existing environment as the dominant feature by placing a very strict upper limit on the density of development. The upper limit will be 33 per cent of any site taken up by buildings and car parking. However, some sites may suggest themselves for even lower densities.

SW3 (b) further emphasises the parkland appearance by specifying that any car parking or built development should be well set back from the roadside. Therefore, an irregularly shaped area of at least 50 metres width adjacent to the A1068 will be kept open.

Clearly, with the risks of intrusion faced by such operations as research and development, security fencing will be vital in some cases. **SW3 (c)** seeks to ensure that any security fencing is as unobtrusive as possible.

SW3 (d) states that any significant car parking should be located behind buildings so as not to be visible from the main road system. It should be placed between built development and the woodland to the east of the site and should itself present a parkland appearance with planting within as well as around parking areas;

SW3 (e) refers again to the need for a parkland setting. The overall appearance of the site should allow for the blending of the overall development with the Green Belt to the west and the open land and woodland uses (also outside the settlement limits) to the east.[14] This is why the intended appearance should be similar to what would be an exceptional Green Belt use[15] - i.e. an institution standing in large grounds.

Finally, some assurance is sought in **SW3 (f)** that no unacceptable, adverse effects on health or work activity will arise from the presence of the electricity pylons.

These employment sites will have an access point from Fisher Lane with no through access to the rest of the sector.[16]

11.3.3 **Provision of Central Community Facilities**

The South-West Cramlington Community Development Area is likely to have a final population in excess of 6000.

Proposal SW4 recognises that it is important to provide local facilities both to cater for residents without access to a car and to minimise the number of car journeys made to other parts of the town.

Northumberland County Council has, on the basis of future population estimates and anticipated school rolls throughout the town, identified that land within the sector should be made available for a first school and middle school. **SW4 (a)** defines a site for educational purposes straddling the main footpath / cycleway of Beacon Lane. This is centrally located - close to the site, identified below, for a proposed district centre. It is at the heart of the residential development and relates well to the existing school provision in Beaconhill. It is also well related to the open aspect of Beaconhill Park.

It is likely that the land will be required on a temporary basis, prior to the date that one or both schools are developed, in order to provide temporary accommodation for playing pitches for reasons explained below and in accordance with Proposal SW6 (b).

A reserve site for a further First School is also safeguarded on the north-west fringe of the Whitehall residential area, should additional provision be deemed necessary in the future.

SW4 (b) earmarks the area around and including Whitehall Farm buildings for a district centre. The site is located at the junction of the proposed inner box distributor road and the road link to Fisher Lane. There is sufficient space to accommodate a small supermarket plus some additional shops and shop front services, a pub or restaurant, a health centre and other community facilities such as a meeting hall a religious building and/or a library.

13 *See Chapter 6, Policy W2.*

14 *The Area of High Landscape Value to the east of the area also need to be taken into account.*

15 *See also Chapter 2, Policy G8.*

16 *See Sub-section 11.3.6 below.*

Proposal ***SW 3*** *WORK ACTIVITY AREA, FISHER LANE*

Land allocated for specified work activity uses under Policy W2 (i)(a), will be developed in accordance with the following specific criteria:

a Not more than a third of each site shall be occupied by buildings and car parking with the option that certain sites should have a lower density of building;

b An area of at least 50 metres depth adjacent to the A1068 shall be kept free of buildings and car parking;

c Any security fencing should not be obtrusive in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority;

d All car parking should be located between built development and the woodland to the east of the site and should itself present a parkland appearance with planting within as well as around parking areas;

e The overall appearance of the site should be that of an institution standing in large grounds that will be seen as appropriate to a rural area on the fringe of the Green Belt;

f Based on advice sought from the National Radiological Protection Board, there should be no unacceptable adverse effects on health or work activity arising from the presence of existing electricity power lines.

The Master Plan will ensure that the provision of these facilities or any others that may be specified, is linked to the growth of the sector. The retention of the Whitehall Farm buildings will largely depend on their suitability for conversion to other uses.

An additional community facility which it may be appropriate to provide in association with the development of South-West Cramlington, subject to further investigation, is an indoor sports hall.[17] The most likely location would be within the site of the existing High School across the railway line - as a dual use facility. This possibility should be safeguarded unless another site becomes available.

11.3.4 **Landscaping**

The "Guiding Principles" section of this Chapter highlighted the relatively high quality of the sector's environment with the presence of many significant landscape features and an undulating topography. Indeed, the desire to retain this landscape quality has been the central principle in guiding the location and siting of all the developments proposed for the South West Sector.

Against this background, **Proposal SW5** identifies a number of enhancement measures that would further strengthen the landscape character of the area and assist in softening the impact of built development.

SW5 (a) specifies the introduction of a substantial tree belt along the northern section of Fisher Lane with a view to screening the rear of houses proposed within the North Moor residential area. A similar approach is not deemed necessary on the frontage of the proposed work activity site as the buildings will front onto Fisher Lane and be constructed in a parkland setting that incorporates landscape features such as ponds.

SW5 (b) recognises the importance of further developing Southern Stream as it meanders across the sector both as a significant visual feature and as a buffer between development in the north and the open countryside to the south. The intention is to retain "natural feel" of the stream whilst accommodating any necessary balancing ponds as features within the attractive marshy area to the east of the SSSI.

17 *See Chapter 4, Section 4.6, for background.*

SW5 (c) defines two open space corridors that will connect the heart of the development area to Southern Stream and the high quality landscape beyond. Beacon Lane is already bounded on both sides by significant hedgerows whilst land below the electricity pylons will help the creation of an attractive linear route.

The Master Plan will ensure that the provision of these features or any others that may be specified, is linked to the development of adjoining sites.

11.3.5 **Public Open Space / Playing Space**

Although the southern half of the sector will be retained as open land, much of it will not be available to the general public to wander through at will. The golf course is a private, fee paying club and the Site of Special Scientific Interest represents a sensitive environment where public access will be restricted to certain times and certain areas in order to avoid disturbance to wildlife, erosion etc.. The existing public rights of way will be retained to provide routes through the area but provision needs to be made for open expanses which are freely available for use by the public.

The planned land use distribution for the sector, as illustrated in Diagram SW-D1, identifies an area for informal public open space towards the centre-east of the overall development, incorporating land that is unsuitable for building purposes. Provision is also made for playing fields on an extension to the existing Westfield Park, where four pitches can be accommodated together with a pavilion of changing rooms.

Given the anticipated timing and phasing of the sector's residential development outlined above, it is unlikely that either of these areas will be created within the Plan period. For this reason, **Proposal SW6 (a)** makes provision for the temporary location of playing pitches within the Whitehall area on land identified for educational purposes.

In line with Policy C4, **SW6 (b)** provides for three equipped play areas for the Plan period. A large neighbourhood facility will be installed immediately to the south of the land reserved for education purposes, where it can be readily accessed by a large number of the proposed households. Two smaller and more localised facilities will be incorporated into the district centre layout and within the North Moor residential area in close association with the footpath/cycleway system.

11.3.6 **The Road Network**

The existing Cramlington road network comprises inner and outer "boxes" of roads (illustrated in Diagram SW-D2). The outer box is long established and is formed by the A189 Spine Road, A192, Fisher Lane (A1068) and A19. It takes traffic and heavy commercial vehicles around the town and also provides access to the town itself.

Three quarters of the inner box is already in existence and made up of Nelson Drive, Northumbrian Road and Lancastrian Way. It circulates traffic within and between the residential and industrial areas and allows good access to the town centre.

The policy within the South-West Sector will be to build on these principles by completing the inner box of town distributor roads and providing new connections with the largely dualled outer network of principal roads, (see Diagram SW-D2). The network will therefore consist of the following elements:

- The completion of the inner box of main roads between Lancastrian Way and Station Road with a new road bridge over the railway line;
- The introduction of a link between Fisher Lane and the inner box;
- The provision of a connection linking the Arcot residential development area with the rest of the sector;
- The provision of a separate and discrete service road off Fisher Lane, to provide access to the area allocated under Policy W2.

Beacon Lane south and the western stretch of Arcot Lane, adjoining the Site of Special Scientific Interest, will both be closed to vehicles and incorporated into the proposed footpath/cycleway system.[18] The provision of any new bridge across the railway should include the investigation into the possibility of closing any existing level crossing in the vicinity of the proposed bridge.

The precise details of the nature and timing of the road network will be reflected in the south-west sector masterplan, pursuant to future negotiations with the Highways Authority and further studies if required.

Proposal SW7 identifies those elements of the network that will be provided within the Plan period. **SW7(a)** refers to the provision of a link between the existing Beaconhill residential area and Fisher Lane. This will require improvements to the northern section of Beacon Lane [19] and the construction of a new roundabout on Fisher Lane, in order to gain satisfactory access into the sector. At present this section of the A1068 consists of a 1.1 kilometre length of single carriageway between dual carriageways to the north and south. DETR advice does not permit junctions within one kilometre of the end of dual carriageways. Therefore, in order to accommodate this new junction, it will be necessary to complete the dualling of this section of road.

SW7 (b) provides for a separate junction to be taken off Fisher Lane to serve the proposed work activity area.[20] It should take the form of a roundabout. This will ease the flow of traffic into the area for delivery vehicles and for

18 *See Proposal SW8 below.*
19 *See Proposal SW2 (a).*
20 *See Proposal SW3 above.*

Proposal **SW 4** — *CENTRAL COMMUNITY FACILITIES*

In order to meet the community needs of the sector's future population, land is safeguarded for:

a Educational purposes, in line with Policy C10 (ii), at the following locations:

- **i immediately south of the existing Beaconhill Park to accommodate the future provision of a Middle School and at least one First School;**
- **ii within the north-west corner of the Whitehall residential area for a reserve First School site;**

b A district centre capable of accommodating a wide range of community facilities adjacent to and including Whitehall Farm, including:

- **i retail facilities in accordance with Policy C17 (iv);**
- **ii other community facilities, having regard to Policies C18 and C19 (i).**

In addition, it will be sought to retain the possibility of an indoor sports facility, in line with Policy C9, at the site identified on the Proposals Map, within the site of the existing High School, unless an alternative site is identified and safeguarded.

Proposal **SW 5** — *LANDSCAPE STRUCTURE*

The existing landscape structure of the sector will be further added to and enhanced as a requirement of adjoining developments by:

a Planting a thick belt of trees along the north-western boundary of the sector (i.e. north of the proposed Fisher Lane roundabout access);

b Improving the length of Southern Stream as a significant visual feature through the introduction of balancing ponds to accommodate run-off from the proposed developments and additional planting, such additions and enhancements to take account of Policies E1 to E6.

c Establishing attractive north-south corridors of open space along the length of Beacon Lane and the strip of land beneath the electricity pylons.

Proposal **SW 6** — *PLAYING SPACE*

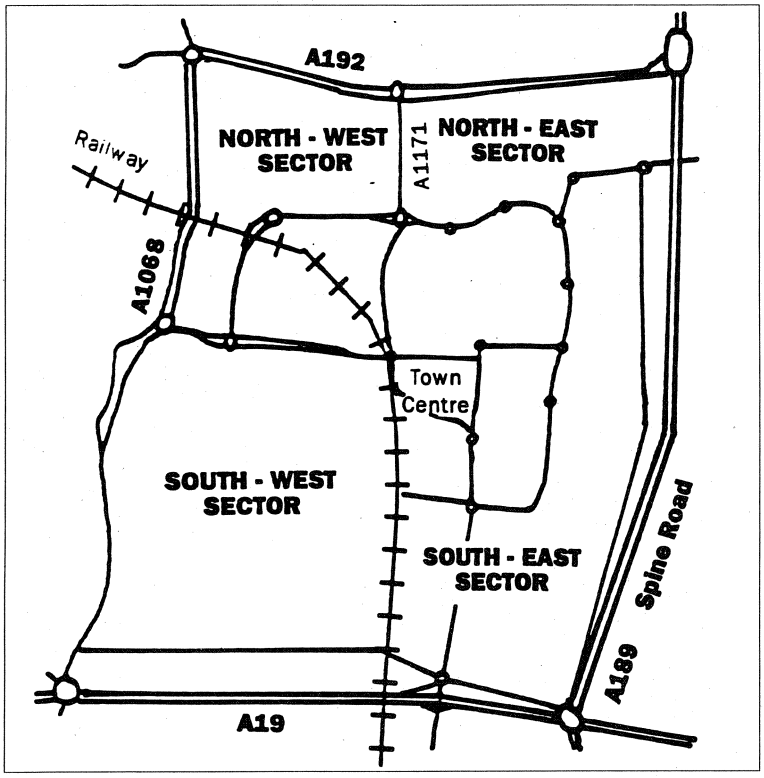
Land is identified for playing space, as follows:

a The temporary provision within the Plan period of playing fields on land identified for educational purposes in SW4 (a);

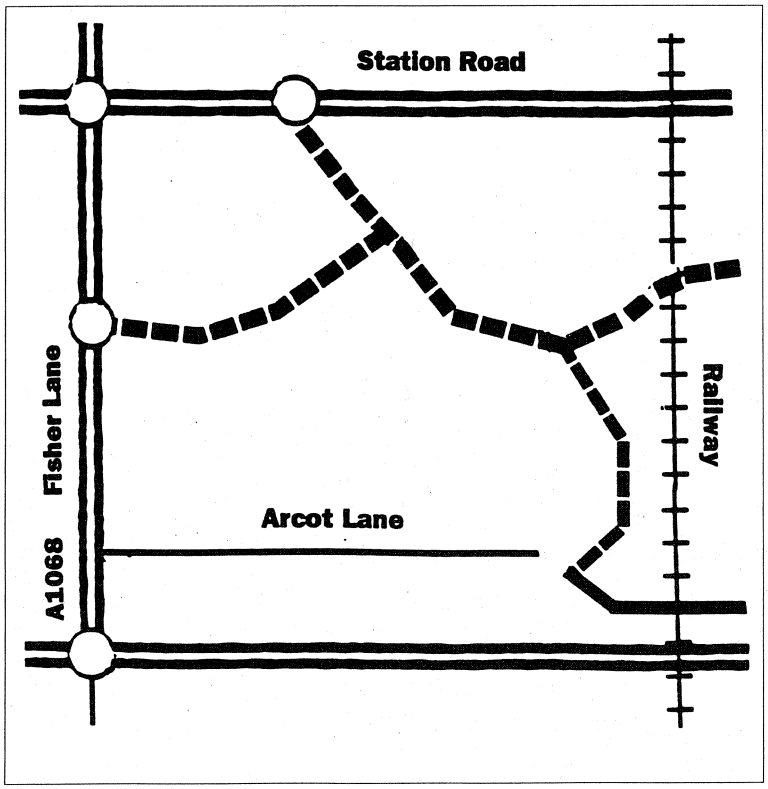
b Equipped playing areas as follows, in line with Policy C4 (i):

- **i a Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play within the vicinity of the land identified for educational purposes in SW4 (a);**
- **ii two Local Equipped Areas for Play at locations within the district centre layout and the North Moor residential area as identified on the Proposals Map.**

DIAGRAM SW-D2



Existing Road Pattern, Showing "Outer" and "Inner" Boxes of Roads



Proposed New Road System - Completing the Inner Box

Proposal ***SW 7*** — *THE ROAD NETWORK*

A road network as indicated on the Proposals Map will be established, in line with Policy M9, at the developers' expense as the sector progresses, with the provision of the following:

a **A link through the proposed residential area between Fisher Lane and the northern section of Beacon Lane;**

b **A separate and discrete service road off Fisher Lane, to provide access to the area allocated under Policy W2;**

c **The incorporation of largely roundabout junctions and traffic calming measures, in line with Policy M6.**

Proposal ***SW 8*** — *FOOTPATH / CYCLEWAY SYSTEM*

A segregated system of footpath / cycleways forming the connections indicated on the Proposals Map will be established, in line with Policy M2, to ensure the timely linking of proposed housing, work activity uses, and community facilities within the sector and also to connect the sector to the rest of the town. Existing routes used by horse-riders will be incorporated into the network wherever possible.

The separate junction is considered necessary in order to keep commercial traffic out of the residential areas and to minimise the temptation of short-cutting through the sector.

The route of these new roads through the sector and the location of the new access points into the sector will adhere to the landscape principles outlined earlier. They will also seek to balance the ease of access to and from the new development with the avoidance of external traffic taking shorts cuts through the existing and proposed residential areas. Significant traffic calming measures will be introduced on stretches of the new road network in order to slow traffic. The network on the Proposals Map is likely to alter slightly as detailed issues are explored.

11.3.7 **Public Transport**

The East Coast mainline on the eastern boundary of the sector carries the electrified passenger services from London to Edinburgh. Although passing through Cramlington, only local services stop in the town, and these have become less and less frequent. Policy M4 in the Movement chapter seeks a relative shift of both passengers and freight from road to rail within the Plan period and safeguards an area adjacent to the railway line immediately next to Damdykes crossing for the development of a second railway station within the town. Although the station site is safeguarded in the Policy referred to, its construction is not part of the Proposals in this Chapter, being beyond those areas to be built in the Plan period.

As far as bus services are concerned, Policy M5 will be implemented with the aim of ensuring that routeing through the sector can be achieved at the earliest possible date.

11.3.8 **The Footpath-Cycleway System**

In common with the rest of Cramlington, the intention is to incorporate, from the outset, a comprehensive footpath cycleway system with a view to separating vulnerable road users from motor vehicles as much as possible.[21] Wherever possible, this approach will also be used in relation to horse riders.

21 *See also Chapter 7, Sub-section 7.2.2.*

A separate, comprehensive system of footpath / cycleways, providing safe and direct internal connections between the housing, local shopping, community and employment centres, schools and public open spaces will be established. Once completed the routes will also form a logical extension to the town's existing network providing connections to the north-west industrial sector, the railway station and the town centre. **Proposal SW8** establishes those stretches that will be provided during the Plan period.

In addition to the existing "country lane" of Beacon Lane, a footpath / cycleway link will also connect north to south using the land strip sterilised by the electricity pylons. The pleasant open aspect of Southern Stream will be utilised to provide the main east-west link across the sector. Further short stretches will be provided between the individual housing estates, the district centre and schools with exact routes defined in conjunction with the road and housing proposals. The alignment of all proposed links will be determined in accordance with the guiding principles outlined earlier.

The proposed network will be fully lit and constructed to specified standards to meet the adoption requirements of the local authority.[22] The number of surface road crossings will be kept to a minimum with use made of light controls at each junction of a distributor road and footpath/cycleway.

11.4 FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

Prior to any development commencing, legal agreements under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 will be entered into with developers and other parties with an interest in the area.[23] A master plan would specify the phasing of development and the funding of all infrastructure and community related works associated with the development. Obligations, to which the Master Plan will be attached, will embody the principle that all the required community-related and infrastructure works shall be funded by the development of the sector, and phased appropriately as the building programme progresses.

Capital works relating to the provision of infrastructure will be phased, as per the Master Plan, with the release of each residential, community or work activity development. These will relate to such matters as:

- the construction of the entire **highway network** including the dualling of Fisher Lane, the bridging of the railway line, the completion of the inner box and the provision of a segregated footpath / cycleway network in conformity with standards set out by the Highway Authority.
- the establishment of an appropriate system of foul and surface water **drainage** to a standard agreed by the Water Authority and the Environment Agency;
- the provision of sufficient capacity to service the sector adequately with **electricity, water, gas and telecommunications** as specified by the relevant public utilities;
- the planting of a **landscape structure** including landscape belts along the A1068 and the main East Coast railway line together with the appropriate landscaping of Southern Stream and the corridor associated with the power cables as agreed with the local authority; and
- the reserving and dedication of those sites identified as **public open space** and for the development of **playing space** including pitches and associated facilities.

It would, however, be unacceptable to expect a single development to meet the costs of providing a First School or community centre. For this reason, an agreed list of community and social facilities required for both the sector and the town as a whole, to be funded via financial contributions from the developers, will be incorporated in the Master Plan. The sum payable will be indexed to take account of financial variations in the economy but will remain consistent between developments regardless of their scale or location within the sector.[24]

The list will include the provision of schools, community recreation centres, equipped play areas, pavilions and sports pitches plus the creation of a trust fund for the management of the S.S.S.I.. It may be the case that the stretch of road abutting the main public open space will be financed from these contributions as it will be difficult to link it with a specific development.

It is also intended to include some developments outside the sector on the basis that the increase in population will affect the needs of the town as a whole. Developers will make a net contribution equivalent to the projected population of the sector as a proportion of the town's population as a whole on its completion. These monies will assist in funding future extensions to Concordia Sports Centre and the town centre library together with a range of upgraded leisure facilities planned for Alexandra Park and the High School.[25]

22 *See also Chapter 7, Policy M3.*

23 *See Chapter 2, Policy G10.*

24 *See also Chapter 2, Policy G11.*

25 *See also the reference to an indoor sports facility above.*

12. West Blyth

12.1 INTRODUCTION

The area referred to in this Local Plan as "West Blyth" is one of two main housing development areas in Blyth. Its first phases, forming the northern half of the area, are now collectively known as "Chase Farm".

West Blyth was opened up for development during the late 1980's. It was previously open fields but was isolated from more open farmland areas by the South East Northumberland Spine Road and the mineral railway line.

South Beach had been the only housing development area of any significance in Blyth for many years and West Blyth was seen as a way of increasing the range of housing opportunities in the town. The location close to the Spine Road was regarded as potentially attractive to commuters, while the entirely new access from Cowpen Road would allow the creation of a distinctive environment with its own landscape structure. The existing schools which immediately adjoin the area would benefit from any increase in child population.

On the other hand, there was a shortage of modern retail facilities in the Cowpen area. There was an opportunity to gain a modern retail outlet for the area and of using this as a lever for development to the south.

Other possibilities existed to add to or make better use of community facilities in the area, particularly in terms of playing space provision.

The superstore at the entrance to West Blyth provides a facility for south-east Northumberland, as well as Blyth itself.[1]

Before house building could commence, it was necessary to agree a Master Plan with the land owner of the northern part of the area, (now called Chase Farm), which corresponded with the area of the original outline planning permission. Such a Master Plan is now in operation. It was the subject of detailed local consultations during 1990, was adopted in Autumn 1991 and is being implemented via a number of Section 106 Agreements with individual developers and with the overall development company in relation to open space provision, recreational facilities and landscaping.

It will eventually be necessary to produce a Master Plan for the Southern Development Area or extend the existing one, which may itself be subject to amendment from time to time.



Bungalows recently built at Chase Farm

1 *See also Chapter 4, Sub-section 4.8.1. Prior to its construction, there was a need to stabilise the land where previous mine workings were relatively close to the surface. This was done by limited, short term opencasting stretching southward to a line, south of which the land is sufficiently stable for house construction. Chapter 1, Sub-section 1.4.1 sets out the stance on opencasting.*

Proposal ***WB 1*** — *CHASE FARM: HOUSING*

The development of the remaining housing land at Chase Farm, allocated as Policy H10 (i) and shown on the Proposals Map, shall be substantially complete prior to the development of the Southern Development Area, (the subject of Proposal WB12), subject to the following:

a The systematic provision by developers of a landscape structure in accordance with the landscape plan outlined in Proposal WB4 below, in relation to which:

i detailed planning permission for particular parts of the housing development will only be granted on condition that associated parts of the landscape structure are implemented in accordance with a scheme agreed by the Local Authority, including a requirement that the first detailed planning permission west of the local distributor road will be only be granted upon the full implementation of Proposal WB4 (a)(ii), below, not later than the first planting season thereafter;

ii planning permissions will be conditioned or Agreements drawn up, in order to ensure that planting takes place in advance of development wherever reasonable and practical, including the implementation of Proposal WB4 (a)(iii), below;

b The provision by developers of access in accordance with Proposal WB3 below, in relation to which the granting of detailed planning permission for particular parts of the housing development will be dependent upon the completion of particular sections of the local distributor road and/or other access routes.

12.2 **THE PROPOSALS**

The proposals in this section reflect the main aims and contents of the existing West Blyth Master Plan. Proposals for the Southern Development Area are less precise but aim to reflect other policies in this Local Plan and take account of the known concerns and aspirations of local people.

12.2.1 **Housing - Chase Farm Area**

Proposal WB1, covers housing land in the northern part of West Blyth. This includes a variety of sizes and shapes of site, as set out in the current Master Plan. It is hoped that, in addition to normal estate housing and self-build schemes, currently underway, the eventual development will include special design housing schemes, as well as contributing towards affordable housing.[2]

Developers will be expected to provide for a phased introduction of a landscape structure and all access requirements.

WB1 (a) sets a framework (literally) within which the agreed housing development will occur. This is the landscape structure the main intention of which is to create a separated and sheltered environment as well as an attractive landscape background within which new development can take place. Different parts of the landscape structure will be strictly timed to coincide with development by the use of conditions, individual Planning Agreements [3] and the main landscape related Planning Agreement. Wherever reasonable and practical, the planting of a structure of trees and shrubs will be sought in advance of house building. Details of the structure are prescribed in Proposal WB4.

WB1 (b) states that the housing development should also occur within a firm network of access provision. It will be necessary to limit the amount of development which is accessed from particular junctions in order that they should not be overloaded. The Master Plan sets out a number of other stipulations regarding the completion of sections of road in relation to the phasing of house building in Chase Farm. Further details on access arrangement are set out in Proposal WB3 below.

2 *The affordable housing is sought in Policy H14.*

3 *The policy on Planning Agreements is Policy G11 in Chapter 2.*

Proposal **WB 2** — *CHASE FARM: OPPORTUNITY DEVELOPMENT SITE*

The feasibility will be investigated of locating a small hotel, in line with Policy L1 (i), and/or a carefully designed, office development, in line with Policy W7 (iv), on a site between the superstore and the housing site to the south, to be accessed, if possible, via the supermarket access road from roundabout WB-R1.

Proposal **WB 3** — *CHASE FARM: ACCESS*

In general access shall be provided by developers through:

a The extension of the local distributor road southward, as shown on the Proposals Map, with the provision of a carriageway of 7.3 metres throughout its length and the inclusion of appropriate junction arrangements and bus laybys;

b Access roads off each junction with the distributor road with a carriageway width of 5.5 metres;

c Estate roads to include traffic calming measures in accordance with Policy M6 while having regard to the the need to allow easy access for buses and the provisions of Policy H21;

d A network of footpath / cycleways including those identified in Policy M2 (ii) and indicated on the Proposals Map, to a standard capable of designation as cycle tracks under the Highways Act 1980, including a new access point to the schools as indicated, plus other necessary footpath links;

e Incorporating the existing public rights of way network, with appropriate diversions if necessary.

12.2.2 **Opportunity Development Site**

Proposal WB2 aims to take further advantage of the strategic location of West Blyth within the road system of south-east Northumberland. Part of the land has outstanding permission for a bingo hall. However, as with the existing superstore, it is the hope that a prestige office, research, or a hotel development in this location could serve the south-east of the County. Should such development not appear feasible in the short to mid term of the Plan period, the allocated use of the land will be the subject of review when this Local Plan comes to be reviewed.

12.2.3 **Movement**

Proposal WB3 sets out in detail how access to and movement through the Chase Farm area will be provided for in phases by developers.

WB3 (a) makes clear that the main spine route through the area will be continued southward from its current southern point to the standard of a local distributor road, which is the third tier of main road below Primary and Secondary routes and above estate distributor roads.[4] This is because the road (Chase Farm Drive) will assist in distributing traffic not just through the new housing area but eventually, when linked to the southern end of Tynedale Drive, around the north-western parts of Blyth as a whole.[5]

As required by the Highways Authority, junctions along the distributor road are being kept to a minimum, with the maximum use of roundabouts. The roundabouts facilitate public transport which will also be helped by the inclusion of specified bus lay-by provision in the West Blyth Master Plan.

It is important to minimise off-site road costs for the eventual developers of the Southern Development Area.

4 *See Chapter 7, Sub-section 7.5.2.*

5 *See also Sub-Section 12.2.10 below.*

WB3 (b) proposes short stretches of access road in the form of east-west spurs from the distributor road, which, like the distributor road itself, need to be provided in isolation and in advance of housing development areas that they are intended to serve.

Both the distributor road and the access spurs are required to include structure landscaping [6] and be flanked by footpaths or footpath /cycleways.

WB3 (c) is in, line with policies in the "Housing" and "Movement" chapters which promote the use of traffic calming measures in housing estates, subject to other considerations of layout - crime prevention etc. It also takes into consideration the fact that buses can only easily negotiate so-called "horizontal" rather than "vertical" traffic calming designs.

In **WB3 (d)** the opportunity is taken to provide safer pedestrian / cycle access to the schools coming up from the south and extending existing and previously proposed networks.[7]

At the same time, it is important to retain the existing public rights of way as far as possible and this is the intention of **WB3 (e)**.

12.2.4 **Landscape Structure**

Proposal WB4 expands on the main intention of Proposal WB1 - to frame the housing development with a landscape structure - by setting down, in more detail, the form that that landscape structure will take.

As already stated, a Section 106 Agreement (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) has been drawn up relating to the provision by developers of the landscape structure, which covers the entire Chase Farm area and encompasses the phasing of that landscaping in relation to housing and other development.

WB4 (a) lists some of the main physical features of the landscape layout sought. Perhaps the major feature of the whole development will be the avenue effect along the main distributor road and the access spurs. In places this will need to be supplemented by some mounding features for the purposes of protecting residential areas from visual and noise intrusion from the distributor road and the superstore traffic. These works will be carried out simultaneously with the building of each stretch of road.

Another major landscape feature will be the 15 metre planting strip alongside the A 189 Spine road, intended to protect the whole area from the overspill effects of the Spine road and activities to the west.[8]

Within the housing development will be the landscape strips which will provide the physical separateness and individual identity of the individual housing areas. Some are being created within the curtilages of houses so as to minimise maintenance and "dead space" implications. Covenants will be needed to provide for their retention in perpetuity.

Finally, not associated with particular housing areas, there will need to be planting around the opportunity development site. This will assist in its marketability as a "prestige" development site.

WB4 (b) cross refers to Policies on landscape retention and enhancement.[9] The existing landscape has some hedgerows and other features which need to be retained to assist the building up of the landscape structure.

12.2.5 **Distributor Road Environment**

The environment of the distributor road has been mentioned in terms of the landscape structure. A second way in which this road will be ensured is through the distribution of housing and open space along its length. It will be the aim that there is an open aspect on one side for most of its length.

Proposal WB5 recognises the importance of adding to the positive environment along the distributor road and its spur access roads, (to supplement the landscaping), by seeking that housing faces onto the road where possible, although vehicular access will be from within housing areas. Within the housing areas themselves, the visual environment can be improved by minimising the length of access roads. It is intended that a substantial length of the distributor road should be fronted by individually designed houses, possibly on large self-build plots. This strip of housing will begin towards the southern end of the Chase Farm area and extend through the Southern Development Area, with certain breaks where there are open space areas or access roads into the housing areas to the rear.[10]

6 *See Proposal WB4 below.*

7 *See Chapter 7, Sub-section 7.2.2.*

8 *This would include the opencasting that has permission in the Hathery Lane area of Bebside.*

9 *See Chapter 1, Section 1.3.*

10 *See also Chapter 3, Sub-section 3.6.2 for more about special design and self-build housing.*

Proposal ***WB 4*** — *CHASE FARM: LANDSCAPE STRUCTURE*

A landscape structure, in line with Policy E6 (iii), shall be provided by developers, in advance of adjoining built development, wherever reasonable and practical phasing to be through negotiation of Agreement(s) under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and through planning conditions associated with individual developments. This will include:

a The creation of the following features, as indicated on the Proposals Map:

- **i mounding alongside parts of the length, and a double Avenue of trees along the full length of the local distributor road and its spurs, (i.e. the access roads running east and west from Roundabouts WB-R1 and WB-R2), these works to be phased so that landscape works are installed at the same time as each phase of the highway works;**
- **ii a tree belt not less than 15 metres wide along the entire western boundary adjoining the A189 South East Northumberland Spine Road and railway, to be phased according to Proposal WB1 (a)(i) above;**
- **iii low mounding and tree planting along boundaries, as specified, which will be a requirement in relation to each detailed planning application, with each section of planting to be completed before any dwellings or other permanent buildings are occupied on any adjoining development site;**
- **iv additional structure planting on the northern and southern edges of the site of Proposal WB2;**

b The retention of existing landscape features and their incorporation into the new works along with the use of native species of trees and shrubs wherever possible, having regard to Policy E5 (vi).

Proposal ***WB 5*** — *CHASE FARM: DISTRIBUTOR ROAD ENVIRONMENT*

In relation to housing immediately alongside the distributor road and the access spurs off it, as proposed above under Proposals WB3 (a) and (b) respectively, it will be sought that:

a Housing should front onto the road but have separate vehicular access from within the housing areas;

b Towards the southern end of the Chase Farm area houses should be of individual design, in line with Policy H21 (vi).

Proposal ***WB 6*** *CHASE FARM: CENTRAL PLAYING SPACE FOR SPORT*

Land identified, in Policy C2 (i), for an open space area at the southern end of the northern development area, shall include at least one playing pitch and a pavilion facility, with the capability, eventually, of forming part of a central sports area, (which will include playing space land at the northern end of the Southern Development Area, proposed under Proposal WB12).

Proposal ***WB 7*** *CHASE FARM: CHILDREN'S EQUIPPED PLAYING SPACE*

Two Local Equipped Areas for Play, in line with Policy C4 (i), shall be provided in association with the Chase Farm development as follows:

a One to serve all present and future housing east of the distributor road proposed at Proposal WB3 (a), to be located adjacent to a new rear entrance to the two schools that face onto Cowpen Road;

b One to serve all present and future housing west of the distributor road proposed at Proposal WB3 (a), to be incorporated as part of, or alongside the main open space area (Proposal WB6).

12.2.6 **Central Playing Space for Sport**

Proposal WB6, the open space allocation, is intended to contribute towards the creation of a central sports ground with requisite changing and other facilities. The remainder of the sports pitch area would lie within the Southern Development Area.[11] [12] Depending on the progress of the Chase Farm development, further investigations into drainage of the land which forms the Southern Development Area and other factors, consideration may be given to entering into an Agreement whereby housing development is permitted on the playing pitch / pavilion area proposed here, so long as a recreational facility is added to the 4.5 acres sought as part of the Southern Development Area.

The joint use of school playing fields may be considered as contributing towards the total need, should the opportunity arise.

12.2.7 **Children's Equipped Playing Space**

Proposal WB7 seeks to ensure that children's equipped playspaces are provided on each side of the distributor road, in locations linked with other facilities - i.e. the pedestrian / cycle entrance into the schools and the main open space area.[13] [14]

12.2.8 **Areas which may be surplus to Educational Requirements**

There have been suggestions that some school land adjacent to the West Blyth Community Development Area may become surplus to requirements. Two sections of school playing fields which the Education Authority indicates may fall into this category.

Proposal WB8 covers a wedge of land within the High School playing field which could provide an extension to the housing area of Chase Farm. Care will need to be taken to amend the requirement for playing space in West Blyth as a whole proportionately with the increase in housing which this site represents or to seek equivalent community benefit should this not be possible. It will also be necessary to assess the loss of the school field against relevant Policies in the Community Facilities Chapter.. Regard should also be had to the townscape policy which seeks to retain the open aspect into the school field from the distributor road.[15]

11 *See Proposal WB12 (c), below.*

12 *Together, they would fulfil the intent of Policy C2 for the West Blyth area.*

13 *See Chapter 4, Sub-section 4.3.3.*

14 *At the time of adoption of this Local Plan, it appears that, for practical reasons, the former may not be possible.*

Proposal ***WB 8*** — *CHASE FARM: ADDITIONAL HOUSING AREA*

On that part of the playing field of Tynedale High School, allocated for housing as Policy H10 (ii), vehicular access shall be from roundabout WB-R2, with detailed permission depending upon:

a The criteria in Policies C6 (i) and C11 (ii); and

b The detailed layout and design not causing any conflict with Policy E18 (ii).

Proposal ***WB 9*** — *CHASE FARM: ADDITIONAL PLAYING SPACE*

Part of the school playing field area close to the junction between the local distributor road and Cowpen Road, will be assessed for its potential to provide an additional playing space and/or amenity open space for the Chase Farm area, under Policy C11 (i) should it become surplus to educational requirements.

Proposal ***WB 10*** — *CHASE FARM: ALL WEATHER, FLOODLIT PITCH*

Efforts will be continued to secure, in association with development of the Chase Farm area, the provision of an all weather, floodlit playing pitch to serve the West Blyth and Cowpen areas and the schools on a joint use basis, to be sited on the site which has planning permission within the site of Tynedale High School. Should such provision be secured, consideration will be given to reducing the overall requirement for outdoor playing space for the West Blyth Community Development area, in line with the criteria set out in Policy C2.

The second area of land, close to the junction with Cowpen Road cannot be built upon but could contribute towards playing space or general open space requirements.

Proposal WB9 aims to maximise the possible ways in which this piece of land could contribute.

12.2.9 **Specialised Sports Facilities**

Proposals WB10 and WB11 reflect the fact that the Sports Council (now Sport England) has identified certain shortages in specialised sports facilities in Blyth. The provision of an all weather pitch will greatly assist the achievement of Policy C2, (on outdoor sports provision),[16] which explains how it can be met. One possibility is to increase public access to the indoor sports hall at the High School which adjoins the development area.

The West Blyth development provides an opportunity to meet these shortfalls: their possible dual use by the schools and the public, the existence of surplus school land and the introduction of new population into the area all combine to boost the argument for such provision.

15 *See Chapter 4, Policy C6 and Chapter 1, Sub-Section 1.6.2.*

16 *The shortfall in indoor provision has been referred to in Chapter 4, Section 4.6.*

12.2.10 **The Southern Development Area**

Proposal WB12 refers to the allocation of the remainder of the West Blyth area for housing and related uses. Further details will be set out in a Master Plan. Land here will be released in a way which provides for continuity with the Chase Farm area. It may be that permission can be granted for housing development to begin from the Tynedale Drive end. If so, the eventual Master Plan will need to ensure that the West Blyth area is managed properly in terms of the amount of construction activity in progress at any given time, having regard to the residential amenity of those already living within the area.

As well as a Master Plan, development will be dependent on suitable conditioning and an Agreement or Agreements. These will ensure the provision of those features which are part of the overall structural requirements which will allow development to proceed.

There is one major element of infrastructure which will need to be put in place prior to the introduction of a residential population into this area. The Highway Authority have made it clear that traffic levels on Cowpen Road are such that, while significant additions to the residential areas served from Cowpen Road have been permitted in the recent past, (including the whole of the Chase Farm area), the addition of another substantial new area. The result would be a need to continue the distributor road that begins at the superstore, through the development area and eastwards from the southern tip of the site to link with Ogle Drive and Princess Louise Road, near Broadway Circle. The off-site part of this link forms part of Policy M9 and may eventually (beyond the Plan period) be provided under the Transport Policy and Programme. However, the Policy makes clear that, should development of the West Blyth Southern development Area come forward within the Plan period, then there will be a need to investigate the extent to which a Planning Agreement may need to be negotiated with the developer to secure the necessary funding for the road link..

Planning permission will also be dependent on Agreements, possibly through a community development fund,[17] for the provision of other facilities which would be providing for the whole development.

Clearly, the need for the road to be funded through development, raises uncertainties over the feasibility of this second phase of the development. The provision of adequate surface drainage could also be costly. Nevertheless, there could be important community benefits to be gained from developing there, including the provision of a passenger rail halt.[18] Access to the halt will need to be safeguarded and this will be a consideration in deciding whether or not to grant detailed planning permission in the area.

The proposal includes a list of some of the main features to be sought within the development.

WB12 (a) covers the linking up of the various footpath and footpath / cycle way systems.

WB12 (b) looks for continuity of landscape structure. It has already been explained how this will give the Chase Farm area its identity. The Southern Development Area is part of the overall concept and should be provided with similar or compatible features.

WB12 (c) makes clear that it is considered important to ensure that this area provides the major playing space for West Blyth and that this is physically and functionally related to any playing field that may be provided in the northern area.[19]

WB12 (d) seeks the addition of at least one further children's playground - in addition to those proposed in WB7.[20]

WB12 (e) acknowledges that the Southern Development Area contains a wetland. Efforts will be made to retain and enhance this as a feature of any development, along with other parts of the wildlife corridor, as appropriate.[21]

WB12 (f) refers to the fact that the area will be expected to provide a quota of affordable housing units in accordance with Policies in the Housing Chapter.[22]



Construction proceeds apace, southward

17 *See Policy G11 in Chapter 2.*

18 *See also Chapter 7, Sub-section 7.3.2.*

19 *See also reasoned justification relating to Proposal WB6 above.*

20 *See also Chapter 4, Sub-section 4.3.3.*

21 *See also Chapter 1, Sub-section 1.2.2.*

22 *See Chapter 3, Section 3.4.*

Proposal **WB 11** — *CHASE FARM: INDOOR SPORTS PROVISION*

The provision of a publicly accessible, indoor sports facility of four badminton court size within or close to the West Blyth development area, possibly as a dual use facility located within one of the adjoining school sites, will be granted permission, in line with Policy C9, subject to considerations of access and amenity considerations.

Proposal **WB 12** — *SOUTHERN DEVELOPMENT AREA*

Land allocated for housing at Policy H10 (iii) shall be granted planning permission for development subject to the signing of one or more Section 106 Agreements.

Where necessary to the granting of planning permission, the Council will seek to negotiate with the developers of the site to ensure:

- **the provision of appropriate services and infrastructure to serve the development, appropriately phased;**
- **the completion of an extension of the Chase Farm distributor road from the northern end of the site to the southern end of Tynedale Drive;**
- **that developers of the site put in place the necessary arrangements to complete the construction of the section of road identified in Policy M9 (ii)(d), connecting the southern end of Tynedale Drive with Princess Louise Road via Ogle Drive, within an agreed time scale;**
- **other facilities which are reasonable, directly related to the proposed development and necessary to the granting of planning permission.**

In granting detailed planning permission, it will be sought to maintain the continuity of development in the West Blyth area by minimising the disruption of construction activity for the occupants of completed dwellings, while safeguarding access to the eventual station site, as identified in Policy M4.

Within the area, developers will be required to make provision for the following:

a **Necessary additions to of the footpath / cycle way system, in line with Policy M2;**

b **The provision of a landscape structure, seeking through negotiation to achieve a degree of consistency with the principles set out in Proposals WB1(a) and WB4 above;**

c **The provision of open space including adult playing space in line with Policies C7 and C2, the adult playing space to be sited towards the northern end of the area, to be physically and functionally related to open space Proposal WB6 in order to provide a central outdoor sports facility;**

d **The provision of not less than one further Local Equipped Area for Play, in line with Policy C4;**

e **The protection and enhancement of areas of nature conservation interest as shown on the Proposals Map and the existing wildlife corridor along the mineral railway line, in line with Policy E2;**

f **Affordable housing, to be negotiated in line with Policy H14 (i), with an indicative target of 100 units, although most of these are estimated to be beyond the Plan period.**

13. South Beach

13.1 INTRODUCTION

South Beach Estate began to be developed in the late 1960's, as a new area of privately owned housing close to the sea.[1]

13.1.1 The "Grid Diagram", 1969

Its development was initially guided by a "grid diagram" (produced in 1969). As well as showing residential blocks, this included other facilities: an area of shops, two First Schools and a Middle School. A large central parkland area was planned. Most housing would be accessed via an east-west distributor road (Amersham Road) which would eventually turn south to meet South Newsham Road. However some areas would take access from South Newsham Road.

Development proceeded generally from east to west but by the early 1980's had varied from the grid diagram with more than one builder by this time involved. Housing densities had been decreasing. The criteria for school provision had changed and the middle school would no longer be required. There had been minimal provision of shops in the chosen location which proved to be relatively inaccessible to the car owning population of the area and had insufficient space to accommodate a modern centre.

Above all, consultation on the Blyth Valley East Local Plan had suggested that a through route for Amersham Road would be unpopular.

13.1.2 The South Beach Master Plan, 1990

This led to the production of a new Master Plan for the area, with a replacement diagram being approved in 1990. The accompanying consultation exercise revealed that the majority of residents did indeed favour the no through route option. This then formed the basis of the South Beach Master Plan.

It was decided to take advantage of the absence of a through route and extend the central parkland



northwards to East Drive, so providing an unbroken pedestrian link through parkland.

It was decided to identify locations for a second First School and a district shopping centre within the remaining development area. The site previously reserved for a school at Barras Avenue could then be released for housing. These two facilities could then also be easily linked into the pedestrian / cycleway network referred to above.

13.2 THE PROPOSALS

The 1990 Plan is illustrated at Diagram SB-D1.

13.2.1 Variations Proposed from the 1990 Master Plan

However the proposals in this Local Plan add into the South Beach equation a strip of housing land to the west of the railway line and east of South Newsham Road which has not previously been considered as part of South Beach but the planning of which is beneficially linked in terms of of phasing development and providing for linkage across the railway line.

A further change from the original Master Plan is a repositioning of the "special design" housing site in the vicinity of Sandringham Park.[2]

1 *The whole of the land area was initially owned by Lord Ridley, (the Blagdon Estate), and most early building was by the construction company Wimpey Homes.*

2 *Further substantial variations from the Master Plan were put forward for consultation at the Deposit stage of this Plan, which would have involved the creation of a sports pitch complex south of South Newsham Road and a rearrangement of the Master Plan layout to allow community facilities on the existing sports ground and housing on the Master Plan First School and District centre sites. However, these have been omitted from this version of the Plan due to changed circumstances and following a large response to public consultation.*

13.2.2 **Housing**

Proposal SB1 covers housing allocations in the South Beach area.[3] The ordered way in which the area is being developed - with particular open spaces, planting, lengths of access road, footpath / cycleway etc. being provided in association with particular blocks of housing development - means that detailed planning permission is only granted subject to the signing of agreements on the exact provision required and its phasing in relation to construction. In addition, South Beach was the first area in which a community provision fund was set up.[4] This money is held in the fund until such time as it can be used for community related projects directly providing for the needs of the estate, such as an equipped children's play area, the laying out of sports pitches / changing facilities etc. and other community buildings.[5]

In terms of general housing provision by the private builders, that part of South Beach accessed by means of Amersham Road is complete.

THE WESTERN DEVELOPMENT AREA

SB1 (a) covers the main remaining development area - The "Western Development Area". House builders are continuing their activities in this area following the completion of the blocks accessed via Amersham Road. Access is via an extension of Sandringham Drive and development is proceeding generally from south to north. Separate housing areas are subdivided by open space and access corridors. There is also a 30 metre buffer strip on the edge which abuts the railway line. Whether affordable housing is sought here will depend very much on the timing of the adoption of this Plan, and the consequent implementation of Policy H14 in the Housing chapter.

LAND AT SOUTH NEWSHAM ROAD / BACK NEWCASTLE ROAD

SB1 (b) refers to an area to the west of the railway line. Much of the area along this strip has been earmarked for housing for some time, in isolation of the general progress of development at South Beach. Some land within the strip has been developed.[6] Partly, the reason for the lack of progress with development of the area, has been the presence of site constraints in the form of drainage problems. The details of development within this area may or may not form part of a revised Master Plan. As a minimum, development briefs will need to be prepared, taking account of the constraints of the area - not least the presence of the railway line. The following will need to be secured through Agreement(s):

- The part funding of the link across the railway which is the subject of Proposal SB3 (c);
- The setting aside of land for affordable housing, through Agreements and/or a revised Master Plan with a contribution of at least 20 units towards overall affordable housing provision assumed.

In addition land will need to be safeguarded for buffer landscaping and the footpath link between the site of that bridge proposal and the junction between Newcastle Road and Laverock Hall Road.

SPECIAL DESIGN SITE

Proposal SB2 recognises that one of the failings of South Beach in the past has been its uniformity. Any variety is largely due to evolution of standard house types and layouts by the builders rather than a genuine mixture of housing design and occupancy groups. A "special design site" has therefore been identified, where a design which adds variety to the townscape will be sought. The preferred use will be for a sheltered housing scheme.

There was an earlier intention to create a woodland on the site, adding to the existing substantial hedgerow. The special design of the site will therefore include the creation of a woodland setting for the houses, especially when viewed from the housing areas to the west. This will involve seeking significant additional tree planting from the site's developer.



Housing faces onto a new Footpath at Woodlands Park

3 *These allocations are made in Chapter 3, Policy H10.*

4 *The amount payable is based on a contribution per hectare of housing development with the timing of this payment specified in the terms of the Planning Agreement and tied to inflation.*

5 *See Chapter 2, Policy G11 and Panel G-P1.*

6 *i.e. Park Farm Villas.*

Proposal ***SB 1*** — *DEVELOPMENT OF GENERAL HOUSING LAND*

Land allocated for general housing development at Policy H10 (iv to vi) will be granted detailed planning permission subject to the signing of individual Planning Agreements relating to the provision of:

- **Access, in accordance with Proposal SB3**
- **Open Space / Buffer Planting, in accordance with Proposal SB5**
- **Payments into the South Beach Community Provision Fund, in line with Policy G11, which will cover especially:**
  - **A Local Equipped Area for Play, in accordance with Proposal SB6;**
  - **The laying out of any sports pitches, courts or greens and the provision of ancillary buildings thereto, which may be required in accordance with Proposal SB5;**
  - **In part or as appropriate, buildings for community use that may be required or proposed, to be located within the area of Proposal SB4 In line with Policy C18 or C19;**

In addition:

a On the Western Development Area allocated under Policy H10 (iv):

i access for the whole area shall be via the estate distributor road proposed in Policy M9 (i);

ii detailed planning permission shall not be granted on any site north of the east-west footpath / cycleway until the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that provision has been made for the construction of the footbridge Proposed at Proposal SB3 (c);

iii the granting of detailed planning permission on each site shall be subject to the provision by the developer, as appropriate to the site of:

- **part of the estate distributor road, proposed in Policy M9 (i); and/or**
- **buffer planting and landscape strips; and /or**
- **any footpath or footpath / cycleway links as may be deemed necessary following these and other routes, whether or not specifically proposed under Policy M2;**

iv sufficient land shall be set aside to allow for affordable housing units, subject to negotiation, in line with Policy H14;

b At South Newsham Road / Back Newcastle Road, on land allocated under Policy H10 (vi):

i development briefs shall be prepared and agreed prior to the granting of detailed planning permission to include the footpath / cycleway link across the land which forms part of the proposals in Policy M2 (ii) and suitable buffer planting along the full length of its common boundary with the railway line;

ii sufficient land shall be set aside to allow for an indicative target of 20 affordable housing units, in line with Policy H14.

Proposal ***SB 2*** — *SPECIAL DESIGN SITE*

Land in the vicinity of Sandringham Drive, allocated under Policy H10 (v), shall be reserved for small scale, specialist, individually designed housing, in line with Policy H21 (vi), with sheltered accommodation for the elderly being the preferred use. A scheme will only be approved if it retains the existing substantial hedgerow and arrangements are put in place to provide significant additional tree planting so as to create a woodland setting for the housing.

Proposal ***SB 3*** *ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS*

In general access shall be provided by:

a The extension of Sandringham Drive northward, as proposed at Policy M9 (i), to include a roundabout at the northern end, as shown on the Proposals Map, as well as bus laybys;

b A network of footpath / cycleways and footpath links, as proposed in Policy M2 (ii), plus any others that may be deemed necessary, with the former, shown on the Proposals Map, being to a standard capable of designation as cycleways under the Highways Act 1980, including suitable crossing points to serve the proposed First School;

c The provision of a new footbridge, preferably capable of taking bicycles and wheelchairs, across the railway line due east of the junction between Laverock Hall Road and Newcastle Road, in line with Policy M2, the funding for which will be sought, in association with future development, through Planning Agreements under Policy G11.

13.2.3 **Movement**

Proposal SB3 deals with general access for the area.

SB3 (a) provides for road access to the Western Development Area. The extension of Sandringham Drive northwards will be to estate distributor road standard for its full length [7] partly because buses will use the road and will be required to turn around. The northern roundabout will allow for this.

SB3 (b) seeks the completion of the planned, extensive network of footpath / cycleways and other footpath links, recognising the fact that it is more economic to install these at the outset of a development, rather than at a later date. Those involving cycleways are indicated on the Proposals Map. Precise routes and the phasing of all these links are, and will continue to be contained in the current Master Plan or its successors

SB3 (c) proposes a footbridge. It is particularly important to link the new housing with the existing services in Newsham across the railway. This is partly because existing services [8] would need to be accessed from the new houses at the western end of South Beach, and partly because services within the western part of South Beach [9] may eventually draw people on foot from areas to the west of the railway line. There is also a more general need to integrate the southern outskirts of Blyth for people moving on foot or bicycle, by providing a safe alternative to the main roads.

The probability of increased desire and need for movement across the railway line, when taken alongside the proposed increase in rail movement along the line,[10] means that the provision of a safe crossing will become increasingly important as the Plan period progresses. It will therefore be ensured that mechanisms are in place at an early date, (through Planning Agreements / The Master Plan), to secure its provision at an appropriate date.

7 *This is partly recognising the possibility that, one day, the road may link through to Plessey Road, (if the Bates mineral railway line is once again taken out of service).*

8 *Those of relevance include a GP practice and various local shops.*

9 *These could include the new First School and any other community facilities.*

10 *See Policy M4.*

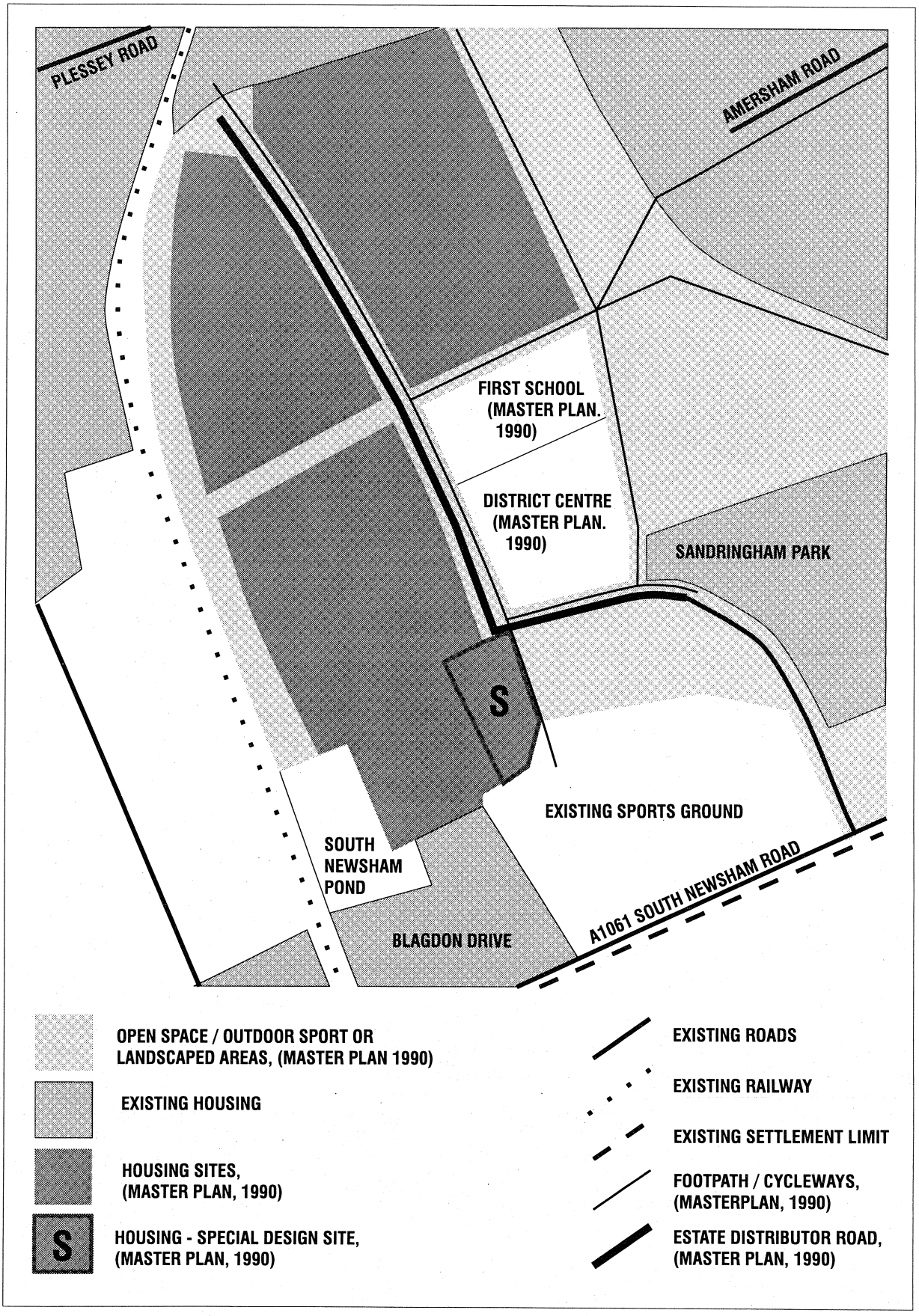


DIAGRAM SB-D1
Extract from South Beach Master Plan, February 1990



First School and Library, South Beach

13.2.4 Site for District Centre, First School and Other Community Facilities

Proposal SB4 refers to allocations within the Western Development Area for a district centre and a first school.

DISTRICT CENTRE

SB4 (a) is the district centre proposal. The term 'district centre' refers to community facilities which would ideally consist of some shops, some related facilities (such as may normally be expected at a local shopping centre) and any other appropriate cultural, religious or other local community facilities that may seek a location there.

Parking will be required to standard but the main aim will be to make the facility, if and when developed, accessible for the people of South Beach. Thus, bus stopping and footpath / cycleway access will be a priority, including the footbridge connection referred to in Proposal SB3. Being adjacent to the central open space, it may be necessary for this site to include the vehicle access to any future changing facilities etc. So, if the site becomes developed, this should be safeguarded.

It is not envisaged that a retail development here would be large scale. In any case, under Policy C17 and others in that section, any proposal of around 1000 square metres or more would be examined in terms of its impact on the town centre of Blyth. Non-retail uses like betting shops and takeaways would not be permitted unless part of a shopping development and, in the latter case would be subject to assessment against Policy C22.

In addition, any proposal thought likely to generate unacceptably high volumes of traffic or cause other disturbance to residential amenity would not be allowed. It will be sought to provide landscape buffers between the site and adjoining housing.

FIRST SCHOOL

SB4 (b) covers the provision of the second First School. The existing First School has, from time to time, been operating considerably above capacity as witnessed by the use of mobile classrooms. At the same time the South Beach population continues to expand. As with the district centre, the bus and footpath cycleway links will be of particular importance. The possibility of a linkage with adjacent open space and possible playing pitches must also be recognised.

OTHER COMMUNITY FACILITIES

A small area has been identified to accommodate other appropriate community facilities. **SB4 (c)** makes clear that considerations applying will be similar to those relating to the school site.

Proposal **SB 4** — *DISTRICT CENTRE, SCHOOL ETC.*

Land central to the remaining development area at South Beach will be developed for community related facilities as follows:

a Land allocated for local community, cultural, religious and small scale shopping and related facilities under Policies C19 (i) and C17 (v) shall be subject to:

- **i adequate vehicle access / parking including allowance for the school site to the north and possible changing facilities etc. for the adjacent playing space area to be accessed via the site;**
- **ii adequate bus stopping facilities;**
- **iii footpath / cycleway connections including requirements relating to the provision of a footbridge, as set out at Proposal SB3 (c);**
- **iv any individual unit within Class A1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 of 929 square metres gross trading area or more, only being permitted if it satisfies an impact assessment as referred to at Policy C17 (v);**
- **v development within Class A2 or A3 of the above Order only being permitted as part of a Class A1 retail development;**
- **vi development not being permitted where its nature or scale would adversely affect residential amenity;**
- **vii associated landscaping and boundary treatment, taking account of the proximity of housing areas;**

b The First School allocated at Policy C10 shall be subject to:

- **i adequate vehicle access / parking including allowance, if appropriate for changing facilities etc. for the adjacent playing space area to be accessed via the site;**
- **ii adequate bus stopping facilities;**
- **iii footpath / cycleway connections including requirements relating to the provision of a footbridge, as set out at Proposal SB3 (c);**
- **iv encouragement, through other planning decisions, of its early implementation;**

c The development of land allocated for other community facilities applying Policy C19 and other relevant policies, shall be subject to:

- **i adequate vehicle access / parking including allowance, if appropriate for changing facilities etc. for the adjacent playing space area to be accessed via the site;**
- **ii adequate bus stopping facilities;**
- **iii footpath / cycleway connections including requirements relating to the provision of a footbridge, as set out at Proposal SB3 (c)**

Proposal ***SB 5*** — *CENTRAL PARKLAND*

Parkland and/or planted areas, (in addition to those already laid out), shall be provided by developers, in line with Policy C7, in the central location indicated on the Proposals Map and in peripheral belts surrounding housing areas and the development as a whole. Within the central parkland area as a whole, scope will be allowed for the accommodation of at least two additional sports pitches, plus changing and associated facilities and any necessary access and parking, while ensuring that there is no adverse effect on residential amenity and while seeking to encourage additional woodland planting.

13.2.5 **Central Parkland / Playing Space and Other Planted / Landscaped Areas**

Proposal SB5, the continuous parkland area from Fulmar Drive to East Drive provides a traffic-free conduit for footpath and cycleway links. The initial levelling, seeding etc. of different sections of the parkland and their associated footpath / cycleways, lighting etc. are tied to different parts of the housing development as detailed in the Master Plan, each part being the subject of a separate Agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Some housing areas will be tied to the provision of areas of buffer or intermediate planting, (also set out in the Master Plan).

It is envisaged that this open space will eventually accommodate some additional playing pitches for the South Beach area (possibly two). These will probably be laid out and changing facilities provided using the South Beach community provision fund. Other funding may be sought depending on what is envisaged. It will also be an aim to increase significantly the amount of tree and shrub planting within this parkland area so as to make it more of an amenity for local residents. It is not certain at this stage how this would be funded.



View North-East from Woodlands Park: An Open Space Strip will be retained alongside the Houses in Picture

Proposal ***SB 6*** *CHILDREN'S EQUIPPED PLAYING SPACE*

At least one Local Equipped Area for Play shall be provided, in line with Policy C4, in association with new housing development, with the preferred location being within the general parkland area east of the western development area.

13.2.6 Children's Equipped Playing Space

Proposal SB6 provides for an equipped play area to serve the western development area. Ideally there should be at least two of these as the area is spilt by the north-south distributor road. However, as a minimum, one is sought which should be sited within the main open space.

It is expected that less formal children's playspace[11] will be accommodated within the central parkland and other planned open space areas, although it may be appropriate for further open space squares etc. to be incorporated into housing areas depending on their individual design.

13.2.7 Other Relevant Policies

The South Beach area also contains the specific protection of the existing part of the central parkland and South Newsham Park[12] and there is a proposal for a cycleway link between the older part of South Beach and Blyth Town Centre via the school complex to the north of Solingen Estate.[13]

11 *See Policy C5.*
12 *See Policy C7.*
13 *See Policy M2 (ii)*

14. South West Newsham

14.1 INTRODUCTION

The analysis of housing requirements in the housing chapter[1] showed that, if all the large development areas to which there is a commitment are successfully completed, the South West Sector of Cramlington comes on stream and smaller sites contribute towards the total as expected, then there should be sufficient plots to meet the district-wide housing requirement to the year 2006, allowing for a satisfactory balance between the development of the two towns.

In spite of this, it is necessary to identify some further housing land at Blyth, (over and above West Blyth, South Beach and other identifiable sites in the built up area), because of the need to maintain a five year supply of housing land at all times including the final years of the Plan period. Should the housing market pick up and a faster rate of new building be sustained throughout much of the Plan period, there is an outside chance that, otherwise, land could be in relatively short supply in Blyth before the end of the period.

The likelihood is that South Beach will become fully developed in advance of West Blyth.[2] In that event, in the interests of continuing a good balance in housing supply in Blyth, it would be wise to maintain a flow of housing land at the southern end of the town to counterbalance West Blyth.[3]

The area to the west of the built-up area of Newsham, stretching out as far as the line of the South Newsham Road Diversion has long been seen as an area into which the built-up area of Blyth will eventually expand. The diversion of the main traffic flows around the outside of the area opens the way for some thought to be given to how this substantial land area could best be accessed via the old road network within the town and how its eventual development could best be developed and phased.

14.2 THE PROPOSALS

The proposals in this Chapter are necessarily general due to the long term nature of the development proposed.

14.2.1 The Need for a Comprehensive Approach

Proposal SN1 sets out the anticipated framework of the development as viewed from the perspective of some years before development is likely to commence.

The first thing to note is that the area actually allocated for housing in this Plan is only approximately one quarter of the eventual overall development area. It is the intention that the development of South-West Newsham should be treated in a comprehensive way, in the same way as the West Blyth and South Beach areas.

It is estimated that the eventual area could accommodate upwards of 800 dwellings in total, should the whole area be developed for housing. For reasons explained in the footnote, it is proposed that the Local Plan allocates the first field area for development, with not many more than a hundred dwellings being permitted within the Plan period.[4] It will be ensured that development does not commence at too early a date, in terms of the successful completion of the South Beach area, by not granting permission until the supply of land in the southern part of Blyth, (defined in terms of the Local Authority Housing Office area of "Blyth South"), falls below a five year supply.

There is also a need for investigations to be carried out into the drainage, access wildlife content etc. of the area, before the land can be released.

On release of the land, development will commence from the eastern end of the land, with the main access being on South Newsham Road, north of the new roundabout on the South Newsham Road Diversion. The reasons for this are:

1 It would allow maximum continuity with South Beach in terms of the provision of infrastructure etc.;
2 It would allow early residents of the South West Newsham area who may need to make use of any South Beach facilities that may be provided, (in advance of the provision of similar facilities for their own area), to be as close as possible to those facilities;
3 It would allow building to commence from the least complicated and most convenient access point on the (by-passed) north-south part of South Newsham Road.

1 *See Chapter 3, Section 3.2.*
2 *The Western Development Area is now well under way.*
3 *There is some evidence that, by having two major development areas in the town, the momentum and variety of development has increased, (taking into account any effects of the recession). Such has been the case since West Blyth was added as a second area in competition with South Beach).*
4 *The housing projections in Appendix II, assume that South West Newsham will come on stream at the earliest during the last five years of the Plan period. The assumption, (for the purposes of looking at how the total housing requirement will be met), is that not many more than100 dwellings would be built in that Plan period. In practice, it is impossible to predict with any accuracy the extent to which it will be necessary or possible to build houses in the area within the Plan period - simply that it is allowed for (and a clear possibility) that some development will happen by the end of the Plan period.*

The first detailed planning permission will be withheld until such time as agreement has been reached over the development of an area at least covering the allocated land - and possibly a larger area. If larger than the allocated land, planning permission would not be granted on the non-allocated part within the Plan period. Depending on the nature of land ownership and prospective developers, there are likely to be a master plan or development brief, the contents of which will be made firm through one or more Planning Obligations.

At this stage, it is not necessary to set out in any detail, the required content of these, but simply to propose a number of principles for inclusion.

SN1 (a) makes clear that, as a comprehensive development, it will be important to apply the criterion of 2.4 hectares of playing space per 1000 head of the population, as has been done at West Blyth, South Beach etc.[5]. This would include adult and children's playing space, the exact needs being subject to further investigation, although it can be stated that an equipped children's play area would be needed within the area of land allocated. Clearly, there would need to be an assessment of whether providing sports grounds within the area would be appropriate, or whether the need could be met elsewhere nearby. In any case regard would need to be had to policies on open space generally.[6]

It has not yet been forecast what other community facilities will be required. Much will depend on the extent of such development at nearby South Beach. **SN1 (b)** states that regard will be had to various Policies in the Community Facilities Chapter, as appropriate.

The land being proposed for development is on the edge of the town and needs to be planned accordingly, with a landscape structure being put in place at the earliest possible date. This is the subject of **SN1 (c)**. The allocated land adjoins the proposed Green Belt.[7] As such, a wide landscaped strip running along the northern edge of the South Newsham Road Diversion should be incorporated into the development. This will be the subject of discussion with land owners well in advance of development coming forward.

A cycle lane has been constructed in association with the South Newsham Road diversion. It will be important to ensure that the new area is well integrated with this network - the subject of **SN1 (d)**.

Affordable housing will be sought to meet needs, through negotiation, in line with Policy H14 - **SN1 (e)**.

It should be added that there will need to be a wide ranging consultation with the general public and other interested parties before the development of this area commences. At a minimum, this will involve all people living and working in the area bounded by the golf course, the railway line and the settlement limit.

14.2.2 Opportunity Development Site - Roadside Uses

The South-West Newsham Diversion is open, and will form a main route into and around the edge of Blyth. It will therefore be appropriate to allow for the possibility of roadside uses along its length. Policies G8 to G10, indicate a presumption against such uses beyond the settlement limits. If suitable sites can be identified within settlement limits, this will help reduce pressure for roadside development in the open countryside.

Proposal SN2 identifies the opportunity for a roadside development such as a petrol station within the South West Newsham Community Development Area, close to the junction between the by-pass and the old section of road that runs north towards Newcastle Road. In recognition of the sensitivity of the location, the proposal contains a number of provisos.

SN2 (a) limits the land take for the roadside purpose to below half a hectare in recognition that this would not be a suitable location for a very large roadside complex.

SN2 (b) allows for its development to take place in advance of the opening up of the housing land, (see Proposal SN1 above), but having close regard to it.

SN2 (c) seeks buffer planting on the north and west sides to separate it from the housing.

SN2 (d and e) take account of the prominence of the location including its juxtaposition to the Green Belt. The 15 metre landscaped set-back from the main road, referred to in Proposal SN1 above, will be pursued, (SN2 (d)). The design sought for buildings and visual aspects of the uses sought, given its location on the new settlement edge of the town, will have full regard to the fact that the site will be visible, from some distance away, (across fields etc.) for the foreseeable future.

SN2 (f) recognises that there are existing houses close to this site. Their amenity will be safeguarded, as appropriate, through a combination of

- the sensitive siting of any new development within the proposal site;
- close attention to the design of any building and other elements;
- close attention to its means of enclosure; and
- a good quality of landscaping.

5 *See Chapter 4, Policies C2 to C5.*

6 *See Chapter 4, Policy C7.*

7 *See also Proposal SN2 below and Policy G7.*

Proposal **SN 1** — *S.W. NEWSHAM DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES*

Land allocated for future housing and associated development at South West Newsham, under Policy H10 (vii), as shown on the Proposals Map will be developed as the first phase of a larger development.

Planning permission shall not be granted until:

- **the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that there is less than a five year supply of housing land in the southern part of Blyth;**
- **there has been further investigation, by the Local Authority, into the detailed aspects of infrastructure, access and service requirements and any environmental safeguards that may be required prior to the site being developed.**

Subject to the further investigation proposed above, development shall proceed from the southern end of the allocated area with motor vehicle access from the north-south section of South Newsham Road.

Detailed planning permission within the allocated land shall be subject to the signing of Planning Agreement(s) between the land owners and/or prospective developers and the Local Planning Authority covering aspects of the detailed development and phasing of housing within the allocated area including:

a **The provision of playing space and other open space in accordance with Policies C2, C4, C5 and C7, with one Local Equipped Area for Play (in line with Policy C4) to be within the allocated area;**

b **Provision for all other necessary community facilities, applying Policies C10, C17, C18 and/or C19 as applicable;**

c **A strong landscape structure, in line with Policy E6, including a 15 metre wide landscaped buffer strip along the northern side of the South Newsham Road Diversion;**

d **Linkage to off-site cycle routes;**

e **Sufficient land shall be set aside to allow for an indicative target of 40 affordable housing units, although some of these will be beyond the Plan period.**

Proposal **SN 2** — *OPPORTUNITY DEVELOPMENT SITE*

The construction of a roadside facility, such as a petrol station, will be allowed in a location close to and north-east of the junction between the South Newsham Road Diversion and the old north-south section of South Newsham Road, as shown on the Proposals Map, subject to:

a **The site being no more than 0.4 hectares in area;**

b **Planning permission being granted with regard to the juxtaposition to future housing;**

c **Buffer planting on the north and west sides of the site;**

d **A set back of 15 metres from the South Newsham Road Diversion to allow for the continuation of the landscape structure proposed at SN1 above;**

e **A design of development which takes account of the prominent location of the site on the edge of the settlement adjoining the Green Belt;**

f **Incorporating safeguards to the amenity of nearby dwellings.**

15. Seaton Delaval

15.1 INTRODUCTION

The role of Seaton Delaval as a settlement within the hierarchy of settlements has been described in some detail in the General Development Chapter of this Local Plan.

It is the intention that Seaton Delaval will remain firmly a village, rather than a small town. However a clear role is identified for it as a local service centre for the surrounding villages. Local Plan policies are geared towards strengthening this role.

At the same time, with a policy of restraint on additional housing development in the small villages, Seaton Delaval will be expected to absorb the bulk of the modest additional housing requirement identified for the Seaton Valley area.[1] This includes a significant element of local need for affordable housing.[2]

The purpose of this chapter is not to expand any further on defining roles for the settlement but, rather, to present a set of proposals with a view to assisting the fulfilment of these roles. The approach is to regard the central place role of Seaton Delaval as a community role and, therefore, to treat the geographical area from which these services will be provided as a Community Development Area.

This Community Development Area is not the whole of the village. Instead, it is defined on a linear axis between the existing centre at Avenue Head and the northern end of the village at Wheatridge Farm.

15.2 PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Community Development Area is defined to take in the problem areas - the constraints to the settlement meeting its intended central role; and the areas of opportunity - where a number of factors coincide to provide at least a partial solution to the problems of the village.

The constraints are within the existing central area. If not addressed, they could undermine efforts to maintain and enhance the defined roles of Seaton Delaval.

The opportunities are located towards the northern end of the village. They would involve the provision of community facilities and environmental improvement, achieved partly through concentrating new housing requirements here.

Each of the above is explained in more detail below.

15.2.1 Central Area: Constraints at Avenue Head

The problems that Seaton Delaval has in meeting its central village role are partly a result of the existence of alternative centres and services that are easy to reach for the increasingly mobile population. This has been detailed elsewhere in this Written Statement.[3] Equally to blame, however, are the constraints which exist at the central hub of the village.

Seaton Delaval Estate, with its coal mining interests, had a number of small villages located within it or on its



New Bungalows adjoining Avenue Head, with an open Countryside Aspect

1 *See Policy H11.*
2 *This is explained in Section 3.4 of the Housing Chapter of this Written Statement.*
3 *See especially General Development Chapter, Section 2.2 Settlement Policy and Community Facilities Chapter, Section on 4.8 Shopping*

edge. These housed estate workers and coal miners. Several of these were dotted along the main road linking Whitley Bay with parts of Northumberland - now the A192. A few have merged to form the current, almost continuous linear settlement stretching from Holywell Village in the south to Wheatridge Farm in the north. The original estate village of Seaton Delaval itself, grew up at the point where this main road was met by the main estate road, known as "the Avenue".

"Avenue Head", as the junction is known, formed a pivotal point, not only for movement in the area but also for local services. This dual role led to the conflict that exists today between two types of movement: movement of people visiting the village centre and those passing along one of the two main A roads which now meet at Avenue Head.

The shopping facility is centred on the roundabout at Avenue Head.[4] There is now no opportunity for that facility to improve substantially at that location, in a way that would meet modern day needs, in an environmentally acceptable manner.[5]

There is also no off-street parking for the shops that exist. Visitors to the shops arriving by car [6] have to park on surrounding residential streets, or else they park on the main roads themselves, often illegally.

Meanwhile, (although no recent figures are available), it is estimated that the village is experiencing a steady increase in through traffic.[7] Therefore, apart from movement within Seaton Delaval, traffic passing Avenue Head may be travelling between different parts of Seaton Valley villages or it may be making a longer journey across the sub-region.

These desire lines will continue to exist and grow, even if there is no further significant expansion of the villages themselves. There is little or no possibility of bypassing the village in the future, due to the built-up nature of the area and the value of surrounding countryside. It must therefore be accepted that a substantial amount of traffic will continue to pass through Avenue Head and indeed that this may increase.

If the situation in the centre of Seaton Delaval is to improve for residents, shoppers and visitors, measures will need to be taken to ease the conflicts described above. Opportunities to add shopping floorspace or increase parking provision in the vicinity are extremely limited. Elements of traffic management, traffic calming, pedestrian / vehicle segregation and environmental improvements are being implemented and will be continued (and measures to this effect are outlined later in this chapter). However their overall impact on reducing the conflicts described would be limited.

A more radical solution is required and the intention is to introduce this over the period of this Local Plan.

Since there is no possibility of removing traffic from either of the main roads which cross at Avenue Head, the solution will involve a dispersal of the focus of shopping and service provision in the village away from Avenue Head. The intention would not be to "kill" Avenue Head as a shopping centre. Its importance as a local shopping and service facility for those living and working within walking distance is well recognised. The aim would be to create an alternative site, with ample parking and good public transport access so as to provide:

- an alternative shopping facility for those visiting from beyond walking distance;
- an enhancement of the local service centre and shopping facility to serve Seaton Delaval and surrounding villages without exacerbating problems at the existing centre.

15.2.2 Wheatridge Park: Opportunities for Solutions

The edge of the settlement of Seaton Delaval is well-defined in terms of the criteria set out in Appendix IX and relating to Policy G6 - as are most of the outside edges of villages in the area. In addition, an approach of limiting further house building in the villages has been adopted.[8]

For these reasons, the settlement limits for the period of this Local Plan have, for the most part, been defined along the existing edge of the built-up area. They follow, well-defined features in the terms of Appendix IX and they place a strict control on large, unbalanced additions to the housing stock and the disappearance of the countryside.

There is one part of the existing edge of Seaton Delaval towards the northern end of Astley Road, which has a particularly haphazard arrangement of land uses which have evolved over time in a piecemeal fashion.[9] The

4 *The shopping centre has not migrated, as shopping centres sometimes do, to a more spacious location, due to the lack of opportunity to do so. But for the attraction of alternative shopping facilities, there is no doubt that there would be more shops around the junction area.*

5 *A site adjoining the junction gained planning permission for housing on appeal. Other nearby open land now designated as Green Belt. This land, if developed, would have a detrimental effect on the Avenue element of the Seaton Delaval Estate Conservation Area. There may be other remote possibilities of shopping expansion in the near vicinity - such as if the Council Offices were to move. An application on a site such as that, may be treated favourably, subject to local amenity considerations and an assessment of the functioning of the Avenue Head centre at the time.*

6 *It is not known what proportion of visitors to the shops arrive by car but it is clearly high. The existence of the two through routes certainly generates passing trade but others will make a special car journey from more outlying parts of Seaton Delaval and surrounding villages.*

7 *General levels of road traffic in South-East Northumberland have increased in recent years. The growth of Cramlington and other large housing developments, (e.g. the very large expansion at Red House Farm, Monkseaton), the increase in commuting between various parts of Tyneside and South-East Northumberland and the rapid increase in the level of car ownership in the region have all contributed to this.*

8 *See Section 3.3 of The Housing Chapter.*

9 *The land is owned by the Hastings Estate (formerly the Seaton Delaval Estate) and is subdivided by a series of leases and sub-leases.*

central use is the Wheatridge Park football ground.[10] This is surrounded by allotments, smallholdings and vacant plots.

Towards the northern end of the area is a field which is underused and in need of reclamation.[11] This adjoins the point on the freight railway line where land is already reserved for a passenger rail halt in the event of the line being reopened for passenger services.[12]

The southern end of the area in question is defined by the former depot site - disused for many years and now with permission for housing development.

The overall appearance of the area is untidy. Although there is no fundamental planning reason why the existing uses should not remain, (subject to reclamation and other "tidying up" measures),[13] the opportunity is there to provide a solution to problems and needs, already mentioned,[14] while removing or relocating the untidy uses.

In order to ensure that it will be fully possible to implement a comprehensive approach and meet these aims, the area as a whole has been defined to include land beyond the previously defined settlement edge.[15]

15.3 **THE PROPOSALS**

The proposals in this chapter aim to be positive, in terms of using the development opportunities described in subsection 15.2.2 above in order to solve problems outlined in sub-section 15.2.1.[16]

15.3.1 **The Wheatridge Park Development Area**

Proposal SD1 sets out a comprehensive framework for the development of the Wheatridge Park area. This area consists of:

a The former BMX track, adjacent to the railway line;

b The farmland to the rear of the area, which is now defined as being within the settlement limit;

c The area of assorted uses fronting onto the A192, including the Wheatridge Park football ground and a number of allotments and smallholdings.

The important principle is that the area is developed comprehensively. The former BMX area is seen as the key site to opening up the area and, although permission on this land will not be dependent on plans coming forward for the other two sub-areas, the developers of this site will be responsible for putting in place the access arrangements and certain off-site linkages with the existing village centre.

The backland area, currently in agricultural use, will be for housing purposes. The Housing chapter has explained that, following the completion of sites with planning permission, for policy reasons, there will be extremely limited scope for further housing development in the Seaton Valley area this will be the location into which most future local housing needs and demands will have to be channelled. This will necessitate arrangements whereby the release of land is carefully phased, while allowing for the widest possible range of housing provision to meet identified needs and contribute towards meeting market demand.[17]

THE FORMER BMX TRACK

SD1 (a) concentrates on the former BMX track. This area will provide the main access point for vehicles into the entire development area, off the A192. The exact position of this junction and access road will be dependent on detailed proposals but it will be required that the option of providing vehicular access from this area to adjacent sub-areas (b and c) is not lost.

The use for which this area will be reserved is retailing, which may take the form of a modest supermarket to fit in with the improvements in local shopping provision sought in Policy C17. It will also allow scope for additional shopping or related service facilities, so as to provide a "one stop" facility. This may be the only way in which to guarantee that some of the pressure would be removed from the Avenue Head area, while increasing the amount of expenditure retained in the Seaton Valley Area.[18] The land allocation is sufficient to allow quite a large development and it will be important to assess any proposals - e.g. for a larger supermarket of around a thousand square metres or more - for its possible adverse impact on existing centres, including that at Avenue Head.[19]

10 *The Wheatridge Park ground is currently used by the Seaton Delaval Amateurs Football team. They have, within recent years, invested in a car park, the extension of a building and other works. They are looking towards further investment - possibly grant aided, but may be prepared to move if assistance was given and a decision one way or the other made at an early date. It is understood that they would not be prepared to move out of Seaton Delaval all together.*

11 *This field is leased from the Hastings Estate by Blyth Valley Borough Council and was used as a BMX track for a while.*

12 *See Policy M4.*

13 *For instance, none of the uses causes particular problems for nearby housing areas.*

14 *i.e. an alternative service centre to tackle the problems at Avenue Head and the accommodation of additional housing for local needs and demands.*

15 *This is currently farmland. As with other pieces of land in this area, it is in the ownership of Hastings Estate.*

16 *It should be noted that the proposals do take into account some uncertainty over the ease of development of the defined Wheatridge Park area, (in terms of its service provision etc.).*

17 *It is acknowledged that, in times of high market demand, there could be periods when not all potential demand can be met in the Seaton Delaval area. The strategy is to direct demand to the main towns. These issues are dealt with in Chapter 3.*

18 *Without complementary shops and services, car borne shoppers visiting the new facility might also make a stop at Avenue Head. While assisting the survival of that centre, this could also exacerbate parking problems there.*

19 *See Chapter 4, Section 4.8.*

As stated above, there must be provision for necessary access points into this area of land and to adjacent development sites. The fact that the site adjoins the proposed rail passenger halt will also have implications for the layout of roads within the site area.

The establishment of a shopping and service centre here will depend, for its success, on the provision of adequate off street car parking and good public transport connections. At present, some of the main connecting bus services pass this point in any case. Efforts would need to be made to create an appropriate bus turning and stopping facility necessary to serve the development. This would be assisted if the policy of reopening the adjoining railway line for passengers were successful and a rail halt provided at this point.[20]

The site area allows adequate land to accommodate all of the above. If land remains following the securing of service provision along the lines suggested above, then, the accommodation of some housing units may be considered, taking account of other parts of this Proposal.

Should the site remain undeveloped for some years, the current poor state of the land will have a greater bearing and reclamation may be pursued independently of development.[21]

It is clear that off site works will be required to allow the development of the site to proceed - not least to assist safe access from the main road. As such, a Planning Agreement will be needed. Some mixed uses, such as dog kennels exist towards the back of the site. Should it be justified, their suitable relocation will have to occur to the satisfaction of the occupier before development can proceed on those particular areas.

It is considered desirable that good and attractive pedestrian links to the facility are maintained. This will be a consideration in making future improvements along Astley Road/A192 within Seaton Delaval.

LAND TO THE REAR OF EXISTING DEVELOPMENT

SD1 (b) concerns the, currently agricultural, land to the rear of the existing developed area, which forms the main housing element of the Wheatridge Park proposal.

This has now been included within the settlement limits. It has been defined so that the development site created will meet requirements without prejudicing either the open aspect from Manners Gardens or the separation between Seaton Delaval / Double Row and the village of New Hartley. Indeed, the intention is to improve the appearance of the edge of Seaton Delaval, as viewed from the Seaton Delaval Estate including the Avenue by screening the views of the haphazard buildings of Double Row.

It should be emphasised that the settlement edge created as a result of this new development is intended to be permanent. The long term Green Belt has been defined to include farmland right up to this line. The proximity of good quality farmland to a new development area, such as this, means that there will need to be very close consultation with farming interests on detailed applications along the new settlement edge.[22] [23]

As well as housing, the land defined in SD1 (b) will include any ancillary facilities considered necessary.[24]

Since it is absolutely crucial that development achieves the variety, scope and timespan referred to above, planning permission will not be granted in outline until a Planning Agreement has been signed between the land owner and the Local Planning Authority, (and possibly any prospective developer(s)), setting out the details and phasing of development over a large area of land. It would be unreasonable to expect prospective developers to take on the whole of the allocated area in this way. Therefore a "phase one" area is defined by defining a line (SDx on the Proposals Map). This will include about half the total area and will form the minimum area that would have to be considered in a comprehensive way before Planning permission is granted. It will be the preferred approach that the details of the Agreement are set out in a master plan or development brief and consulted upon extensively before final agreement is reached.

There are a number of elements that will be required for inclusion:

- Firstly, there is a strong need for the site to contribute towards **affordable housing provision**. Affordable housing demands have been dealt with extensively in Chapter 3.[25] The needs identified therein for the Seaton valley area are high and could not possibly be fully met within this, the only major housing site to be allocated. It is nevertheless considered that the land could contribute in the order of 100 units which, taking into account relative building densities etc., would probably occupy around one fifth of the overall land area. 60 of these units would be provided within the "phase one" area, (to the south-west of the line SDx).

- Secondly, one facility which will be required to serve the area as a whole is a **Local Equipped Area for**

20 *See Chapter 7, Policy M4.*

21 *See Chapter 1, Sub-section 1.5.3.*

22 *Normally, the main consultee would be the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.*

23 *It is now predicted that some of the housing will be completed beyond the end of the Plan period. This is due to the relatively large amount of housing that has received planning permission in Seaton Delaval and New Hartley in the months prior to the adoption of this Local Plan.*

24 *Examples could include toddler's play spaces or seating areas within certain types of housing scheme, bus turning areas etc..*

25 *See Chapter 3, Sub-section 3.4.*

Play.[26] From the present perspective, it is considered that this would be best located in the heart of the housing areas and it is stipulated that the facility should form part of the "phase one" area.

- Thirdly, in terms of measures required from developers of the area, there may be **certain safeguards**. For example, if the Wheatridge Park football ground continues to operate once construction has started, there may be a need to protect housing from the overspill effects of the activities there.

- Fourthly, some of the adjoining uses such as allotments or kennels could require relocation for development to be able to go ahead.

In some ways, due to its greenfield nature and the fact that its current use as farmland does not present any particular problems that would be solved by its development, this land area could be seen as the reserve development land. In practice, however, it is likely that development, (on part of the area at least), will precede the opening up of some of the road area fronting the A192, (see below for explanation).

As a general control on the release of housing land, it will be ensured that, should there be a single developer for the ***whole*** of the allocated area, then the more north-easterly part of the area, (furthest away from the main road - to the NE of the line SDx), will not be granted detailed planning permission until the substantial completion of the area south-west of the line SDX.

In terms of design, there is the need to avoid uniformity, which could be out of keeping with the village setting. Variety and separateness of character will be enabled by seeking to limit the area covered by individual detailed permissions and requiring strong boundary treatment, in terms of landscape strips. There should also be careful control over the form of development on the sensitive edges of the site facing onto permanently open countryside which can be viewed from parts of the Seaton Delaval Estate Conservation Area, including the Avenue. The use of self-build plots, demand for which is relatively high in Seaton Delaval, and the affordable housing policy will also help to create variety. If it is considered that a particular site is particularly prominent, the use of the special design site approach may be considered.[27]

LAND FRONTING THE A192, INCLUDING WHEATRIDGE PARK SPORTSFIELD AND THE ALLOTMENT AND MIXED USE AREA

SD1 (c) covers a site which, unlike the other two, has a complicated pattern of established uses. These could remain indefinitely or they could be removed / relocated (in full or part) and the land area thus released incorporated into the overall housing (and associated development) area. Should the latter be the case, it would be likely to happen later rather than sooner due to the time taken to relocate. The access arrangements for the other three areas will therefore be designed to allow for the possibility that this area will not be part of the equation - at least at first.



Traffic Management at Avenue Head

26 *Although this type of facility will be provided on the opposite side of Astley Road, (within the existing Wheatridge housing area), the new development area, (being in an area of under-provision and across a main road), should have its own "L.E.A.P." - see also Policy C4.*

27 *See Policy H21 (vi).*

Proposal **SD 1** — *WHEATRIDGE PARK*

The area around Wheatridge Park defined on the Proposals Map will be comprehensively developed for a combination of housing and community uses, in accordance with allocations, with detailed arrangements for the development of the land, as follows:

a Land adjacent to the A192 and the railway line, allocated for shopping use in Policy C17 (v) shall accommodate:

- **i development within Class A1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, with any individual retail unit of 929 square metres or more gross trading area being subject to assessment, as referred to in Policy C17 (v);**
- **ii development within Classes A2 or A3 of the above Order, only as part of a Class A1 retail development;**
- **iii the main access junction and road from the A192, with the capacity to serve this site, plus sites (b) and (c) below and with safeguarding of access to sites (b) and (c) below;**
- **iv access to land safeguarded for a passenger rail halt under Policy M4 (ii) and any associated car parking;**
- **v appropriate servicing, parking and bus stopping and turning requirements, necessary to serve the development;**
- **vi housing, only if there is scope following the accommodation of (a)(i, iii and iv) above and subject to satisfactory integration with surrounding development.**

Should the land remain undeveloped for a period, then Policy E11 shall be applied, if considered appropriate The provision of off-site works necessary to the development will be negotiated with the developer as part of a Section 106 Agreement. It will be a requirement that any displaced uses are suitably relocated before displacement should this be justified.

continued....

The proposal relating to this land therefore allows for a range of possibilities, including partial relocation of the existing activities.

Should the existing uses remain, it would be necessary to seek some consolidation of the various uses and environmental improvements in tandem with development of the other three areas.

Displacement of allotment, sports or other premises would be assessed against the relevant Policies and/or the prevailing circumstances in relation to individual holdings. The developer would be responsible for their satisfactory relocation.[28] [29]

Should the housing option be pursued, it would be necessary for it to be a continuation of development in the backland area, with access being from within that area or via the former BMX track area, rather than increasing the number of access points from the A192. Planning permission would only be given once the form of the development of the farmland area ("b" above) was known, (i.e. following the granting of permission there).

Given the independence of this area from the other two, it would be acceptable for permission to be granted for improvements to the sports ground -possibly involving some additional land take.

28 *See Chapter 4, Sections 4.5 and 4.3 respectively.*

29 *The Plan does not identify any area into which allotments or smallholdings can be decanted if displaced from the vicinity of Wheatridge Park. However, allotments are an acceptable use outside settlement limits. Any proposed resiting can therefore be considered based upon criteria set out within this document. Uses would be subject to the restrictions of Policies G8 to G10. There are some small businesses in the current area of allotments at Wheatridge Park. If there is relocation to a location in the Green Belt, it will probably not be possible for the businesses to move or set up there. This is partly due to a general presumption against buildings within the Green Belt - see Policy G8.*

Proposal ***SD 1*** *continued* *WHEATRIDGE PARK*

b Land to the rear of existing development and alongside the railway, allocated for housing use in Policy H13 shall accommodate housing and any ancillary community use that may be identified as being required; planning permission will only be granted subject to the signing of a Planning Agreement or Agreements between the land owners and/or prospective developers and the Local Planning Authority, covering at least the whole of the area south-west of the line marked SDx on the Proposals Map, to include the following aspects of the detailed development and phasing of the housing within the area:

i the setting aside of sufficient of the land identified for housing to allow for an indicative target of at least 100 affordable subject to negotiation which should allow for the following:

- **the possibility that land within SD1 (c) could come forward for housing in which case a proportion of the total number of units could be located within that area;**
- **arrangements for the provision of approximately half of the indicative target number of units to be in place as part of the Planning Agreements for the area south-west of line Sdx referred to above;**

ii the provision of one Local Equipped Area for Play, in line with Policy C4, to be within the land area south-west of line SDx;

iii any works necessary to protect residential amenity from the effects of existing, adjoining uses or to allow for the continuation of those uses including suitable boundary treatment;

iv the relocation of any displaced uses before displacement occurs, should this be justified;

c Within the area fronting the A192, allocated for development in Policy H20 (i), where there is a mixture of existing uses, planning permission will be granted, covering all or part of the area for:

i housing, subject to:

- **permission not being granted in advance of permission being granted for development within (b) above;**
- **it being capable of satisfactory integration with that development;**
- **the developer being responsible for:**
  - **the relocation of any displaced sports facilities, in line with Policy C6;**
  - **the relocation of any displaced allotments, in line with Policy C8;**
  - **the suitable relocation of other displaced uses which may require relocation**
  - **any works necessary to protect the residential amenity from the effects of any remaining, existing uses or to allow for the continuation of those uses;**
- **vehicular access being taken from the area (a) or (b) above;**

ii outdoor sports pitches and ancillary buildings and car parking including expansion of the existing facilities if proposed.

15.3.2 **Other Housing Opportunities**

The settlement limits around the village are now drawn in such a way as to allow scope for additional small housing schemes to add variety to housing provision serving the Seaton Valley area. It is anticipated that several small schemes could emerge by the end of the Plan period, through careful planning within these limits.

15.3.3 **Avenue Head Local Service Area**

Proposal SD1 (a) (above) has the aim of shifting some of the overspill effects of having a concentration of shopping and shop front services at Avenue Head. In the meantime, until the idea is put into practice, it will be necessary to permit service uses to continue to locate close to Avenue Head so that the village can continue to fulfil its role as a local service centre.

Proposal SD2 defines a "Local Service Area" the main purpose of which is to provide an area into which retail and related service uses can locate themselves, while protecting the amenity of residential properties in the immediately surrounding area.

Such an area has been defined previously but this Local Plan widens the definition slightly. This is an attempt to recognise the extreme parking problems and take advantage of the possibility of spreading the load, in parallel with Proposal SD3 below, along more of the length of Astley Road.

SD2 (a and b) defines the uses that will normally be favoured within the defined area, subject to local safeguards and Highways considerations. These are basically the shop front uses. Retail use will normally be permitted, subject to local amenity considerations such as parking generated, shop front design etc. Other uses will be permitted up to a threshold defined in part (b) of the Proposal. Office related uses such as banks, building societies etc. may be permitted. Hot food take-aways will be allowed in principle, but will be assessed against Policy C22 (i).[30]

SD2 (c) takes account of the need to keep a certain proportion of frontage in retail use in order to retain the vitality of the centre.[31] A retail frontage policy is applied in Blyth Town Centre where there are alternative routes through the town centre for pedestrians. In Seaton Delaval, it would be inappropriate to exclude non-retail shop front services from any part of the area. This is because the aim is to allow for the full range of services - not just retail shops -to enhance the service centre role.

Taking as its base the full length of frontage within the defined area which is not in residential use, it is proposed to prevent the proportion of this in non-retail (and non-residential) use from falling below fifty per cent of the total. This should ensure a continued retail presence on most stretches.

It may be necessary to review this policy in the light of this watershed being breached or the development of the centre proposed at Proposal SD1 (a).

15.3.4 **Avenue Head Environmental / Parking Improvements**

Proposal SD3 is the other wing of the approach at Avenue Head and its surrounding area. This is to try to achieve some improvements to the immediate environment and parking facilities in the area. The main aims will be to:

- provide some additional parking close to the hub of activity;
- spread the load of shopper parking over a slightly wider area;
- remove as much of the conflict as possible between
  - pedestrians and vehicles
  - vehicles stopping in the area and those passing through;
- improve the environment and general appearance of the central area for those visiting it and living or working there.

SD3 (a) involves the creation of a modest additional car parking area in the immediate vicinity of Avenue Head roundabout, making use of existing Highway and open space. It is considered that the slight loss of public open space would be more than compensated for by the overall improvement to the environment that would result.[32]

Along Astley Road, there is scope to use the wide pavement on the northbound side to create formal parking bays.[33]

SD3 (b) refers to the general policy of maximising the use of traffic management measures to alleviate problems of congestion and conflict. The measures proposed at SD3 (a) will assist the bringing forward of traffic management proposals at this location.[34]

30 *See Chapter 4, Sub-section 4.13.1.*

31 *Issues of vitality and viability and the reasons for retail frontage policies are explained fully in the Chapter 4, Section 4.8.*

32 *For example, additional seating and other pedestrian features could be added. The possibilities of extra planting on the remaining open space area could also be investigated.*

33 *This would alleviate the problem described earlier. Parking problems could be eased further by cars parking further north along Astley Road. The likelihood of this is assisted by Proposal SD2 which defines the Local Service Area to include a substantial length of the frontage concerned.*

34 *Some have recently been implemented, as at the adoption date of this Local Plan.*

Proposal **SD 2** — *AVENUE HEAD LOCAL SERVICE AREA*

In line with Policies G4 (ii) and C17 (ii), a Local Service Area is defined in central Seaton Delaval, comprising Avenue Head and surrounding blocks of buildings, as shown on the Proposals Map. Within this area:

a **Uses falling within Class A1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 will be granted planning permission subject to other policies and local amenity considerations;**

b **Unless (c) below applies:**

- **i** **applications for uses falling within Class A2 of the above Order will be granted permission subject to other policies and local amenity considerations;**
- **ii** **applications for additional A3 uses will be assessed against Policy C22;**

c **Planning permission for change of use from Class A1 Retail to Class A2, Class A3 or other non-residential use will normally be refused if it leads to the total frontage in uses that are neither residential nor Class A1 exceeding 50 per cent of the total non-residential frontage.**

Proposal **SD 3** — *AVENUE HEAD ENVIRONMENT / PARKING IMPROVEMENTS*

Improvements in the vicinity of Avenue Head will be pursued as resources allow, including:

a **The creation of a car park involving part of Hartley Street West and the open space to its north and the creation of formal parking spaces and other environmental improvements along the full length of Astley Road, in line with Policies M8 and E22;**

b **Traffic management measures in association with (a) above and in line with Policy M6.**

16. Blyth Quayside

16.1 INTRODUCTION

Blyth Quayside is the first of three localities in this Plan,[1] which are defined as "Local Areas for Action". As such, it is being identified as a key location with scope for improvement and opportunities to achieve something positive through planning measures.

In the late 1980's a study was jointly commissioned by Blyth Valley Borough Council, Northumberland County Council and the District Councils of Wansbeck, Castle Morpeth and Tynedale in order to arrive at a strategy for European Regional Funding. The regeneration of Blyth riverside was one of the study's main recommendations. This included the introduction of housing along with mixed development.

This was followed by the commissioning of further studies, concentrating on the areas close to the river and the town centre but outside the Operational Area of the Port of Blyth. The recommendations of that study form the basis of the proposals in this chapter although certain amendments have been made in the light of subsequent findings.

The improvement of the area will be achieved incrementally over a period of ten years by taking advantage of opportunities as they arise, with a certain amount of "pump priming" activity on the part of the Council, mainly on the environmental side. There will inevitably be a certain element of business relocations. Compulsory purchase powers will be used where special circumstances require. Subject to the evolution of land uses in the vicinity, it is intended to enhance the area on and adjoining Plessey Road.[2]

The strategy for the area will consist of five main elements:

1 Renewal towards Bridge Street based on **town centre related uses**;
2 Reinforcement of **small business activities and a continuation of port uses**;
3 **A buffer zone** between these two to include some work activity uses as well as appropriate screening;
4 **Environmental improvements** in the central part of the area, including the preservation and enhancement of the Heritage Conservation Area and buildings of merit;
5 **Rationalisation of accesses** and construction of new roads.

The general approach will be to retain existing buildings of intrinsic or townscape merit; in many cases new uses will be found for these. Meanwhile, efforts will be made to relocate some uses which could detract, in visual, functional or other terms, from the aims of the development area proposals. The development of these and other gap sites will be encouraged.

The phasing of the development, to be co-ordinated by means of an overall plan, will be aimed at minimising disruption and disturbance.

It is not envisaged that there would be significant retail activity although small local shops or factory / craft shops may be appropriate in the mixed area towards Bridge Street. There is a concentration of leisure activities at the eastern end of Blyth town centre. It would be logical for any extension to this to be directed towards the Quayside area. This in turn will help the area become more vibrant.[3]

16.2 THE PROPOSALS

The Proposals below cover the area set aside for work related uses, the mixed use and intermediate areas and finally the area immediately adjacent to the river.[4]

16.2.1 Work Activity Area

Proposal BQ1 tries to cater for work activity uses within the area. It would not be the intention to exclude work activity from the area of Proposals BQ2 and 3. However, by setting aside an area for industrial uses, it will be possible to relocate uses which might hold back regeneration within that zone, for reasons of noise or visual intrusion, while helping to revitalise, in particular, the more derelict block to the north of Quay Road.[5] The favouring of work related uses in that part of the area closest to the Quayside will also ensure that the interests of the Port of Blyth are protected.

1 *All are in or around Blyth. See also Chapters 17 and 18.*
2 *This is considered to be appropriate, since this was precisely the location of the market place in old Blyth.*
3 *The Quayside was also been identified as the preferred location for an arts centre for Blyth. (See also Chapter 4, Section 4.10).*
4 *Development within the Quayside area being adjacent to the River Blyth estuary, may have implications relating to the Estuary Management Plan. In addition regard will need to be had to any detrimental impact upon the Northumberland Shore SSSI and the proposed Northumberland Coast SPA and RAMSAR site which include areas of the Blyth Estuary and shore.*
5 *See also Chapter 6, Section 6.2.*

Proposal **BQ 1** — *BALLAST HILL / QUAYSIDE AREAS*

Within the area of land in the vicinity of Ballast Hill and Quayside, identified for continued general and local employment and business park use under Policy W1, with port uses also being favoured, applying the last part of Policy W4, any redevelopment will be for small businesses within Use Classes B1, B2 and B8 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987. Permission may be refused if:

- **it is considered that the use concerned would be visually intrusive, as viewed from within the areas of Proposals BQ2 or BQ3 which are the subject of regeneration proposals; or**
- **the criteria of Policy E1 (i), relating to the Special Protection Area, are not satisfied.**

Proposal **BQ 2** — *SUSSEX STREET / RIDLEY STREET / BRIDGE STREET AREA*

In an area between Sussex Street / Ridley Street and Bridge Street, planning permission will be granted for infill development, and/or refurbishment of existing buildings, for uses falling within Classes A1, A2, B1, D1 and D2 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, subject to necessary safeguards to protect the amenity of the Conservation Area and existing housing, where compatible with port operations and the provisions of Proposal BQ4.

Proposal **BQ 3** — *INTERMEDIATE AREA*

Vacant land and existing buildings, including port operational land, should it be released from port use in the intermediate area between Proposals BQ1 and BQ2, are identified as a buffer zone in which Classes B1 and B8 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 and motor trade uses would be acceptable along with appropriate screening, subject to necessary safeguards to protect residential amenity and the provisions of Proposal BQ4.

16.2.2 **Area for Mixed Uses**

Proposal BQ2 covers an area which is more removed from the Quayside itself. Here, town centre related uses will lead the renewal effort, but without detriment to the amenity of existing housing. Possible conflicts between existing uses and new uses and the requirements of a working port will be considered in the light of the material evidence available, including the Council's Quayside Impact Study. Some new non-family housing has been permitted in the area and existing housing will be retained but further housing will not be promoted by the Borough Council at this stage. Included in Proposal BQ2 will be small scale retailing, workshops and offices as well as appropriate leisure uses.

Proposal BQ3 covers an intermediate area between the work activities (towards the Quayside), and the mixed zone, (towards Bridge Street). Here, small scale work activities compatible with nearby residential uses will be encouraged and appropriate screening works sought.[6]

6 *It may be that the situation regarding residential use close to the port could be reviewed when this Local Plan is next reviewed.*

Proposal ***BQ 4*** *ENVIRONMENTAL UPGRADING OF QUAYSIDE AREA*

The upgrading of the environment within the area covered by Proposals BQ2 and BQ3 will be achieved, while taking full account of the continuation of port activities, as follows:

a Development will only be permitted, if its form and the activities involved, including during construction, are acceptable in relation to:

i The possible environmental impact of port operations, applying in particular Policies W3 and M7 (ii). Any adverse impacts of the proposal on the present or future operation of the port, or vice versa, applying in particular Policies W3 and M7 (ii), as weighed against any proposed mitigating measures, and the relative positive benefits of the proposal itself and on the continuing and future planned operation of the Port.

ii The need to contribute towards the preservation and enhancement of the Heritage Conservation Area, in line with Policy E15, while seeking to implement elements of Policy E16 (ii);

b Visual aspects of all development proposals will be a priority in considering applications, applying Policy E17 (i);

c Planning permission for retail use will only be granted on a small scale, in line with Policy C17 (iii), except where they it is ancillary to some other use;

d Vehicular access will be rationalised as follows:

i the aim will be to limit access for heavy goods vehicles in accordance with Policy M7 (ii)(a);

ii access from the rear of any properties facing onto Quayside, Quay Road, Bridge Street and Wellington Street East will be encouraged in order to minimise any conflict with Port activities;

e Regard shall be had to the operational requirements of the Port of Blyth;

f The amenity shall be enhanced in the area on and adjoining Plessey Road, including the improvement of pedestrian priority.

Proposal BQ4 covers the combined area of Proposals BQ2 and BQ3 and identifies ways in which the upgrading of the environment will occur.

BQ4 (a) concerns two major and contrasting factors that will need to be taken into account in assessing individual development proposals and also the construction work involved in implementing them.

Firstly, there is the impact of Port operations on the proposed activity and vice versa, (as already discussed). This impact may extend to areas away from the immediate Quayside environment. Clearly, adverse impacts would have to be weighed against any proposed mitigating measures, and the relative positive benefits of the proposal itself and for the continuing and future planned operation of the Port.

Secondly, it will be the aim to add to the quality of the Heritage Conservation Area which adjoins, bearing in mind the possibility that, following further investigations, this Conservation Area will be extended to cover more of the Quayside Area.[7]

BQ4 (b) deals more generally with uses that might be introduced, especially their visual impact, and the possibility that encouragement could be given separately to positive proposals. Efforts will be made to ensure that the fullest possible use is made of existing buildings in the area, rather than encouraging demolition and replacement. Once again, full account will be taken of the fact that there are Listed Buildings and part of the area is a Conservation Area and that the Conservation Area status may be extended.

BQ4 (c) recognises that the introduction of extraneous traffic accessing a facility that could equally be

7 *See Chapter 1, Sub-section 1.6.1 for details of the Heritage Conservation Area; Policy E15 covers the approach to be taken on proposals affecting a Conservation Area; Policy E16 covers the possible extension of this Conservation Area.*

Proposal ***BQ 5*** *THE DUN COW QUAY*

It will be the aim, through agreement with Blyth Harbour Commission to enhance Blyth Quayside as a visitor attraction in its own right, in line with Policy L2 (i) while adhering to Policy E1 (i), in particular to:

a Retain access to the water's edge, as at present, for people on foot and all types of road users, in line with Policy M2 (v);

b Achieve environmental improvements on the Quayside, including the possibility of using the Quayside for passenger carrying boats from the Black Steps landing point.

accommodated elsewhere, could upset some of the other aims. Thus retail use will only be allowed on a limited scale, (which would, hopefully have the effect that it would met only local needs or would offer a small scale attraction for visitors), or if ancillary to some other use.[8]

BQ4 (d) extends the safeguards against unnecessary traffic conflict with a long term aim of limiting through access between Bridge Street and the Quayside to two routes, (one at either end of the area covered by Proposals BQ2 and BQ3).[9] This includes a small section of new / improved road on the line of Wellington Street East to be funded independently from the main Highway Authority programme. There will also be an aim to avoid significant new access points being taken from these two routes or from Bridge Street or the Quayside itself - roads likely to be used by Port traffic. The possibilities will therefore be investigated of providing rear access to new developments, or conversions, where the building faces outwards onto these roads.

BQ4 (e) is a direct recognition of the needs of the Port.

BQ4 (f) seeks improvements to the streetscape. It is the intention to introduce traffic calming measures which, while discouraging through traffic, allow access to existing business and houses.

There is a need to provide a central focus for the increased number of residents and visitors. This will be in the form of enhancing the amenity of the area on and adjoining Plessey Road.

16.2.3 **The Dun Cow Quay**

Proposal BQ5 looks at Dun Cow Quay itself in recognition of the fact that, ultimately, this is the reason why the Quayside area presents a unique opportunity. The Quayside has long been a focus for people walking, fishing or simply parking their cars for the view.[10]

BQ5 (a) states that a key element of the whole Quayside Strategy will be the retention of access to the water's edge.

BQ5 (b) looks for improvements in the quality of the environment / streetscape along the Quayside area. The potential for running passenger boat services, from the Black Steps landing point should be recognised.

8 *This also recognises the proximity of Blyth Town Centre - see also Chapter 9.*

9 *Sussex Street and Ridley Street will need to be kept open for the time being. It is also the case that any pedestrian priority area that may be introduced in the future would not necessarily preclude all traffic. (This is already the case in the pedestrian priority area around the Market Place at Blyth town centre). See also Section on heavy goods vehicles in Chapter 7, (Sub-section 7.5.4), and Chapter 9, on Blyth town centre.*

10 *More recently, the wind turbines across the river on the East Pier have added to the reasons for visiting the site.*

17. Crofton Mill

17.1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there have been numerous improvements to the environment surrounding the approaches to Blyth Town Centre. There has been a general encouragement of mixed uses, (rather than strict industrial / residential zoning), so long as environmental considerations allow.

In spite of this, there are certain localities where existing uses and the general appearance of buildings etc. no longer sit comfortably in a tight-knit, inner urban residential environment. The main example is the area surrounding Crofton Mill, a former colliery where the pithead buildings, now part of an industrial area continue to dominate the environment along with the reclaimed spoil heap / railway embankment area known as Crofton Moor.

The Education Authority have long had a site reserved for a First School adjacent to the area of the former pithead buildings - currently an area of grass known as Crofton Field. The school would replace an older First School further along Plessey Road towards the town centre. The industrial (former pithead) area itself has become increasingly run-down, mostly being rented to a number of users. While it provides relatively low rent, easily accessible business accommodation for local users, this is at the expense of visual and noise problems as well as local traffic conflict.

To the south lies Rosemary Terrace alongside which there are some local environmental problems attributable to a small element of local industry and a gradual taking over of a row of private allotments by small businesses and garage accommodation. It has now been agreed that a freeze should be put on further business uses and improvements sought through planning means.

On the western side, on Hedley Avenue, a builder's yard along with some derelict areas of former garages and allotments have been earmarked for housing for some time. There is a further housing site to the rear of Hunter Avenue.

17.1.1 Problems and Opportunities

The main problem with the Crofton Mill area, necessitating its treatment as a "Local Area for Action" within this Local Plan, has been the lack of development or improvement measures. Therefore, it has been difficult to envisage a workable solution to the area's environmental problems. The key to a solution is to take a comprehensive approach, building in some leverage - some change in the situation - to make development in the area a more attractive proposition than it has been to date.

It has been recognised that the reserve school site, (the "Crofton Field" land), as a possible development site is in a prime location within the town. It lies close to the town centre, on one of the feeder roads into central Blyth from the south.[1] To date, the safeguarding of the site for school use has precluded this possibility. However, if an alternative way of accommodating the school could be found, the Crofton Field site could be used for other development, releasing resources for the Education Authority to build the school at an early date.

A major barrier to development would, however, remain - namely the proximity of the Crofton Mill Industrial Area. The the gradual relocation of occupants from the assorted buildings and yards that make up the area, along with the removal of at least some of the buildings themselves would remove visual and other intrusion and would create a larger and more attractive development site.

The displacement of work activity from this central location would, on the other hand, represent a reduction in the availability of local workspace in the residential heart of Blyth. It would be desirable if any redevelopment contained replacement space for small businesses compatible with the residential area.

A package of proposals is therefore put forward which involves:

- Supporting the alternative location of the school to release a development site;
- Providing for the phased relocation of the occupants of Crofton Mill Industrial Area;
- Providing for the accommodation of workshop uses along with housing in the new development area.

1 *See also Chapter 7, Policy M6 on traffic management measures.*

17.2 THE PROPOSALS

The following are the Proposals for the Crofton Mill area.

17.2.1 Housing Sites

The two purely housing sites are allocated within Chapter 3. If these sites could be developed at an early date, there could be some environmental gains in advance of the implementation of the main Proposal, (CM2 below). The Hedley Avenue site adjoins the site of the main mixed development proposal. Should the site remain undeveloped at the time that the Master Plan for the main proposal is drawn up, then it could be incorporated into the phased approach for the whole area. **Proposal CM1** simply seeks to make sure that access possibilities for the main proposal in this Chapter are retained if the site of the former builder's yard is developed first.

17.2.2 The Central Development Site: Housing and Mixed Uses

Proposal CM2 is the main development area comprising Crofton Field and the Industrial Area.

The identification of the land in its entirety for housing and small workshop use will be dependent on an alternative site being found for the proposed First School. Should no such site be identified, then part of the area of this proposal will have to revert to being safeguarded for school use. **CM2 (a)** ensures that this Use Class will also be permissible if necessary. Before Planning permission is granted for any housing development on the land, there should be a firm commitment to the building of the school within the period of the programme of the Education Authority.

The complexity of the proposal, involving, as it does, the displacement of longstanding work activity, some demolition, (although there is always a possibility that some of the existing buildings and structures could remain and be incorporated into the new development), new housing and the integration of small business premises, means that it will be necessary to provide firm direction and phasing to the activity. The best way of doing this is through a master plan to be agreed between the Local Planning Authority and land owners (and/or main developers) at the outset of development, before the first detailed planning permission is granted. It is particularly important that this master plan includes the proper phasing of the removal of industry and introduction of housing.

CM2 (b) seeks to ensure proper integration of new development with existing uses that may remain.

It will be a major plus factor if this area can incorporate business uses which are compatible with the residential nature of this part of Blyth. The thinking behind this approach is set out in the section on mixed uses in the Work Activity chapter. As such, **CM2 (c)** states that planning permission will only be granted for housing schemes once it is clear how the intended small business activity will be accommodated within the area. This may be as a separate small scheme, phased within a master plan, or it may be preferred to include the uses within each individual housing scheme. These matters will be the subject of further investigations.

CM2 (d) covers the types of business use that would be suitable. They will be limited to small workshops, (involving activities suitable for inclusion in a residential area), small offices, studios etc.

It will contribute towards the integration of the proposal with surrounding residential areas if not all of the access were to be direct from the main Plessey Road. There are at least two potential access routes via other residential areas - Hedley Avenue and Rosamund Street. Splitting new traffic between these entrance points would be advantageous with the avoidance of through routes - as recognised in **CM2 (e).**

The proposal lies on the proposed route of the South Beach to Blyth Town Centre cycle route.[2] **CM2 (f)** makes clear that its exact route will need to be incorporated into the layout.

One of the main problems environmentally, has been the visually intrusive aspect that the current use of part of the land presents towards the main road (Plessey Road). In order to maximise the gain on this approach road into Blyth town centre, **CM2 (g)** seeks that development should not turn its back onto the road. The best solution would be to have buildings facing onto Plessey Road but set back from it. Conversely, it would be inappropriate for development to face onto the existing residential back lane to the rear of Park Road.

The Proposals Map shows this area to lie within an area of shortage of children's equipped playing space.[3] **CM2 (h)** states that the master plan should therefore make provision for a small open space central to the development area with a Local Equipped Area for Play provided, probably via commuted payments.[4]

2 *See also Chapter 7, Policy M2.*

3 *See also Chapter 4, Policy C4.*

4 *See Chapter 2, Policy G11.*

Proposal **CM 1** — *FORMER BUILDER'S YARD*

Any development of land allocated for housing development, at Policy H10 (viii), on vacant or derelict land at the former builder's yard to the south of Hedley Avenue will retain the possibility of access to the site of Proposal CM2 being provided via Hedley Avenue unless alternative access points to the site of Proposal CM2 have been agreed in advance of the development of the site.

Proposal **CM 2** — *CROFTON MILL MIXED USE HOUSING PROPOSAL*

On land allocated for housing and work activity, in Policy H20 (i) and Policy W8 (iii) respectively, at Crofton Mill, south of Plessey Road:

a **Educational Use under Use Class D1 will also be acceptable, if required in accordance with Proposal CM4;**

b **Detailed planning permission will be subject to satisfactory integration with any remaining work activity use in the Crofton Mill Industrial Area and, if appropriate, will not be granted until a satisfactory phasing plan has been agreed;**

c **Planning permission for housing use will only be granted where, either:**

- **the scheme includes an element of office or small workshop uses in line with Policy W8 (iii), sufficiently segregated from but satisfactorily integrated into the housing element; or**
- **such an element will be provided as a later phase of the same proposal;**

d **The work activity elements within the area being limited to Class B1 uses within the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order, 1987 although individual proposals for retail use will be assessed under the criteria in Policy C14 (ii);**

e **There being no through route provided for vehicular access within the site;**

f **Provision being made for part of the South Beach to town centre cycle route, proposed in Policy M2 (ii), to pass through the site on a north-south axis;**

g **Buildings to face onto Plessey Road but be set back from it and no buildings to front onto back Park Road;**

h **The inclusion of a small central open space the exact area and siting to be agreed, on which the provision of a Local Equipped Area for Play, in line with Policy C4, will be sought through Planning Agreement in association with the overall development of the area.**

Proposal ***CM 3*** *ROSEMARY TERRACE AREA*

The area of allotments and mixed uses at Rosemary Terrace and to the rear of Woodbine Terrace shall be enhanced by determining planning applications as follows:

a Not granting permission for further business or workshop uses, including the replacement or expansion of existing, within the area onto which houses on Rosemary Terrace face;

b Granting permission for either housing or replacement work activity use, within Use Classes B1 or B8 in the area the rear of Woodbine Terrace;

c Where the application site contains elements which are visually detrimental to amenity, applications will normally be granted permission if there would be a visual benefit, within the terms of (a) or (b).

17.2.3 **Rosemary Terrace Area**

Proposal CM3 covers the area of the allotments and mixed uses along Rosemary Terrace and the rear of Woodbine Terrace. An immediate response to the acknowledged environmental problems is required. This will take the following approach.

CM3 (a) covers that part of the area facing the frontages of the houses on Rosemary Terrace itself and stipulates that no further permission will be granted for work activity uses.

The other part of the site, towards the northern end, (to the rear of Woodbine Terrace), has existing work activities in a poor environment of decaying buildings and ill-protected yards. Here, the introduction of better-housed workshop premises could go a long way towards solving environmental problems. In the longer term, there could be a case for extending the area covered by the housing / mixed use proposal (CM2) onto the tongue of land at Back Woodbine Terrace, especially if the environment of these premises does not improve. **CM3 (b)** covers these point.

CM3 (c) seeks environmental improvements through the granting of planning permission where such improvements would result.

17.2.4 **First School**

Proposal CM4 seeks the provision of the First School at an early date.[5] The preferred solution would be to accommodate it within the site of Wensleydale Middle School. Should this not be feasible, other sites may be present themselves as possibilities but, ultimately, it may be necessary to revert to part of the area of Proposal CM2. This is taken into account within that Proposal.

17.2.5 **Crofton Moor**

Proposal CM5 emphasises that the Crofton Moor is a protected open space in this Local Plan under Policy C7. All three of the possible reasons to protect an open space apply here - i.e.:

- for nature conservation reasons;
- for reasons of its contribution towards the townscape;
- because it is regarded as a strategic open space for the area bounded by Links Road, Wensleydale Terrace, Park Road, Plessey Road and Rotary Way.[6]

However recognition is given to the possible benefit to be gained from the removal of material from the embankment at some future date. During the early 1990's it was suggested that material be removed from

5 *See also Chapter 4, Sub-section 4.7.2.*

6 *See Appendix XXII for full list of spaces protected and reasons for protecting them.*

Proposal ***CM 4*** *FIRST SCHOOL*

Should the option of a first school at Wensleydale Middle School or any other site not be feasible, provision will be made for a school within the area of Proposal CM2.

Proposal ***CM 5*** *CROFTON MOOR*

Crofton Moor will be protected from development in open space use, applying criteria in Policies C7.

Should reclamation or recontouring be proposed, this will only be supported on the basis that:

a Any planning benefit of the proposal would, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, outweigh any disruption caused through the removal of material;

b A large open space element would be retained with

- **strong landscaping applying criteria in Policy E6;**
- **replacement wildlife habitats applying criteria in Policy E2.**

c Other after use would be limited to educational or another community use considered suitable for the location.

the Rotary Way end so as to provide an alternative site for the school. The likely disruption was considered to be too great, in the absence of firm, workable proposals, and the idea was dropped. **CM5 (a)** recognises that, if the idea is revived, there will need to be a clear gain in terms of planning benefits for the locality, that would outweigh any disruption caused by the excavation activities. The predominantly open space use will have to remain, (**CM5 (b)**), with strong landscape elements introduced, and the nature conservation interest replaced through habitat creation measures. All after uses must benefit the whole community, (**CM5 (c)**).

It should be emphasised that this kind of upheaval would only be acceptable in very exceptional circumstances and that the emphasis will be on the retention of the Crofton embankment in its current form with the minor variation of the introduction of a properly surfaced cycle route as part of the proposal for a South Beach to town centre route.

18. Blyth Links Area

18.1 INTRODUCTION

On the coastal approach to Blyth from the south, the point of entry into the town is characterised by a mixture of land uses and underused land, criss-crossed by a main road network which has been realigned over the years, leaving islands of land and areas of redundant carriageway. Yet, as well as being a strategic visual focus for people entering, leaving and skirting around Blyth, this area provides the only sea front / beach facility for a large coastal town and marks the northern end of the longest, unspoilt beach within easy reach of the Tyneside conurbation.

18.2 PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The need to upgrade the local environment is clear.[1]

18.2.1 The Links Itself

The Links and promenade have become progressively run down, due to changes in leisure time habits and the lack of resources to invest in maintenance and replacement of facilities. Many of the traditional features, such as shelters and chalets, have had to be removed. A number of structures dating from the First World War have been Listed by the Government but require considerable work in order to ensure their preservation and to enhance their appearance. Without this, they are seen as an eyesore. The Coastal Defence fort has its origins in the late 19th Century but was remodelled during the First World War and added to during the Second. Constructed on (and partly sunken into) the sand dunes, from reinforced concrete and brick, it consists of a pair of gun emplacements facing seawards and various other structures such as stores and shelters in the immediate surroundings. The Listed Structures are all Grade II.

18.2.2 The Area to the Rear of the Links

The mix of buildings and old road carriageway immediately behind the Links reflect a period when this was a local gathering point on the main road rather than the more dispersed recreational area of today.

18.2.3 The Area of the Existing Caravan Site

The caravan site is a dominant feature viewed from the road. There is no doubt that the visual environment would be improved if the caravans were not present, (although heavy screening could have a similar effect). On the other hand, the proximity of the caravans to Blyth's built-up area means that the park has a very strong relationship with the town which cannot be ignored in considering its future.

North of the caravan site, the Wellesley Children's Home is operated by Sunderland Borough Council. This complex also has a run-down appearance due to its mixture of open land and multifarious buildings. Some surplus land and buildings may be released in the future and this needs to be taken into account.

18.2.4 Other Sites

Part of a former timber yard, adjoining the beach, continues to lie vacant and suggests an opportunity for a northward extension to the publicly accessible sea front; but it is in the control of the Port Authority. In the north-east corner of the area lies another site with no permanent use at present.

18.2.6 The Opportunities Presented

The purpose of the proposals in this Chapter is to take advantage of the opportunities which exist in order to improve the overall environment and provide Blyth with facilities which are lacking at the moment. First and foremost, the town lacks a hotel which can meet business accommodation needs while tapping into a tourism market which is likely to grow during the Plan period. Although this Local Plan earmarks another potential hotel site in Blyth.[2] the area of the Links is regarded as the best potential hotel location in the town, offering the greatest scope for recreational as well as business use.[3]

A public consultation exercise found that, within this local action area, the links itself is preferred to the existing caravan site as the location for a hotel. On the other hand, the caravan site as a location was not strongly opposed.

18.3 THE PROPOSALS

In the light of the above, the approach taken is to pursue the option of securing hotel development of the Links with the caravan site as the fall-back option. Other proposals in the Chapter try to achieve an enhanced leisure and recreational facility for Blyth, achieve

1 *It is of note that the area has been identified as a location for Millennium celebrations.*
2 *This is within the West Blyth Community Development Area - see Chapter 12, Proposal WB2*
3 *See also Chapter 5, Sub-section 5.3.1.*

environmental improvements or else are designed to assist in the achievement of the main proposals.

18.3.1 **A Hotel for the Links**

Proposal BL1 seeks the location, ideally, of a hotel with associated leisure facilities at the Links. A combination of hotel, restaurant and public house may be considered and an imaginative mix of these uses would be welcome. The slightly exposed location may not lend itself to an isolated public house or restaurant building from a visual point of view. In this respect, it may be preferable if any such facility is combined with any hotel scheme. Any hotel and associated development might relate to the recreational activity on the beach and/or the potential heritage attraction of the coastal fortifications. A hotel in this location would have clear sea views.

There are several measures and precautions that will need to be taken before full permission can be granted.

BL1 (a) states the need to avoid any conflict between the hotel use and the the Listed wartime structures, not just to ensure their preservation and possible repair but also to respect their setting.

BL1 (b) ensures that car parking will be included to serve the needs of the development, as well as giving recognition to the current provision available to the general public. An area of public car parking with clear sea views would be an attraction in its own right although car parking provision should not compromise the possibility of a fully effective landscaping scheme or direct pedestrian access.

BL1 (c) refers to landscaping associated with the hotel itself but this must be clearly related to the general goal of upgrading the environment of the Links, which is pursued under Proposal BL2 below. The landscaping scheme will need to be agreed well in advance of development commencing and should offset the buildings and enhance the setting, bearing in mind the coastal location and the microclimate.

BL1 (d) recognises that it would be important to retain access to the sea front for pedestrians and other users such as sailboarders.

BL1 (e) refers to design aspects. The main orientation of the hotel should utilise views of the bay to the south. The architectural form and character should take account of the seaside location and the relationship of the site to its surroundings. It should set a good standard for the design of further projects in the area. Buildings should be no more than two or three storeys in height, so as to respect the landform and not to dominate the landscape. As stipulated in part (a) of the Proposal, close attention will need to be paid to the effect of any hotel scheme on the setting of the Listed fortifications. The form and construction of buildings should take into account the possible effects of long term changes in sea level.[4] Developers will be expected to carry out their own assessments of service capacities and ground conditions at the development site.

BL1 (f) clarifies the access arrangements that would be required - i.e. using the existing access via the old carriageway off Links Road, rather than any direct access from the A193.

It is possible that the application site of any hotel related development, will include those areas of the Links which would be subject to environmental upgrading as a result of the proposal. Nevertheless **BL1 (g)** allows for the possibility that off site improvements of the Links will be relevant to the application site.

The adjacent Internationally Important and other nature conservation sites will be another very important factor in considering any development proposal. This is the purpose of **BL1 (h)**.

18.3.2 **The Environmental Improvement of the Links**

Proposal BL2 aims to achieve the environmental improvement of the Links over a period of time. At least an element of this could be in association with the development of a hotel and associated facilities, whether on the Links itself, (see Proposal BL1), or at an alternative location, (see especially Proposal BL4 - but also Proposals BL3 and BL5 as outside possibilities). However, it is expected that direct action through Council schemes and alternative means of funding, (e.g. for tree planting), would be an important part of this process.

In relation to this four objectives will be pursued:

- **BL2 (a)** proposes landscaping works to upgrade the surroundings of the site.
- **BL2 (b)** seeks work to ensure the preservation of the Listed fortifications to ensure their retention and enhance their general appearance.
- The children's playground at the Links has a strategic role. In recognition of this, an improved facility has recently been installed. **BL2 (c)** recognises that any development of a hotel etc. may necessitate a relocation or further improvement.[5]
- **BL2 (d)** recognises that the existing public car park with its sea views provides a unique facility along this part of the coast and aims to secure its replacement if displaced by a hotel development.
- The adjacent Internationally Important and other nature conservation sites will, again, be a very important factor in considering any development proposal. This is the purpose of **BL2 (e)**.

4 *See Chapter 1, Sub-section 1.5.1.*
5 *The overall Policy on equipped children's play space is contained in the Community Facilities Chapter, Policy C4.*

Proposal **BL 1** — *PROPOSALS FOR BLYTH LINKS*

The development of a hotel, within Use Class C1, and associated facilities will be sought at the Links, Blyth, in approximately the location indicated on the Proposals Map. Class A3 restaurant and/or public house facilities will be granted permission as an integral part of a hotel development or separately although the latter may be refused if the building concerned could not be successfully integrated with its surroundings.

Detailed planning permission will be subject to:

a The protection of and negotiations on the possible repair of the Listed fortifications and a form of development which respects their setting, with account also being taken of Policy E16 (iii);

b The inclusion of car parking to serve the needs of the development taking account of the existence of public parking facilities;

c The agreement of a suitable landscaping scheme;

d Retention of sea front access for the general public and safe provision for horse-riders, cyclists and walkers using the recreational route along Blyth Links;

e Agreement on design, to include:

- **i a form of building considered suitable for the location, including a seaward aspect;**
- **ii a maximum of three storeys on any buildings;**
- **iii full regard to the presence of the Listed Fortifications;**
- **iv regard to the possible effects of changes in sea level, in line with Policy E9 (ii);**

f Vehicular access being provided via the Links Road and not directly from the A193;

g A contribution towards the upgrading of the Links area, in accordance with Proposal BL2, should this be necessary to the development and outwith the application site;

h Adequate safeguards necessary in relation to adjacent Internationally Important and other nature conservation sites, in line with Policy E1.

Proposal **BL 2** — *ENVIRONMENTAL UPGRADING OF LINKS AREA*

An upgrading of the whole of the Links area will be co-ordinated by the Local Planning Authority, elements of which may be achieved through Planning Agreements in association with hotel development, whether under Proposal BL1 or BL4 (or alternatively BL3 or BL5); this will involve:

a The upgrading of the landscape to an agreed scheme;

b Work to make good and restore the Listed fortifications;

c Any further improvements to or resiting of the strategic equipped children's play facility, that may be necessary as a result of a hotel being built on the Links, in line with Policy C4;

d An alternative provision of any car parking that is displaced, as a result of a hotel being built on the Links;

e Adequate safeguards necessary in relation to adjacent Internationally Important and othernature conservation sites, in line with Policy E1.

18.3.3 **Areas to the Rear of the Sea Front**

Proposal BL3 deals with the area behind the Links. This area is effectively an island between the old and new roads and is visually prominent both from the road system and the Links. It contains existing farm buildings of some merit but also a mixture of uses some of which would not sit well with a visitor attraction adjoining. The area could be redeveloped to some extent. However environmental improvements within this zone will be important in enhancing the setting of the Links itself.[6]

BL3 (a) makes clear that any environmental upgrading should include:

- the removal of redundant areas of carriageway or their conversion to car parking use;
- the possible relocation of existing uses if considered incompatible with a hotel or leisure use nearby or the environmental improvements proposed;
- the retention / refurbishment of selected buildings of merit with conversion for other uses where necessary.

The above will be achieved through a combination of local Authority environmental schemes or in connection with the granting of planning permission on this or adjacent land.

BL3 (b) allows for the fact that this triangle would be suitable for some redevelopment. It could even be suitable as an alternative site for hotel development, should the Links proposal not materialise. In its context uses within Use Classes C1 or D2 and any associated uses in Class A3 will be suitable. The prominence and current openness mean that development should be on a scale which would retain approximately the existing ratio of built development to openness.

Proposal BL4, covering the area occupied currently by a caravan park recognises that the caravans are a fairly low key and visually uninspiring land use on a very prominent site. It therefore allows for the redevelopment of the site for leisure related use. This could include the possibility that part of the caravan park could become the preferred hotel site. If this option is pursued for the siting of a hotel, it would be necessary for a Planning Agreement to be entered into to secure some contribution towards the improvement of the Links itself, in association with the hotel development.

Options could include the retention of a caravan park within the area of the Proposal. As stated above, there is an outside possibility that land at Wellesley Children's Home would become surplus to requirements in the future.[7]

BL4 (a) ensures that the building would be limited in height in a similar way to the Links option.

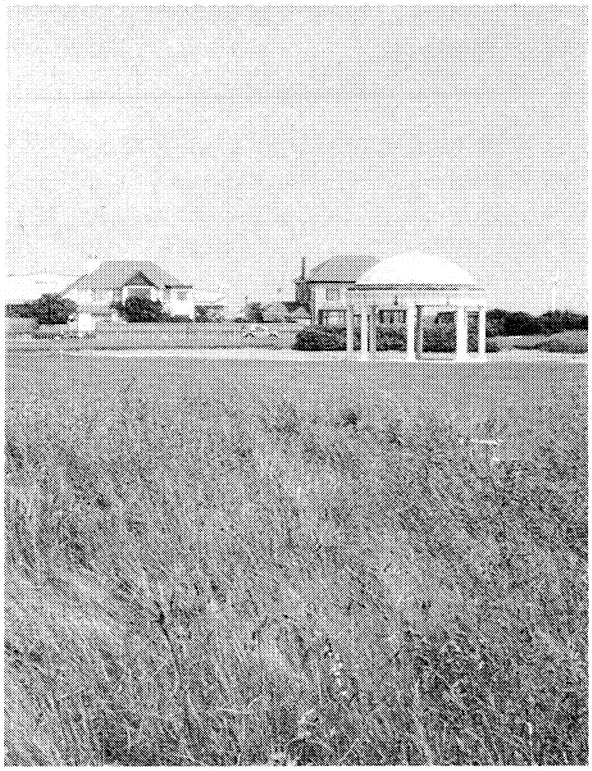
BL4 (b) allows for housing development but only if this will assist a leisure use or uses to proceed. Were this to be the chosen site for a hotel, it is considered that such a use would best be located at the prominent, southern end of the site. It would be appropriate to set aside around two hectares at this corner for such a use which would be sufficient to allow for ancillary uses, parking, any future extension(s) and ancillary uses, parking etc. for these. The first phase of any hotel or other permanent, built leisure development could therefore trigger housing on the site but avoiding two hectares at its southern end.

BL4 (c) states that access will be limited to points along Links Road.

18.3.4 **Operational Port Land**

Proposal BL5 takes a realistic view of the land in Port Authority control but identifies it as having potential for leisure development in the medium to long term. Should this land be developed for port use during the Plan period, it will be sought through negotiation that any buildings should be limited to a scale in sympathy with existing uses and proposed uses to the west and south.

A major objective will be to retain access to the beach [8] at all times.



Bandstand with Beach Way Houses to Rear.
Behind the Houses is Port of Blyth Operational Land

6 *The area includes Listed Structure.*

7 *This could have the effect of increasing flexibility - e.g. for the repositioning of the caravan site if necessary.*

8 *Part of the beach is in the ownership of Blyth Harbour Commission.*

Proposal **BL 3** — *AREA TO THE REAR OF THE LINKS*

Within the triangular area to the rear of the Links:

a The gradual upgrading of the environment will be sought, to include:

- **the removal of redundant areas of carriageway or their conversion to car parking use;**
- **the possible relocation of uses if they are considered to be incompatible with surrounding developments or environmental improvements taking place;**
- **the retention / refurbishment of existing buildings of merit with conversion for other uses where necessary.**

The above will be achieved through a combination of Local Authority environmental schemes or in connection with the granting of planning permission on this or adjoining sites.

b Planning permission will be granted for suitable uses within Classes C1 or D2 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 and any associated Class A3 uses, on a scale which would retain approximately the existing ratio of built development to openness; should development be on a sufficient scale and sufficiently linked with the sea front area, there will be a requirement that the developer makes a contribution towards the upgrading of the Links area, as outlined in Proposal BL2.

Proposal **BL 4** — *AREA OF CARAVAN SITE*

Within the area occupied by the caravan park, uses within Classes C1 or D2 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 will be permitted. Should development be on a sufficient scale and sufficiently linked with the sea front area, there will be a requirement that the developer makes a contribution towards the upgrading of the Links area, as outlined in Proposal BL2. Within the site:

a Any built development should be limited to three storeys in height in order to protect adjacent residential amenity;

b Housing will be acceptable as part of a mixed development, in accordance with Policy H20 (i), but:

- **occupying a maximum of 4.5 hectares;**
- **only if it will assist the achievement of a recreation / leisure objective in the locality;**
- **not at the southern corner of the caravan park;**

c Access to any development shall be from Links Road.

Proposal **BL 5** — *FORMER SOUTH TIMBER YARD (PART)*

At the remaining land at the South Timber Yard, Links Road, should it be released from Port use, planning permission will be granted for suitable uses within Classes C1 or D2 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987.

Proposal ***BL 6*** *LAND AT JUNCTION OF ROTARY WAY & AMERSHAM ROAD*

Land at the junction of Rotary Way with Amersham Road, is allocated for use as a garden centre subject to stability. Any development shall allow for future vehicular access to the area occupied by Wellesley Children's Home.

Proposal ***BL 7*** *FOOTPATH / CYCLEWAY: ROTARY WAY TO LINKS ROAD*

The introduction of a footpath / cycleway link, sub-divided for pedestrians and cyclists, will be sought, to link Rotary Way with Links Road, in line with Policy M2 (ii) and, in any case, the line shown on the Proposals Map will be safeguarded from development.

18.3.5 **Opportunity Development Site**

Proposal BL6 refers to land close to the junction of Rotary Way with Amersham Road. It is a highly accessible and immediately available area of land. There is direct access from the roundabout on Rotary Way. There are constraints - notably instability and the proximity of housing. This has led to the conclusion that a garden centre (lacking in Blyth at the moment), should be the preferred use, although certain other uses would also be acceptable.[9] Development of the land should allow for an access point to the Wellesley Children's Home site to the south, in case this becomes the subject of a future redevelopment proposal.

18.3.6 **Pedestrian / Cycle Link**

Proposal BL7 is for a pedestrian and cycle link from Rotary Way to Links Road. This would be connected at its western end to the proposed South Beach to town centre cycleway link.[10]

9 *A day centre for physically handicapped people has been given outline planning permission on part of the land in the past.*

10 *See Policy M2 in the Movement Chapter.*

19. Monitoring & Implementation

19.1 INTRODUCTION

The policies & proposals in this Local Plan are intended to guide the Borough's development up to the year 2006. However circumstances change. New legislation, development opportunities or economic and social forces may emerge and develop over the Plan period. These changes may affect the Plan's aims and objectives. It is important, therefore, to keep a check on how well the Local Plan is working and to keep it up to date.

19.2 MONITORING

Effective monitoring of the plan will establish whether proposals are being implemented and policies are performing as intended. It will also identify the possible need for change or modification.

Local Planning Authorities are required to undertake a regular review of "matters which may be expected to affect the development of their area or the planning of that area."[1] To assist in this process the Council will, after adoption of the Plan, produce an Annual Monitoring Statement which will show:

- the extent to which new development has taken place;
- proposals which remain to be implemented;
- any major departures from Local Plan policies;
- the identification of new pressures or trends which may require changes to policies or proposals;
- the need for additional new or modified policies;
- the evaluation of plan policies in relation to their sustainability and impact on the environment.

The environmental impact of Local Plan policies is monitored through an Environmental Appraisal (see Appendix I), which will be periodically reviewed and included as part of the Monitoring Statement. The Appraisal indicates the environmental success and failings of the Local Plan, directing attention to areas of deficiency or concern, and helping ensure that development is sustainable.

The Monitoring Statement will show where problems have arisen (if any) and provide a context for setting priorities for implementation, (see also Implementation sections below).

19.3 IMPLEMENTATION - PROCESSES

The Policies and Proposals in this Local Plan will be implemented in two main ways:

- **Development Control**:
  The Borough Council will refer to the Blyth Valley District Local Plan in deciding applications for built development and changes of use. The development control process and how this document relates to it are explained more fully in Section 2.6 of Chapter 2. This includes a sub-section on the increasing use of legal agreements signed before planning permission is finally issued. These ensure that developers are responsible for the cost of all those works which are necessary to the development of the site for which permission is being given, even if these are not within the site itself or not necessary until a later date.

- **Positive Proposals**:
  There are also positive proposals in the Plan which will be pursued by various means throughout the Local Plan period. Not all of these are for built development. Many relate to one of the Plan's main themes - the protection of the environment. Overall responsibility for the implementation of positive proposals set out in this Local Plan does not, however, rest solely with the Borough Council, as with the development control process, much will be achieved through private investment, (see section entitled "Implementation - Financial Resources" below).

The Government's promotion of the development plan as "the main consideration on which planning applications are decided"[2] suggests that the policies of the Local Plan will guide and influence investment decisions, not only within local authorities but also for all other private and public organisations.

Blyth Valley Borough Council will, therefore, continue to work closely with a wide range of partners who have an interest in promoting the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Borough, to encourage considered investment which will secure the overall aims and objectives of this Local Plan.

19.4 IMPLEMENTATION - FINANCIAL RESOURCES

One effect of applying the "sustainable approach" represented in this Plan by the four "E's", whereby **e**nvironmental measures, **e**nergy conservation and an **e**qualising of accessibility are combined with **e**conomic

1 *PPG12, Development Plans and Regional Planning Guidance, para. 4.21.*
2 *PPG12, Development Plans and Regional Planning Guidance, para. 1.4.*

development, is that there is a tendency towards maximising the efficiency of the use of financial resources.

For example, the fact that there is a concentration of development in the existing settlements, particularly the two towns, means that existing infrastructure which has surplus capacity can be used.

Of course there comes a time when such infrastructure reaches capacity and a substantial injection of resources is required. By planning for large, comprehensive development areas, such as West Blyth and SW Cramlington, it is possible to present developers, the utilities and other service providers with the opportunity to pool resources and thus co-ordinate and phase the required investment. In this way, the total amount invested over the full period of development should be considerably less than would be the case if an uncoordinated approach of piecemeal site allocations were adopted.

The Local Plan contains a mixture of Policies and Proposals, only some of which have resource implications over and above those that would, in any case, apply in order to implement the development to which the Policy or Proposal relates.

The order of the Policies and Proposals in the Written Statement follows a logical sequence of topic areas and geographical divisions. As a result of this way of presenting the Plan, the resource implications are spread across the document Those Policies and Proposals with wider resource implications are not grouped in any one part of the Written Statement. For instance, the Policy on Children's Equipped Playing Space (C4) includes statements that have no resource implications, Borough-wide criteria-based approaches with resource implications, and site specific proposals also with resource implications for developers or the Council. Such complexity is an inevitable by-product of the way in which the Local Plan is set out.

In order to make sense of how the Local Plan envisages items to be funded, a document has been produced entitled "**Blyth Valley District Local Plan: Resource Implications of Policies and Proposals**." Within this document, each Policy or Proposal is covered in the form of one or more panels with information as follows and as illustrated in Panel MI-P1.

The top left hand box relating to each Policy / Proposal, (or sub-division thereof), categorises it according to its geographical coverage, (Plan area-wide or more specific). Some site specific proposals are part of lists within general policies some of which are given further detail in a separate area-specific proposal. Others, where there is a one-off or mixed use proposal occur only as a separate proposal and do not appear in any particular Policy.

The top right hand box uses one of six key words to categorise each Policy or Proposal.

- Some simply try to control and regulate the development process and are described as "**controlling**" Policies. Normally these have no financial resource implications other than those resulting, in any case, from the development of the site concerned.

- Others have a more positive slant and are seeking to create the circumstances for bringing about, or "**facilitating**", development. Normally, these require a positive initiative to lead to the desired development.

- Some Policies and Proposals are "**proactive**" in that they deal with a project which is seen as highly desirable to implement. These tend to require an injection of resources, normally from the public sector and/or grant aid, in order to ensure that they can be realised.

- There is a category where the Policy or Proposal is not seeking development or investment in a new project but where an input of resources is nevertheless required to fulfil its aim of "**actively protecting**" some aspect of the local environment.

- Some Policies are "**intentional**" - simply statements of intent - and do not deal directly with particular types of planning situation or particular proposals. These have no resource requirements themselves.

- Another set of Policies are concerned with future possibilities and are "**investigative**". These may have resource implications in terms of financing the investigations themselves. Resource requirements for any eventual development that results from such investigations are less easy to predict.

The third box in each panel covers sources of finance themselves and, across the top, lists the main funding sources - i.e. the **developers** themselves, the **Council**, the **County Council**, other **agencies**, (with mention, where possible of the relevant agency), the **land owner**, (where separate from any developer), and **others**, (including private concerns). In each case, an estimate is given of whether the agency concerned is likely to be the main source of finance, or the level, if any, that they are likely to be a source of finance in part or on occasion. These categories are reasonably self-explanatory within the panel.

The analysis can be no more than indicative of the nature of each Policy or Proposal and the level and sources of financing. It must be read alongside the background information and in the context of what the Plan is aiming to achieve in that geographical or subject area. It is quite possible that changes will occur in the availability of funding from different sources as the Plan period progresses. This, in turn, could affect the relative

implementability of Proposals, something which could trigger a review of the Plan itself.

There are eleven area specific chapters in this Plan, plus a section in the chapter on Work Activity which contains area specific proposals as well. Each has a set of aims and intentions for the area concerned which need to be implemented. Although the analysis referred to above covers each individual policy / proposal, it is worth giving an overview of how each of the Chapters' proposals will be resourced.

Chapter 8. Cramlington Town Centre

The completion of the existing town centre will be funded by the town centre owners or any individual developers that may become involved. There are certain bus, pedestrian, cycling etc. facilities which will need to be implemented in a coordinated way across the town centre. These may require separate Section 106 Agreements to allow for implementation where off- site and may need topping up through public funding programmes. Environmental enhancements are also planned. These are likely to be publicly funded.

The Northern Expansion site is a separate proposal which will be implemented by developers. There are specific off-site works which will be achieved through planning obligations as detailed in the latter part of Proposal CC2.

Chapter 9. Blyth Town Centre

There are further environmental improvements sought in Blyth town centre, especially in and around the Market Square. Public funding is likely to lead this work. There is also access to European monies and Single Regeneration Budget, (SRB), for town centre projects.

Meanwhile any further built commercial development or redevelopment will be developer-led. Necessary off-site works relating to these will be funded through a planning obligation signed with the developer but there may be additional off-site works desirable in connection with such schemes, especially if they are large scale. There is therefore a possibility that public spending programmes would be utilised. Car parking and public transport related works could fall into this category.

Where there are complex schemes to improve aspects of the centre which incorporate private properties as well as public areas, a multi-agency approach will be taken with funding coming from a range of sources, public and private, depending on circumstances.

Chapter 10. North-East Cramlington

The North-East Sector of Cramlington is nearing completion but a number of additional works are planned covering landscaping, footpath-cycleways, play spaces etc. Since, for the most part, one land owner is involved, it has been possible to ensure that the putting in place of additional works can be done in parallel with remaining development. A single Section 106 Agreement has therefore been signed with the land owner to achieve this. There may nevertheless be situations where match funding can be sought.

Additional "missing links" in the footpath-cycleway system and matters such as landscape enhancements within the larger public open spaces will be resourced, probably via public funds, as and when such resources become available. Grant aid for planting could be an element of the latter.

Affordable housing will be achieved through a "quota" arrangement, as explained in Section 3.4 of the Written Statement.

Chapter 11. South-West Cramlington

The South-West Sector of Cramlington will be a developer-led comprehensive development. The assumption is that all aspects will be funded through the development itself, although there may be situations where match funding can be sought. The timing and pace of development may reflect money available but there is no evidence on this. The funding arrangements for all works will be set out in a sector-wide master plan. This will incorporate proportional arrangements for the funding of area-wide facilities such as schools and playing fields. Details are set out in Section 11.4 of the Written Statement.

Affordable housing will be achieved through a "quota" arrangement, as explained in Section 3.4 of the Written Statement.

Chapter 12. West Blyth

The Chase Farm area which forms the northern part of West Blyth was the subject of a Master Plan approved in 1991. This sets the framework within which Section 106 Agreements are drawn up and agreed in relation to each detailed planning permission for housing. These typically cover sections of the spine distributor road, elements of landscaping, footpath-cycleways and play areas.

It is envisaged that some elements of the sporting facilities, especially indoor and all weather facilities, that are being sought in connection with the development, (but possibly off-site within the grounds of the adjoining high school), could be alternatively funded including the use of grant aid.

The Southern Development Area of West Blyth has not been the subject of a Master Plan so far. However, it is envisaged that such a document would be drawn up and agreed with the overall land owner prior to development commencing. There are likely to be considerable infrastructure requirements off-site before the development of this area can commence. Negotiations will take place at an early date to ascertain the level to which such works would directly serve the development compared to any benefit for existing built-up parts of

Blyth. The former element would need to be funded by the developer(s) of the Southern Development area through the mechanism of Planning Obligations, the latter may have to rely on public sources.

Affordable housing will be sought in the Southern Development area only. It is likely to be achieved through a "quota" arrangement, as explained in Section 3.4 of the Written Statement.

Chapter 13. South Beach

South Beach is a well advanced development. The remaining stages will be privately built with each development area being tied to a particular, related piece of open space or landscape strip, as well as the relevant section(s), (if applicable), of the estate distributor road and access roads.

Each developer will be expected to enter into a Planning Agreement which secures the related provision. The framework for this is set out in the South Beach Master Plan, which was agreed by the Council and the overall land owner in 1990 but would benefit from early revision. The works which will be financed in this way will include the levelling and seeding of the piece of land concerned, (or its landscaping if a landscape strip), and the putting in place of the relevant sections of the footpath-cycleway system.

The same Agreements have ensured that developers have also been paying towards future facilities through contributions, on an acre by acre basis, to the South Beach Fund. This community provision fund will be directed towards additional features, such as laying out sports pitches on the open space areas, related changing facilities etc..

A footbridge is required over the railway and this may be funded partly through the fund just referred to. There may be a need to assist the funding of this particular feature through entering a Section 106 Agreement with the private developer of any retail facility - which would directly benefit from the bridge.

Landscape enhancement of the central open space is not taken into account by any existing arrangement. Alternative funding sources may be used to allow this to be realised - e.g. grant aid - although it is not out of the question that the community provision fund could provide for an element of this. There may be a possibility of seeking match funding.

Affordable housing will be sought in later parts of the area and is likely to be achieved through a "quota" arrangement, as explained in Section 3.4 of the Written Statement.

Chapter 14. South-West Newsham

South West Newsham is a future development area. It is envisaged that a full range of local facilities, as well as infrastructure and landscaping will be put in place by developers in association with the development, involving Section 106 Agreements where necessary. It will be sought that some structure planting is put in place by the land owner in advance of development.

Affordable housing, if the need continues at the time that the developments commences, will be achieved through a "quota" arrangement, as explained in Section 3.4 of the Written Statement.

Chapter 15. Seaton Delaval

The development of housing at Wheatridge Park, Seaton Delaval will require a full range of internal access and landscaping arrangements. These will be guided by agreement with developers, with a single such agreement covering at least around half the total area of the site.

There is a site for retail development and there are likely to be off-site works required in association with this - to improve the pedestrian links from the site to Avenue Head. It is probable that further improvements on Astley Road will be funded via public spending programmes. However, elements may be sought via a Section 106 Agreement with the developer of any retail site. Should the railway reopen for passengers, the developer may be responsible, alongside railway bodies for access to the station.

In relation to the area generally, a considerable amount of relocation of uses such as allotments may be required. The developer will be expected to fund the provision of alternative sites should there be a need.

The land owner may have a role in funding the initial preparation of the site. For example, considerable length of off-site drainage will be required to be put in place across other land owned by the same land owner.

Chapter 16. Blyth Quayside

The Quayside Chapter sets out a number of controls and land zonings but also seeks environmental upgrading. The complexity of the area is likely to mean that the eventual achievement of the package of improvements sought can only be with assistance from a number of sources including the Council, the port authority, other agencies such as Regional Development Agency SRB and European sources also form an element of the resources being used.

Chapter 17. Crofton Mill

The Chapter on Crofton Mill contains a large mixed use proposal which will require the relocation of a number of existing uses. It will be expected that developers will fund this, with the assistance of the County Council who are the land owner, and/or the Regional Development Agency possibly being required to identify suitable land / premises.

EXAMPLE

Policy B2

Page in Written Statement: 241

Blyth Town Centre: The Market Square

COVERAGE OF POLICY OR PROPOSAL

- ○ Policy Covering Whole Plan Area
- ◉ Policy Covering Part of Plan Area or Area Specific
- ○ Area Specific Proposal within Policy Not Otherwise Referenced
- ○ Separate Area Specific Proposal(s)

ESSENCE OF POLICY OR PROPOSAL

○ Controlling	○ Proactive
◉ Actively Protecting	○ Facilitating
○ Intentional	○ Investigative

SOURCES OF FINANCE	Developers	Council	County Council	Other Agency (Blyth Pride)	Grant Aid	Land Owner (where separate)	Other
Normally / Likely to be Main Source	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Normally a Source in Whole or in Part Dependent on Circumstances	○	◉	○	◉	○	○	○
Normally / Likely to be a Source in Part	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
May be a Source in Part or Whole	○	○	○	○	◉	○	○
Not Normally / Unlikely to be a Source	◉	○	◉	○	○	◉	○
Not Applicable	○	○	○	○	○	○	◉

Panel MI-P1: Example of Analysis of Policy / Proposal from the Document entitled 'Blyth Valley District Local Plan: Resource Implications of Policies and Proposals'

A small central open space will also be sought.

It will depend on the sub-division of the site whether an overall Planning Agreement will be required to guide development.

The school which forms part of the proposals for the area will be funded by the County Council as Education Authority, with a possible contribution from a developer or developers, should this be an appropriate element of any land exchanges that take place.

Affordable housing will be achieved through a "quota" arrangement, as explained in Section 3.4 of the Written Statement.

Chapter 18. Blyth Links

Should a hotel be built on the Links, the developer will be responsible for the protection, (including through repair), of the Listed Fortifications and depending on the type of development, a contribution towards the environmental upgrading of the Links may be sought.

Without a hotel on the Links, funding for the upgrading works would await the availability of Council resources. Should leisure development on other sites, including the current caravan site and/or the site to the rear of the Links, be of a type to cause its users to spill over onto the Links area during visits, then contributions towards the various elements of the upgrading of the Links would be sought. Grant aid could form an element of funding of repairs to the Listed Buildings and is being actively sought.

The Chapter also safeguards a line for a cycleway. This could be funded through developers or via the County Council, (or a combination).

Chapter 6. Work Activity Proposals

The latter part of Chapter 6 of the Plan includes a number of proposals for particular employment sites. Financial resource implications are examined below.

At the former *Bates Colliery* reclamation works will be necessary to allow development to proceed. Such works form part of the derelict land programme. The buffer mounding will be sought as part of this but it may be necessary for certain types of developers to finance additions to this.

A number of sites may require landscaping works as a result of new employment development there and developers would normally be expected to provide this, with Section 106 Agreements being drawn up where such works are off site. This would apply at *the strategic employment site, Cramlington, South Cramlington, East Cramlington, Land south of Mansell Terrace, Double Row* and *Seghill.*

Seghill will, in addition, require off-site traffic calming to be funded by developers of the employment land there.

The strategic employment site will require safeguards and off-site works to be funded by any developer.

Some existing employment zones require continued environmental upgrading and maintenance. At Double Row and Avenue Road, Seaton Delaval and at the Blyth Industrial Estates, it is envisaged that land owners and existing occupiers will contribute towards improvements. Grant aid may be a source in some cases.

LIST OF APPENDICES

NUMBER	SUBJECT OF APPENDIX	Page
Appendix I	Environmental Appraisal	329
Appendix II	Housing Land Requirement: How it could be met	331
Appendix III	The Definition of the Areas of High Landscape Value	337
Appendix IV	Extract from Draft Landscape Strategy for Blyth Valley	339
Appendix V	Policy Framework Relating to Minerals and Waste Disposal Operations in Blyth Valley as Defined in the Northumberland County Structure Plan	343
Appendix VI	Derelict Land Sites within Blyth Valley that Justify Reclamation	344
Appendix VII	List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, Department of the Environment, as at adoption date	345
Appendix VIII	Locally Listed Buildings	347
Appendix IX	Criteria Used in Defining Settlement Limits	347
Appendix X	Businesses within Blyth Valley, Authorised under Part B of the Environmental Protection Act 1990	348
Appendix XI	Notifiable Installations Authorised under the Planning (Hazardous Installations) Act 1990	348
Appendix XII	List of Standard Planning Conditions Currently in Use at Blyth Valley Borough Council	349
Appendix XIII	List of Supplementary Guidance	352
Appendix XIV	Local Housing Authority Objectives which Overlap with Planning Objectives for Housing Provision	353
Appendix XV	Assessing the Need for Affordable Housing	355
Appendix XVI	Affordable Housing: A Examination of Local Income and Related Indicators	357
Appendix XVII	Proposed Car Parking Standards for Development, Northumberland County Council	360
Appendix XVIII	Outdoor Playing Space: Levels of Provision	363
Appendix XIX	Nationally Recommended Areas Needed for the More Popular Sports and Games	365
Appendix XX	Requirements from Developers in Respect of the Preparation of Land for Future Playing Field Use and the Provision of Children's Equipped Playgrounds	366
Appendix XXI	Areas Where There is a Shortage of Equipped Children's Playing Space	368
Appendix XXII	Protected Open Spaces	369
Appendix XXIII	Background to the Local Economy of Blyth Valley	371
Appendix XXIV	Land Available / Required for General and Local Employment and Business Park Use	377
Appendix XXV	Retail Frontage Policy Applied to Principal Shopping Area of Blyth Town Centre	379
Appendix XXVI	Energy Efficiency Guidelines for New Housing, South West Cramlington	380
Appendix XXVII	List of Sites of Regional and Local Archaeological Importance	383
Appendix XXVIII	Noise Exposure Categories, (with reference to Policy E25)	387
Appendix XXIX	Map showing Recreational Routes Network Defined in Sub-section 5.5.2	388

APPENDIX I

ENVIRONMENTAL APPRAISAL

THIS IS A SUMMARY OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL APPRAISAL CARRIED OUT ON THIS WRITTEN STATEMENT. THE FULL APPRAISAL IS AVAILABLE FROM THE COUNCIL'S PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT.

Public awareness of environmental issues has grown rapidly in recent years, with increasing concern over both global and local issues.

Government at all levels has now committed itself to develop, implement and achieve a balance between economic growth and environmental consideration.

Blyth Valley District Local Plan has a part to play in the process of achieving sustainable development, helping ensure that future generations are not denied the best of todays environment.

The environmental impact assessment is an important tool in demonstrating the environmental success and failings of the Blyth Valley District Local Plan, directing attention to areas of deficiency or concern.

The environmental impact assessment tested each of the Local Plan's 117 land use policies against a series of 15 environmental stock criteria, generating a total of 1755 possible impacts. Of these over 90% were judged to have an overall favourable level of impact in terms of sustainability, with the main thrust of written policies securing the aims of environmental protection.

The pressure for new development is constant, and the Local Plan seeks to promote the most efficient and cost effective way of accommodating such demand in land-use terms.

Blyth Valley District Local Plan counters the worst environmental impacts of development through the promotion of a coherent and comprehensive strategy, limiting the scope for permanent damage or reduction in total environmental stock via:

- Settlement consolidation;
- Recycling of derelict or vacant land;
- Energy conservation;
- Promotion of viable alternatives to the motor car;
- Separation of incompatible land uses;
- Careful integration of new development.

Blyth Valley District Local Plan offers long-term environmental protection against the worst excesses of short-term economic expiediency, setting a positive tone for future land use decisions within the Borough.

(See below for table of impacts).

Table Summarising the Impactsof Individual Policies and Proposals in each of the Main Seven Chapters of this Local Plan on the Total Environmental Stock

	Positive Impact	Indirect Positive Impact	Likely but Unpredictable Impact	Insignificant Impact	Indirect Negative Impact	Negative Impact	Insufficient Information
Chapter 1 Environmental Protection and Enhancement	20%	16%	4%	57%	1%	0%	2%
Chapter 2 General Development	17%	11%	18%	49%	3%	0%	2%
Chapter 3 Housing	15%	1%	20%	42%	3%	18%	1%
Chapter 4 Community Facilities	22%	2%	5%	69%	1%	0%	5%
Chapter 5 Leisure & Visitor Activities	14%	3%	28%	44%	3%	3%	5%
Chapter 6 Work Activity	18%	1%	5%	54%	3%	1%	18%
Chapter 7 Movement	31%	7%	2%	56%	2%	0%	2%

APPENDIX II

HOUSING LAND REQUIREMENT: HOW IT COULD BE MET: Illustrative only

The following tables refer to Chapter 3 , Sub-section 3.2.3 of this Written Statement and are intended to illustrate how six different elements of housing provision, outlined in that part of the Local Plan, will each contribute towards the provision sought in Policies H1, H5, H8 and H11. The first table is a summary table for the whole of Blyth Valley and looks at all six elements, along with a grand total. Following this, three further tables look at Blyth, Cramlington and "Rest of District" respectively.

Housing Land: TABLE 1: SUMMARY TABLE, BLYTH VALLEY

	BLYTH	CRAM-LINGTON	REST OF DISTRICT	TOTAL
ELEMENT 1: Sites with Full Planning Permission, Completed or in Progress at adoption date where there have been Completions after 30.6.91. (N.B. Any Completions on these sites on or before 30.6.91 are not included in the totals given).				
TOTAL - PLAN PERIOD Mid-1991 to Mid- 2006	1133	1212	375	2720
ELEMENT 2: Land with Current Planning Permission for Housing, but no Development at adoption date.				
TOTAL - PLAN PERIOD Mid-1991 to Mid- 2006	78	131	99	310
ELEMENT 3: Estimated Contribution from Land Allocated for Housing Purposes in this Local Plan without the benefit of Planning Permission at adoption date				
TOTAL - PLAN PERIOD Mid-1991 to Mid- 2006	850	1475	150	2475
ELEMENT 4: Estimated Contribution from Land Where Housing may be constructed but Conditional upon other Matters				
TOTAL - PLAN PERIOD Mid-1991 to Mid- 2006	160	0	15	175
ELEMENT 5: Estimated Contribution from Windfall Sites				
TOTAL - PLAN PERIOD Mid-1991 to Mid- 2006	105	50	20	175
ELEMENT 6: Estimated Contribution from Infill Sites				
TOTAL - PLAN PERIOD Mid-1991 to Mid- 2006	30	0	15	45
GRAND TOTAL				
TOTAL - PLAN PERIOD Mid-1991 to Mid- 2006	2355	2870	675	5900

Housing Land: TABLE 2: BLYTH (within settlement limits)

		Estimated Range of Site Capacity where unknown at adoption date	Contribution towards Total Housing Requirement: Mid Point (or Best Estimate) or Actual, Mid 1991 to Mid 2006	Estimated Capacity Remaining Beyond Plan Period, i.e beyond Mid 2006)
ELEMENT 1: Sites with Full Planning Permission, Completed or in Progress at adoption date where there have been Completions after 30.6.91. (N.B. Any Completions on these sites on or before 30.6.91 are not included in the totals given).				
HB 1.1	(Priory Grange) Albion Way	-	81	-
HB 1.2	Isabella IV	-	27	-
HB 1.3	Isabella V (Southend Avenue)	-	29	-
HB 1.4	First and Seventh Avenue	-	49	-
HB 1.5	Second Avenue	-	16	-
HB 1.6	Land at 25/27 Twelfth Avenue	-	4	-
HB 1.7	Sixth Avenue	-	13	-
HB 1.8	Victoria Mews (Formerly Princess Louise Middle School Site + Part of Second Avenue Land)	-	26	-
HB 1.9	Second Avenue / Fourth Avenue (Cherry Trees -even; Elm Trees)	-	40	-
HB 1.10	West Blyth Sites 1 (all parts)	-	173	-
HB 1.11	West Blyth Sites 2B, 4B, 4D, (+ 4C / E (small part))	-	136	-
HB 1.12	South Beach - off Amersham Road (Sites 1 to 3)	-	116	-
HB 1.13	South Beach - Land off Barras Avenue	-	44	-
HB 1.14	South Beach - off Sandringham Drive (Site 6 - Woodlands Pk.)	-	119	-
HB 1.15	South Beach - off Sandingham Drive (Sites 4/5)	-	88	-
HB 1.16	South Beach - off Sandingham Drive (Site 7 - Cavendish Manor)	-	97	-
HB 1.17	John Street / Beecher Street	-	13	-
HB 1.18	Newsham Farm Dairy	-	5	-
HB 1.19	Thorneyburn Way	-	3	-
HB 1.20	Argyll Street	-	3	-
HB 1.21	Allotment Site, Hedley Avenue	-	8	-
HB 1.22	Corner of Plessey Avenue and Hunter Avenue	-	3	-
HB 1.23	Junction Plessey Road / Bridge Street	-	17	-
HB 1.24	Tate Street, (former Phoenix Taxi site)	-	9	-
HB 1.25	27 - 29 Middleton Street	-	4	-
HB 1.26	Junction Lynn Street / Railway Terrace	-	6	-
HB 1(Other)	Sites less than 3 Dwellings	-	4 (Est.)	-
SUB-TOTALS, ELEMENT 1		**N/A**	**1133**	**0**

Housing Land: TABLE 2: BLYTH (within settlement limits) continued....

		Estimated Range of Site Capacity where unknown at adoption date	Contribution towards Total Housing Requirement: Mid Point (or Best Estimate) or Actual, Mid 1991 to Mid 2006	Estimated Capacity Remaining Beyond Plan Period, i.e beyond Mid 2006)
ELEMENT 2: Land with Current Planning Permission for Housing, but no Development at adoption date				
HB 2.1	Nordale Way	7 - 26	17	-
HB 2.2	Land at French Street	-	6	-
HB 2.3	Land at former Traveller's Rest	-	12	-
HB 2.4	158 Plessey Road	-	4	-
HB 2.5	Land adjacent to Front Street, Bebside	25 - 40	32	-
HB 2(Other)	Sites less than 3 Dwellings	-	7 (Est.)	-
SUB-TOTALS, ELEMENT 2		**N/A**	**78**	**0**
ELEMENT 3: Estimated Capacity of Land Allocated for Housing Purposes in this Local Plan without the benefit of Planning Permission at adoption date				
H10 (i)	West Blyth (Remainder of Northern Development Area)	60 - 100	80	-
H10 (ii)	Chase Farm "Additional Area"	36 - 58	47	-
H10 (iii)	Southern Development Area, West Blyth	420 - 680	150	400
H10 (iv)	Western Development Area, South Beach, general housing - remaining areas- i.e Areas 8,9 and small site adjoining community facilities site	130 - 200	165	-
H10 (v)	Land in Vicinity of Sandringham Drive - Special Design Site	40 - 70	55	-
H10 (vi)	Land at South Newsham Road	110 - 170	140	-
H10 (vii)	Land at South-West Newsham	-	125	75
H10 (viii)	Land to r.o. Hedley Ave. / Plessey Ave.	-	17	-
H10 (ix)	Land to r.o. Hunter Avenue	-	7	-
H10 (x)	Land at Brierley Road	20 - 48	34	-
H10 (xi)	Land at Chestnut Avenue	10 - 25	18	-
H21 (ii)(a)	Swaledale Avenue, Cowpen - Adjacent to Local Shops	-	6	-
H21 (ii)(b)	Druridge Drive, Newsham Farm - Adjacent to Local Shops	-	6	-
SUB-TOTALS, ELEMENT 3		**N/A**	**850**	**475**

Housing Land: TABLE 3: CRAMLINGTON (within settlement limits)

		Estimated Range of Site Capacity where unknown at adoption date	Contribution towards Total Housing Requirement: Mid Point (or Best Estimate) or Actual, Mid 1991 to Mid 2006	Estimated Capacity Remaining Beyond Plan Period, i.e beyond Mid 2006)
Element 1: Sites with Full Planning Permission, Completed or in Progress at adoption date where there have been Completions after 30.6.91. (N.B. Any Completions on these sites on or before 30.6.91 are not included in the totals given).				
HC 1.1	Northburn Dale (2Ai) / Hartford Dale (1A): Remaining Dwellings	-	183	-
HC 1.2	Hartford Chase (1B)	-	90	-
HC 1.3	Hartford Glade Part (1C(A))	-	49	-
HC 1.4	Hartford Glade Part (1C(B))	-	48	-
HC 1.5	Hartford Grange (1D)	-	73	-
HC 1.6	Hartford Green Part (1E (A))	-	23	-
HC 1.7	Hartford Green Part (1E (B))	-	72	-
HC 1.8	Hartford Edge (1E ext.Part)	-	15	-
HC 1.9	Hartford Edge (1E ext.Part)	-	17	-
HC 1.10	Northburn Green (2G) eastward extension	-	50	-
HC 1.11	Northburn Edge (2H) south	-	73	-
HC 1.12	Northburn Edge (2H) north	-	102	-
HC 1.13	Northburn Lea (2F iii)	-	42	-
HC 1.14	Horton Drive - Special Design Site (West)	-	17	-
HC 1.15	Horton Drive - Special Design Site (East)	-	18	-
HC 1.16	Land East of Hartford Dale - with Special Design element	-	60	-
HC 1.17	Chirnside	-	39	-
HC 1.18	r.o. Sea View Villas	-	3	-
HC 1.19	Lamb Street, East Cramlington	-	8	-
HC 1.20	Eastfield Grange	-	85	-
HC 1.21	Hastings Terrace, Shankhouse	-	4	-
HC 1.22	Scott Avenue, Nelson Village	-	10	
HC 1.23	Land East of Crow Hall Lane, Nelson Village, (2 phases)	-	22	-
HC 1.24	The Pastures, Lanercost, East Cramlington	-	89	-
HC 1.25	Coanwood Drive, former garage site	-	18	-
HC 1(Other)	Sites less than 3 Dwellings	-	2 (Est.)	-
SUB-TOTALS, ELEMENT 1		**N/A**	**1212**	**0**

Housing Land: TABLE 3: CRAMLINGTON (within settlement limits) continued....

		Estimated Range of Site Capacity where unknown at adoption date	Contribution towards Total Housing Requirement: Mid Point (or Best Estimate) or Actual, Mid 1991 to Mid 2006	Estimated Capacity Remaining Beyond Plan Period, i.e beyond Mid 2006)
Element 2: Land with Current Planning Permission for Housing but no Development at adoption date				
HC 2.1	Land at Cramlington High School	100 - 140	121	-
HC 2.2	Former Youth Centre, East Cramlington	-	9	-
HB 2(Other)	Sites less than 3 Dwellings	-	1 (Est.)	-
SUB-TOTALS, ELEMENT 2		**N/A**	**131**	**0**
Element 3: Estimated Capacity of Land Allocated for Housing Purposes in this Local Plan without the benefit of Planning Permission at adoption date.				
H7 (i)	Land adjacent to Westwood Grange, NE Cramlington	175 - 255	215	-
H7 (ii)	Land Adjacent to Northburn Glade	75 - 150	70	-
H7 (iii)	SW Cramlington - Whitehall and North Moor Areas	-	1180	770
H21 (ii)(c)	Dewley Place, Hall Close Grange - Adjacent to Local Shops	-	10	-
SUB-TOTALS, ELEMENT 3		**N/A**	**1475**	**770**

Housing Land: TABLE 4: REST OF DISTRICT

		Estimated Range of Site Capacity where unknown at adoption date	Contribution towards Total Housing Requirement: Mid Point (or Best Estimate) or Actual, Mid 1991 to Mid 2006	Estimated Capacity Remaining Beyond Plan Period, i.e beyond Mid 2006)
ELEMENT 1: Sites with Full Planning Permission, Completed or in Progress at adoption date where there have been Completions after 30.6.91. (N.B. Any Completions on these sites on or before 30.6.91 are not included in the totals given).				
HR 1.1	Avenue Head Farm, Seaton Delaval	-	26	-
HR 1.2	Coppergate (East of A192), Holywell	-	103	-
HR 1.3	Murrayfield (West of Pitt Lane), Seghill	-	78	-
HR 1.4	Meadow Close, Pitt Lane, Seghill	-	18	-
HR 1.5	Laycock Gardens, Seghill	-	4	-
HR 1.6	Fox Lea Walk, off Mill Lane, Seghill	-	36	-
HR 1.7	Melton Drive, New Hartley	-	10	-
HR 1.8	Former Garage Site, Beresford Road, Seaton Sluice	-	8	-
HR 1.9	Former PPM Site, Seghill	-	32	-
HR 1.10	Former Western Avenue Depot Site, Seaton Delaval	-	20	-
HR 1.11	Hartburn Terrace, Seaton Delaval	-	18	-
HR 1.12	Land at Milbourne Terrace, Seaton Delaval	-	19	-
HR 1(Other)	Sites <3 dwellings	-	3 (Est)	-
SUB-TOTALS, ELEMENT 1		**N/A**	**375**	**0**
ELEMENT 2: Land with Current Planning Permission for Housing, but no Development at adoption date				
HR 2.1	Land Adjacent to Elsdon Ave. Shops, Seaton Delaval	-	5	-
HR 2.2	Land South of Gloucester Street	-	35	-
HR 2.3	West Strother Farm, Holywell	-	6	-
HR 2.4	Land at Wheatridge Farm, Seaton Delaval	-	45	-
HR 2(Other)	Sites <3 dwellings	-	7 (Est)	-
SUB-TOTALS, ELEMENT 2		**N/A**	**99**	**0**
ELEMENT 3: Estimated Capacity of Land Allocated for Housing Purposes in this Local Plan without the benefit of Planning Permission at adoption date				
H13 (i)	Wheatridge Park	-	150	70
SUB-TOTALS, ELEMENT 3		**N/A**	**150**	**70**

APPENDIX III

THE DEFINITION OF LANDSCAPE TYPES AND AREAS OF HIGH LANDSCAPE VALUE

INTRODUCTION

This appendix expands on Section 1.3 in chapter 1 by defining six distinct landscape types that exist in the Borough and then defining the three AHLV's (Areas of High Landscape Value), which consist of combinations of these. It should be noted that the landscape types defined can extend into areas beyond the AHLV's, albeit in a less coherent form than would normally be the case within them.

The landscape types are:

a **incised, wooded valley landscapes**

b **estuarine**

c **farmed estate landscape**

d **open coastline landscapes**

e **cliffed coast landscapes**

f **wooded wetland / grassland landscapes**

The AHLV's are:

1 **The River Blyth Valley A.H.L.V.**

2 **The Holywell and Coast A.H.L.V.**

3 **The Arcot A.H.L.V.**

LANDSCAPE TYPES

a Incised, Wooded Valley Landscapes

Where coastlines rise sharply, water courses meeting the sea, over time erode back to form incised valleys. This has been the case with the valleys of the River Blyth and the Seaton Burn. The steepness of these valleys means that they have not been farmed and much of their length has been retained as mature woodland by the respective large estate land owners. The woodland is largely natural and consists primarily of broad-leaved species. Clearly, there has been an element of management but this has taken place within the context of retaining the natural beauty and variety.

Viewed from a distance across open farm land, these features present a broad, dark green defining ribbon. It is therefore important, where possible, to include this contextual open land within AHLV's.

b Estuarine

Where the River Blyth emerges from its incised valley, sedimentary deposits have created a flat, open area of land through which the river now meanders for its last several hundred metres before reaching the sea. The flatness means that the river waters have spread out and changed course over time, forming intertidal mudflats. It is possible to argue that these are, in themselves, not aesthetically pleasing. However, they do form a unique landscape which is of great local value when the following elements are taken into consideration:

- firstly, they are intertidal which means that the waterscape and large, open skyscape combine to form an ever-changing, moving landscape;
- added to this, they have a nature conservation value which adds a variety of bird life to the vistas from land and water;
- thirdly, the estuary is surrounded by the contrasting, jagged edges of the town, the port and the power station. This very contrast adds emphasis to the softness of the mudflats, shore and waterscape.

c Farmed Estate Landscape

The estate landscape surrounding Seaton Delaval Hall is, in many ways similar to many other such created, informal landscapes in the Northumberland area, being characterised by open, grazed land, interspersed with areas of mature woodland and stone farm buildings and offering vistas to the main house, (in this case Seaton Delaval Hall). What makes it unique and worthy of inclusion is the following:

- the great architectural and historic merit of Seaton Delaval Hall and its associated buildings
- the inclusion within the estate of buildings of unusual appearance, such as the Mausoleum and the obelisk, carefully positioned within the landscape
- other unique landscape features, such as the Avenue and the nearby Holywell Dene, (see "Incised Wooded Valley Landscapes" above).
- a wide variety of vistas, including those of the Hall and other buildings and to the sea.

All the above have similarly contributed towards the definition of the area as part of a Conservation Area.

d Open Coastline Landscapes

The open area between Blyth and Seaton Sluice is to be included in the Green Belt as a result of Proposals in this Local Plan. Viewed from the coastal road, on one side are the sand dunes, while on the other is an open landscape with a relative absence of mature tree cover.

This is of value in that:

- it provides an open interlude between the built-up areas
- it provides vistas from the coast to the facade of Seaton Delaval Hall and vice versa
- it provides the setting for the impressive dunes area, which is the subject of nature conservation interest.

e Cliffed Coast Landscapes

At the extreme south-eastern corner of the Plan area is a small area of cliffs which forms the northern end of a largely cliffed area extending to Tynemouth. The cliffs themselves, (which are an SSSI for geological reasons), present an interesting landscape when viewed from the shore. The area of fields at the top of the cliffs is included in the AHLV because the coastline being raised up by many metres, offers views over the sea of increased distance and drama. These views take in rocky outcrops centred on Saint Mary's Island.

f Wooded Wetland / Grassland Landscapes

The Arcot area is best known for its substantial ponded area, which is of considerable nature conservation value and which sits among mature woodland. Some of the areas of vegetation are flooded, which provides areas of natural decay and marshland. Surrounding this is a substantial area of natural grassland and lowland heathland, also noted for its nature conservation value. This too is interspersed with woodland, some semi-natural and some planted. The golf course has been designed into this landscape and aims to protect, within its "rough" and fringe areas, elements of the landscape mentioned above.

THE THREE AHLV'S DEFINED

1 The River Blyth Valley A.H.L.V.

Western part consists of landscape type **a**, (an incised, wooded valley landscape), covering the dene of the River Blyth and Horton Burn. Added to this is an element of open countryside to the south, which is mentioned, (under "a" above), as providing a suitable context. The southern boundary, as far as possible, follows firm lines on the map - i.e. from the west, Shotton Lane, the A192, the edge of the West Hartford Farm proposed work activity area, the northern edge of East Hartford Sewage Works, the eastern edge of East Hartford and the track to the South, (which, incidentally, provides a context for the incised part of Horton Burn), Horton Road, Bebside Road and Bebside Furnace Road. The areas thus included are sufficient to provide the required context for the incised valley, while avoiding any devaluation that would occur if more distant areas or areas too close to the built-up areas were included.

Eastern part consists of landscape type **b**, (estuarine). The boundary of the Site of Nature Conservation Interest - i.e. the estuary itself - is used. This is because the buildings alongside the full length of the Blyth riverside area, for the most part, block any vistas into the area from further afield.

2 The Holywell and Coast A.H.L.V.

Southern part and the western fringe of the southern part of Seaton Sluice, consists of landscape type **a**, (an incised, wooded valley landscape), covering the full length of the incised part of the Seaton Burn, (known as Holywell Dene). Added to this is an element of open countryside to the south, which is mentioned, (under "a" above), as providing a suitable context. The "context" area to the south may appear to be wide in comparison to that alongside the River Blyth valley. However, this is a particularly open stretch of landscape. To the south, outside the Plan area, lies the village of Earsdon, (itself a Conservation Area), which is situated on a rise. From here, can be seen a long stretch of the green ribbon of Holywell Dene as well as the Conservation Area of Holywell village. The intervening countryside provides a pleasingly open context in the foreground and, as a result, is worth preserving in its current state. The opposite views, (towards Earsdon) are also important.

The western boundary is provided by the Seghill waste disposal site. West of here the valley itself ceases to be heavily incised and the Seghill site offers a landscape of much lower quality to the south, (for obvious reasons).

Central part consists of landscape type **c**, a farmed estate landscape. This is the Seaton Delaval Estate Landscape described in considerable detail under "c" above. An area west of the Conservation area is included within the AHLV, taking it up to the settlement limit of Seaton Delaval (Seaton Terrace) and Holywell. While not containing all the estate landscape elements found east of the dismantled railway, this area does provide a good lead-in to this area, as viewed from the settlements and from the Avenue. In addition, Holywell pond provides a contrasting element. The Avenue and Holywell Dene provide strong defining lines to the north and south of this particular sub-area. North of the Avenue and west of the dismantled railway line, lies an area which is excluded as its fringes, especially along the Double Row industrial area, detract from the surroundings. The Avenue itself shields it from vistas into and out of other parts of the Seaton Delaval Estate. North of the Avenue but east of the dismantled railway, the landscape is a very important part of the vistas to and from the front of the Hall and leads into the Open Coastline area which comprises the northern part of this AHLV, described below.

Northern part consists of landscape type **d**, an open coastline landscape. This blends from the farmed estate landscape to the south and is clearly defined by the coast and settlement limit to the east and the (partly raised) goods railway line to the west. At its northern edge, the AHLV boundary largely coincides with that of the Conservation Area. Beyond this line, the land drops slightly to Meggies Burn and the built up area of Blyth to the north becomes more dominant than views to the Hall, (albeit that the Hall is still visible in its raised location).

South-eastern corner consists of landscape type **e**, a cliffed coast landscape. This has already been described under "e" above. Its inner edge is provided by the settlement limit at Old Hartley. Beyond this, the built-up nature prevents many of the opportunities for the described vistas to be experienced.

3 The Arcot A.H.L.V.

Whole of area consists of landscape type f, a wooded wetland / grassland landscape. This has been described in detail under "f" above. Its northern, eastern and western boundaries are provided by the eventual proposed settlement limits, which themselves will follow defined features on the ground. Beyond Southern Stream and east of Beacon Lane, the landscape becomes much less varied and more open. Although the AHLV can be viewed from these areas, they will form part of the eventual built-up area, the edges of which shall be defined to make the most of the views into the AHLV while not detracting from them. This will similarly be the case with the Fisher Lane employment site, where the proximity of the AHLV will be treated as a positive asset of the potential investment sites. At the southern end, Arcot Lane is taken as the boundary. Although the area between Arcot Lane and the A19 does provide for vistas into the area across open land from the trunk road, the intervening landscape is not, in itself, of any great value. Its openness will, in any case, be ensured through its inclusion in the Proposed Green Belt.

APPENDIX IV

EXTRACT FROM LANDSCAPE STRATEGY FOR BLYTH VALLEY

N.B. This Appendix is advisory but is material insofar as it is referred to in Policy E6.

INTRODUCTION

This is an extract from the Council's Landscape Strategy, giving guidance to developers. Its reproduction here is intended to assist in interpreting how certain criteria in Policies E3 to E6 could be met on the ground in varying circumstances.

THE EXISTING SITUATION

There are examples of both good and bad landscapes within the developed areas of the Borough. The better residential landscapes such as Ridley Avenue, the Poet's Estate and Holywell Village tend to be older developments. These areas all have large trees incorporated into the design which soften the harsh edges of the buildings and define the character of the area. Many recent developments tend to lack any landscape structure and appear rather bland in comparison.

Industrial developments have improved greatly in recent years. The eastern section of the Kitty Brewster Industrial Estate has a well defined landscape structure which unifies the whole development even though the individual buildings have highly contrasting design styles.

Recent developments in the Nelson Industrial Estate also exemplify a positive, structured, approach to the landscape. There is also a greater attention to the small scale detail which sets the development apart from the rest of the Estate.

With the exception of the above mentioned schemes, the majority of the Borough has been developed with little integration with the surrounding landscape. Even the well landscaped developments often appear to have been `imposed' on the site. This situation needs to be remedied in future developments through more thoughtful design and integration.

THE ROLE OF THE DEVELOPER

In a relatively short period of time the activities of the developer can radically alter the character of the landscape over an area much wider than the development site itself. The developer should recognise this fact and accept the responsibility of ensuring that any new development enhances, rather than degrades, the surrounding landscape.

These enhancements can only be achieved by a fundamental change in the design process. At present the majority of developments are designed and partially built before the landscaping is considered in any detail. This approach makes it difficult, if not impossible, to avoid a poor quality, compromised landscape. It is clear that a landscape architect needs to be a member of the development/design team from the outset. This would ensure that existing landscape features are integrated into the scheme and also lead to a better site layout with a suitable landscape structure. This `landscape first' approach is the only way to create a unified development.

The developer should also consider the aftercare and long term maintenance of any landscaping scheme he implements. Currently, public open space and landscaping within housing developments are maintained by the developer until a satisfactory standard is attained, enabling the Borough Council formally to adopt the open space. The areas are then maintained under the standard maintenance regime by the Borough Council. Management trusts can be created in residential developments with each household contributing financially to the long term maintenance of communal landscaped areas. The same principle can be employed in commercial or industrial developments where individual unit occupiers would contribute to a central fund.

Whatever method is adopted it is essential that long term maintenance is secured as even the best implemented scheme will deteriorate without adequate attention.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Any new development site has constraints against, and opportunities for, a successful landscape solution. It is essential that professional landscape advice is sought, in the early stages of design, to minimise these constraints and exploit the opportunities.

While each site will be unique and therefore require a unique landscaping solution there are several broad principles, outlined below, which can be applied to most sites.

Developers should also refer to Section - Urban Areas, Section - Industrial Areas and Section - Drainage.

RETAINING EXISTING FEATURES

Existing features such as trees, shrubs, hedgerows and ponds should, in most cases, be retained to form the core of any new development. It is important that these features are given sufficient space to survive within the new development. Figure shows some possible alternatives for integrating an existing hedgerow into a residential development. All of these alternatives use the hedgerow to define pedestrian circulation within the development.

Mature trees require much more space to survive in a new development. They do, however, give a development a sense of place and a unique character. Within development sites they can be adversely affected by root disturbance and changes in the site hydrology. Both of these factors can be reduced by restricting construction to an area two metres beyond the tree canopy. Figure demonstrates this basic principle. With this space requirement, it is logical, within residential developments to design parks and open spaces around mature trees. Within industrial or commercial developments it is more practical to let mature trees define individual unit boundaries or create entrance features.

Ponds can greatly enhance any new development when integrated successfully. Within residential developments they should form the core of parks, open spaces or school sites. Within industrial areas they can be incorporated into entrance features or employees rest areas and can also serve as a water storage facility for the fire services.

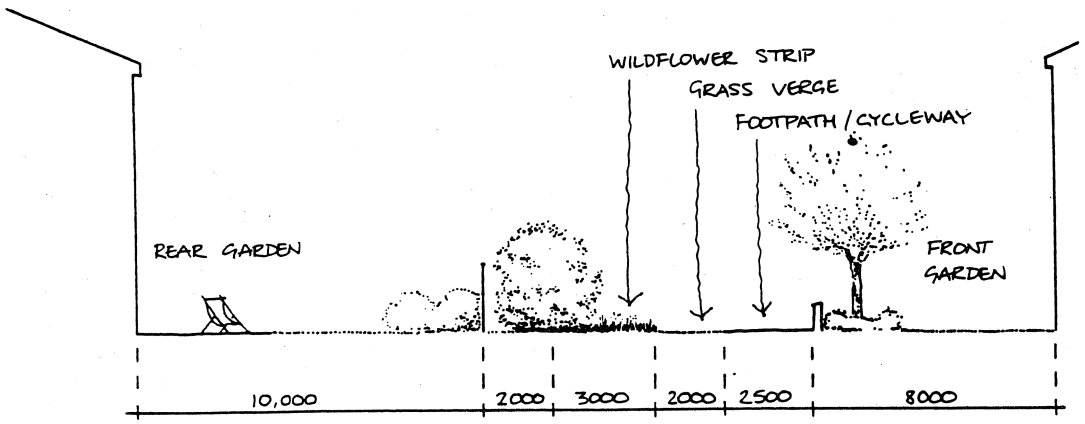
It must be emphasised that existing features should form an integral part of the design. The other elements of the design should flow through and around the existing features to be retained.

VIEWS TO AND FROM THE SITE

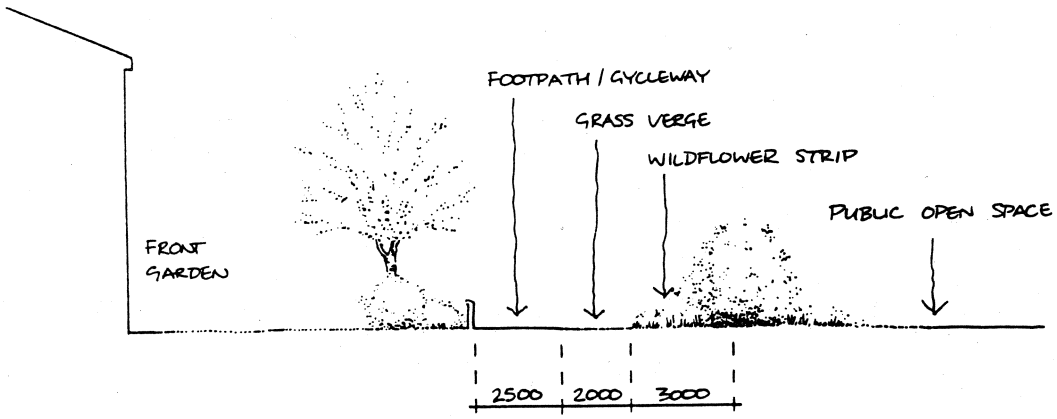
The developer should be aware of the need to retain views out of the site and to create views. This obviously requires a knowledge of an area much wider than the development site. Views into the site are particularly important from public rights of way and the transport network.

With distant views of a proposed residential area the developer should be aware of the impact of the roofscape. In recent developments this aspect of design appears to have been overlooked. This together with a reluctance to plant any trees which will break the roof line tends to create a monotonous roofscape. This problem is often accentuated on a sloping development site. The north east sector of Cramlington is a typical example of this problem with distant views of St. Nicholas' Church being marred by the large expanse of house roofs.

Less monotonous roofscapes can only be achieved by better design and the incorporation of large tree species. Figure shows a view of a typical residential development on a sloping site. The roofs merge to give a monotonous appearance. Figure shows the same basic lay-



A - GREEN LINK / WALKWAY



B - EDGE OF PARK / PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

C - STRUCTURE PLANTING BETWEEN HOUSING CLUSTERS

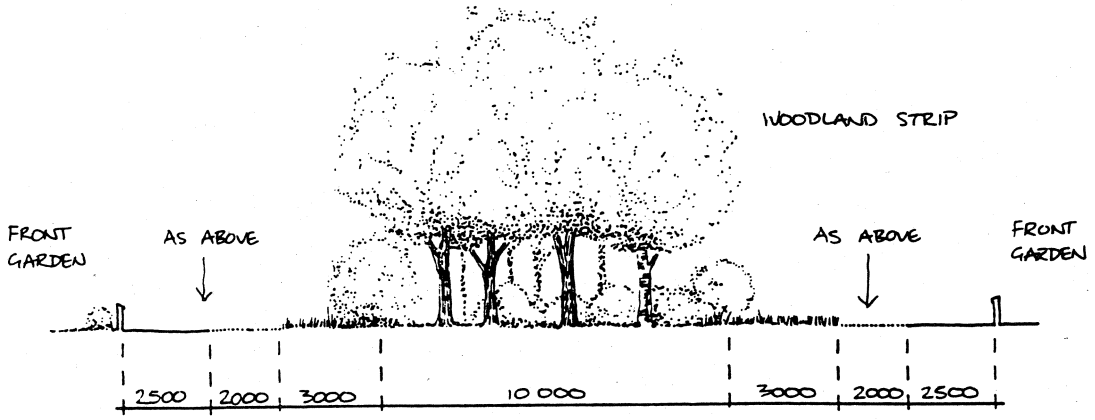


Figure F1 - Hedgerow Integration

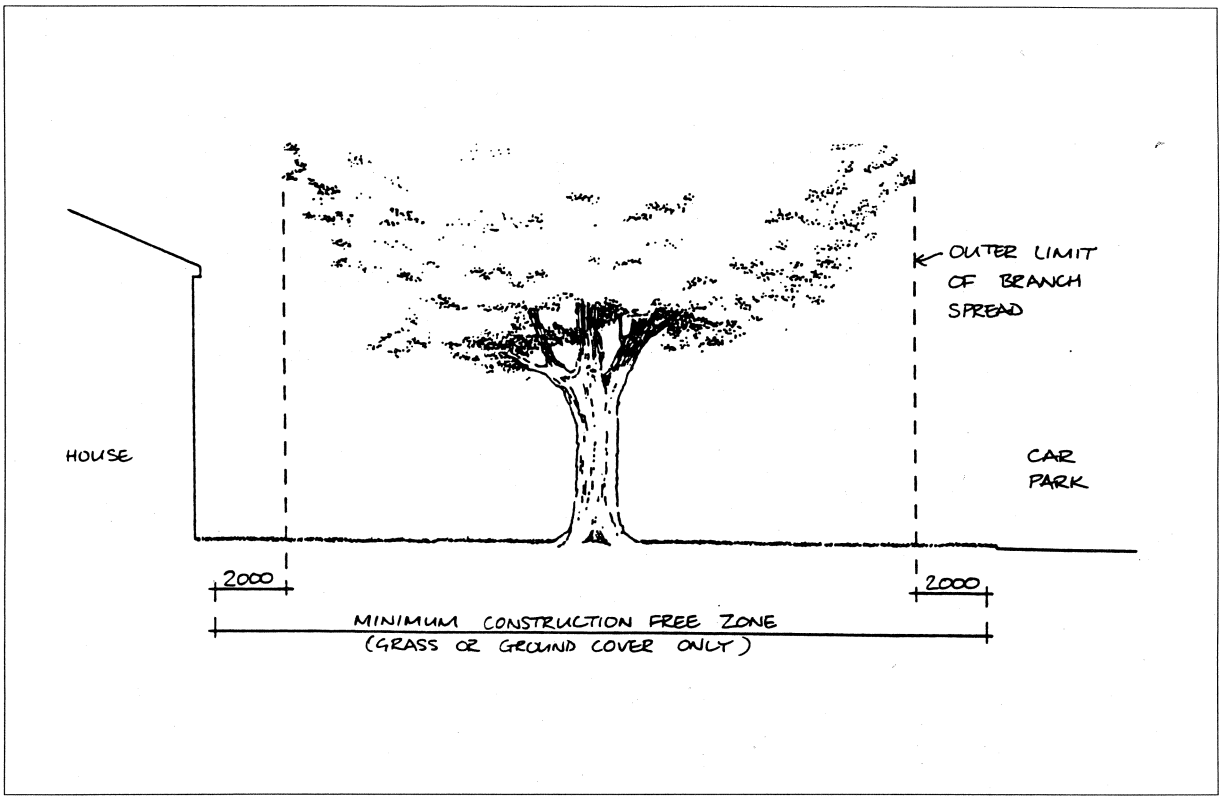


Figure F2 - Tree Protection

out incorporating tree planting to break up the roof lines. This approach leads to a visually attractive scheme which is successfully integrated into the surrounding environment.

With industrial developments the scale of the units necessitates a different approach. Large scale tree planting needs to be incorporated into the design to reduce the impact of large industrial units. In certain cases off-site planting may be the most appropriate solution in that less planting can screen more from the viewpoint.

SERVICE DESIGN

Water, gas, electricity and telecommunications service lines all impose constraints on tree and shrub planting. Without an early design input from a landscape architect the service layout is often designed in a manner which precludes any tree planting. The developer should be aware of this problem and design the service layout to allow adequate sites for tree and shrub planting.

SPECIES CHOICE

Species choice will depend largely on the location of the development site and the type of development. Wherever possible native tree and shrub species should be used. In urban situations, where ornamental planting is more appropriate, ornamental forms of native species can be used. This approach can be adopted to successfully integrate totally ornamental planting into the surrounding vegetation.

HARD LANDSCAPING

The principles above relate to the `soft' elements (i.e. the living plants) of landscape scheme. The `hard' elements of a scheme are equally important. The materials chosen for and the design of proposed walls, fencing, seating, lighting and paving should be carefully chosen to reflect the surrounding landscape character.

THE ROLE OF THE PLANNING AUTHORITY

The Planning Authority should ensure through the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990, that the guidelines contained in this Strategy are adhered to in future developments.

Masterplans should be produced for any development site that requires specific guidance. This ensures that a satisfactory landscape structure will be achieved in the new development

ACTION AREAS

Masterplans should be produced for the following development areas:

- South West Sector, Cramlington
- North East Sector, Cramlington
- West Blyth, Southern Development Area
- South Beach
- South West Newsham

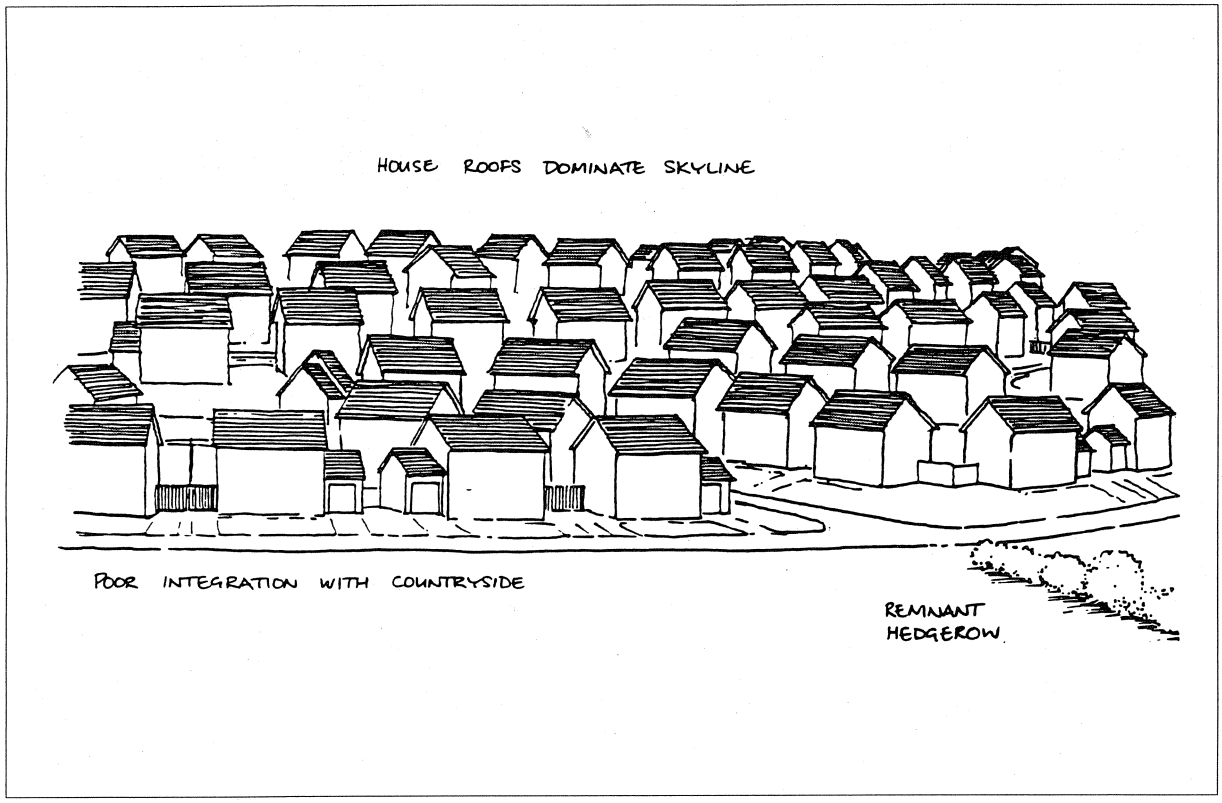


Figure F3 - Typical Residential Roofscape

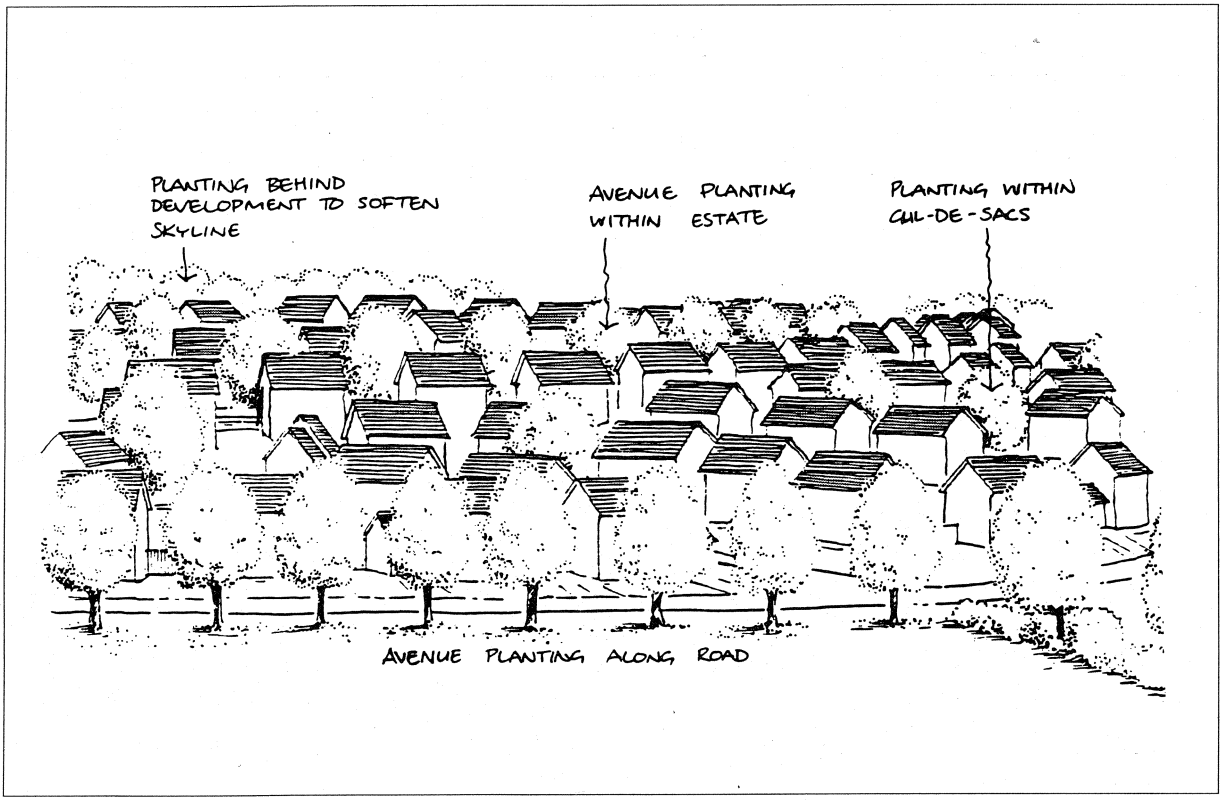


Figure F4 - Integrated Residential Roofscape

APPENDIX V

POLICY FRAMEWORK RELATING TO MINERALS AND WASTE DISPOSAL OPERATIONS IN BLYTH VALLEY AS DEFINED IN THE NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY STRUCTURE PLAN, MAY 1996

N.B. The Policies of the emerging Minerals and Waste Local Plans will supersede the Structure Plan policies currently set out in this Appendix.

Policy M2

The Local Planning Authority will only permit Major developments where the benefits clearly outweigh any potential environmental damage. Developers will be required to demonstrate that their proposals include measures to minimise their impact on the environment and should be accompanied by an Environmental Assessment, where appropriate. In addition all proposals will be assessed against the following:

a the impact on the landscape, visual amenity and areas of heritage and nature conservation interest, and potential conflict with other policies in this plan;

b the impact of emissions, including noise, to air, land and water;

c the impact on the local community;

d the impact on the local economy;

e the impact on the transport network, including the accessibility to the road, rail and public transport network. Any assessment will include the transport requirements arising from the development and the transport and the disposal of waste;

f the effect on agriculture in relation to land quality, farm structure and fixed assets;

g the cumulative impact of proposals on the local environment and community;

h further criteria for the assessment of major developments contained in local plans.

Policy M6

Land will be made available for mineral working to maintain an adequate supply of minerals to contribute to local, regional and national needs.

Proposals for major mineral workings, including energy minerals, will be assessed against Policies M1 and M2. Additionally:

Proposals for other mineral workings will only be permitted where they have no significant adverse effects on the environment and local community. Such proposals will be assessed against criteria a to g in Policy M2, taking into account any benefits which might outweigh the environmental disadvantages.

In addition, all proposals will be assessed against Policies contained in the Northumberland Minerals Local Plan.

Policy M7

In the case of aggregate minerals, land will be made available to meet the County's agreed share of the regional supply of aggregates. For the period 1992 to 2006, provision will be made for the supply of at least 15.5 million tonnes of sand and gravel and 41 million tonnes of crushed rock. A landbank of permitted reserves of aggregates, will be maintained in accordance with national policy guidance and the advice of the Northern Aggregates Working Group, unless exceptional circumstances prevail.

Policy M8

In the interests of conserving primary aggregates, where developments require the use of aggregates the potential for the use of secondary aggregates should be examined.

Policy M9

In assessing proposals for land use change and development, account will be taken of the need to safeguard proven mineral reserves against sterilisation.

Policy M10

All major proposals for the disposal and treatment of waste will be assessed against Policies M1 and M2. Proposals for other waste disposal and treatment sites will only be permitted where they have no significant effects on the environment and local community proposals will be assessed against criteria a to g in Policy M2 taking into account any benefits which might outweigh the environmental disadvantages.

All proposals will be assessed against the Policies contained in the Northumberland Waste Local Plan;

In addition, detailed consideration will be given to the location and operation of the proposal in relation to the floodplain surface and underground water resources.

APPENDIX VI

DERELICT LAND SITES WITHIN BLYTH VALLEY THAT JUSTIFY RECLAMATION
All Non-priority sites are covered within the general ststement of Policy E11; Priority sites are shown on the Proposals Map

Site No.	Name of Site	Status / Proposal No.	Area (ha)
C05	Field north of Mares Close, Seghill	Non-Priority	0.77
C06	Field on Mill Lane, Seghill west of A19	Non-Priority	3.00
C08	Former railway line, north of Holywell Grange Farm	Non-Priority	0.70
C09	Millbourne Terrace, Seaton Delaval	Non-Priority	0.88
C10	Field at Wheatridge, Seaton Delaval, east of A192	Priority - **Policy E11 (i)(c)**	1.00
C11	Field south of Low Horton Farm, east of A189	Non-Priority	0.45
C12	Land north of Central Park, Cramlington	Non-Priority	5.60
C13	Field north of Shankhouse, west of A189	Non-Priority	1.20
C21	Field at East View, New Hartley	Non-Priority	2.00
C22	Field south of The Avenue, Seaton Delaval	Non-Priority	1.12
C23	Field at Gloucester Lodge Farm, west of A193	Priority - **Policy E11 (ii)**	10.08
C24	Former Avenue Branch railway line, north of A190	Non-Priority	5.70
C30	Land at Front Street, Bebside south of A193	Priority - **Policy E11 (i)(b)**	1.00
C34	Land at former Bates Colliery, Blyth	Priority - **Policy E11 (i)(a)**	9.54

APPENDIX VII

LIST OF BUILDINGS OF SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST, (CORRECT AT DATE OF ADOPTION OF THIS LOCAL PLAN)

NATIONALLY LISTED PLACES OF WORSHIP AND ATTENDANT STRUCTURES

Name / Location	Grade
BLYTH	
Church of St. Cuthbert, Plessey Road	II*
Attendant Structures:	
Straugham Tomb, 6 metres west of Church Hall	II
Watts and English Eadstones, 8 metres south of Church Hall	II
Blyth United Reform Church, Waterloo Road	II
Church of Our Lady and St Wilfrid, Waterloo Road	II
Church of St. Mary, Wanley Street	II
Cowpen Cemetery Chapels, Cowpen Road	II
Attendant Structures:	
Gates and Screen Wall entrance to Cemetery	II
Fynes Memorial in Cemetery (75 metres S.E. of Chapels)	II
CRAMLINGTON	
Church of St. John the Baptist, Annitsford	II
Church of St. Nicholas, Cramlington Village	II
Attendant Structures:	
Pair of table tombs, 7 metres south of Church	II
Gray tomb, 13 metres south of Church	II
HOLYWELL	
Church of St. Mary, A192 (West side)	II
HORTON	
Church of St. Mary, Horton Road	II
SEGHILL	
Church of the Holy Trinity, A190 (off North Side), Seghill	II
SEATON DELAVAL	
Church of Our Lady, A190, The Avenue (South side)	I
Attendant Structures:	
The Piers and Gate at entrance to drive to Church of Our Lady	II

NATIONALLY LISTED SECULAR BUILDINGS - GRADE I: SEATON DELAVAL HALL AND ATTENDANT STRUCTURES

Name / Location	Grade
Seaton Delaval Hall, The Hall, Seaton Delaval	I
Attendant Structures:	
Coach House and attached yard walls east of Hall	II
Yard walls and outbuildings, west of Hall	II
Gatepiers, gates and ha-ha at Hall entrance	II
Ha-ha and angle bastions and statues enclosing Hall and Church of Our Lady	II
Statue of Samson in garden west of Hall	II
Privy 80 metres north-east of Hall	II
Icehouse 100 metres north-east of Hall	II
Farm Buildings 130 metres north-east of Hall	II
Orangery in walled garden, 300 metres north-east of Hall	II*
Garden walls to north, east and south of walled garden	II
Garden walls at north-east of walled garden, with attached cottage	II
Mausoleum, 500 metres east of Hall	II*
Ha-Ha surrounding mausoleum	II
Obelisk 900 metres south south-west of Hall	II

OTHER NATIONALLY LISTED SECULAR BUILDINGS

Name / Location	Grade
BLYTH	
Lloyds Bank, 33 Bridge Street	II
Boathouse Tavern, Bridge Street	II
Harbour Commissioners' office, Bridge Street	II
Kings Head Hotel, 85, Bridge Street	II
Police Station, 72 to 76, Bridge Street	II
House, 10 metres north of St Mary's Church, Wanley Street	II
5 to 13 inclusive, Bath Terrace	II
Highlight, Back Bath Terrace	II
Cowpen Road War Memorial, Cowpen Road	II
New Delaval War Memorial in Miners' Welfare Park	II
Wensleydale Terrace, Nos. 4 and 6	II
Garden Walls to above	II
Defence Electric Light emplacements east of Links House	II
Public Lavatory, out-buiding and enclosing walls east of Links House	II
Gate pier at entrance to Links Farm	II
Fort on Blyth Links	II
CRAMLINGTON	
Cramlington Village	
Cramlington Hall, Cramlington Village	II
War Memorial in Cramlington Village Square	II
The Blagdon Arms, Cramlington Village	II
Outbuilding with attached wall to north-east of Blagdon Arms, Cramlington Village	II
Middle Farmhouse, Cramlington Village	II
Garden Walls to South of Middle Farmhouse	II

OTHER NATIONALLY LISTED SECULAR BUILDINGS continued

Name / Location	Grade
CRAMLINGTON continued....	
Arcot Area	
Arcot Hall Golf Club, attached walls and outbuildings	II
Outbuilding range to east of Arcot Hall Golf Club	II
Damdykes Farmhouse	II
Walls, rails and gate to south of Damdykes	II
Farmbuildings to north and west of Farmhouse	II
PLESSEY AREA, NORTH OF CRAMLINGTON	
Plessey Mill House and adjacent outbuildings	II
Plessey Mill, adjoining Plessey Mill House	II
Plessey Hall	II
Hartford Bridge, over the River Blyth	II
Railway Viaduct over the River Blyth	II
Dovecote 50 metres north-west of Plessey North Moor Farm	II
Old Windmill, 700 metres, south-west of Plessey Checks Roundabout	II
HARTFORD AREA, NORTH OF CRAMLINGTON	
Main farmbuilding group to east of West Hartford Farmhouse	II
Shelter Shed to west of above farmbuilding group	II
East Hartford Farmhouse with adjacent outbuilding to east	II
SEATON SLUICE AND HARTLEY	
Seaton Sluice	
Collywell Bay Road, No. 10, The Octagon	II
Collywell Bay Road, No. 10, Garden Walls	II
Collywell Bay Road, (West Side) 2 lamp standards	II
Collywell Bay Road, (East Side) 1 lamp standard	II
The Habour	
Basin, slip and outlet walls of Seaton Sluice Harbour	II
Remains of Sluice Gate at west end of the cut	II
Kings Arms Hotel and Coach House	II
Turntable mechanism	II
Retaining walls, below road to east of Kings Arms	II
Watch House, Rocky Island	II

OTHER NATIONALLY LISTED SECULAR BUILDINGS continued

Name / Location	Grade
SEATON SLUICE AND HARTLEY continued	
Hartley	
The Delaval Arms	II
Fort House	II*
Fort House, boundary walls and additional structures	II*
Fort House, outbuilding 60m south-west	II*
Sewer Lamp outside 21 Hartley Square	II
Holywell DeneThe Dene Cottage	II
Primrose Cottage	II
Bridge over Seaton Burn on Track to Hartley West Farm	II
SEATON DELAVAL AND HOLYWELL	
The Avenue	
Avenue Farmhouse North	II
Avenue Farmhouse North Barn and Shelter sheds	II
Avenue Farmhouse North Stable and cart shed	II
Avenue Farmhouse North Yard Walls	II
Lookout Farmhouse, plus attached outbuilding to west	II
Farmbuilding ranges to north and east of Lookout Farmhouse	II
Shelter Shed, 50m south of Lookout Farmhouse	II
Seaton Village, Farm Building, east of drive	II
Seaton Village, Farm Building, east of farmhouse	II
Obelisk base, on east side of road to New Hartley	II
Old Vicarage and walls, south side	II
Old Vicarage, ha-ha, south side	II
Seaton Delaval	
Head Office, Delcor Furniture Ltd, Double Row	II
Milepost, A192, 50m north-west of Hastings Arms	II
Signpost, A192 / B1326 junction	II
Milepost, 150m south of North Moor Farm Entrance	II
Seaton Terrace, lamp standard outside Avenue House	II

OTHER NATIONALLY LISTED SECULAR BUILDINGS continued

Name / Location	Grade
SEATON DELAVAL AND HOLYWELL continued	
Holywell	
Holywell Manor House	II
Holywell Manor House, Stable range	II
Holywell Manor House, Gardens walls and gate piers	II
Drinking fountain west of Holywell Manor House	II
North Farmhouse and outbuilding	II
Footbridge to west of road bridge over Seaton Burn A192	II
BEBSIDE	
Hyde Park Trekking Centre (north side A193)	II
Grotto, 100m south of Bebside North Farm	II
HORTON	
Low Horton Farmhouse	II
SEGHILL	
Seghill Hall	II
Seghill Hall, Entrance piers and screen	II
Seghill Hall, Gate Lodge	II
Seghill Vicarage (A190, north side)	II

APPENDIX VIII

LOCALLY LISTED BUILDINGS (CORRECT AT DATE OF ADOPTION OF THIS LOCAL PLAN)

Locally Listed Buildings are buildings which are regarded as being of local architectural / historic significance and therefore worthy of retention and preservation, even though they are not nationally listed. At present, these are confined to areas close to Blyth town centre. However the list is likely to be added to during the Plan period. The relevant part of Policy E14 will apply equally to the additions to this list

Within Heritage Conservation Area

- 62 to 64 Bridge Street
- The Steamboat Inn, 87 Bridge Street
- Oddfellows Arms, 91 Bridge Street
- Old Vicarage, 99 Bridge Street
- 1 to 4 Bath Terrace
- 14 to 17 Bath Terrace
- Customs House, 32 Ridley Street
- Warehouse, 30 Ridley Street / 8, Tate Street
- St Cuthberts Church Hall, Plessey Road

Within Bondicar Conservation Area

- 79 Waterloo Road
- Beulah House, Bondicar Terrace
- Y.M.C.A., Bondicar Terrace
- Fairholme, 46 Marine Terrace
- Coquetdale House, 48 Marine Terrace
- Dinsdale House, Marine Terrace
- 72 Middleton Street
- 76 Middleton Street
- Chest Clinic, 78 Middleton Street

Within Central Conservation Area

- 43 Waterloo Road
- 41 Waterloo Road
- 37 / 39 Waterloo Road
- 31 / 35 Waterloo Road
- 27 / 29 Waterloo Road
- 21 / 25 Waterloo Road
- 1 / 7 Waterloo Road / 2 / 12 Union Street
- 18 Bridge Street, (Former Hedley Youngs Store)
- 1 to 9 Beaconsfield Street, (Former Thomas Knight Memorial Hospital)
- 7 / 9 Bridge Street
- Library, 20 Bridge Street
- Barclays Bank, 22 Bridge Street
- Northern Gas, 24 Bridge Street
- 35 / 39 Bridge Street
- Midland Bank, 29 to 31 Bridge Street
- 23 / 27 Bridge, Street
- Post Office, 21 Bridge Street

Elsewhere

- Bonded Warehouse, Sussex Street
- 2 to 6 Sussex Street / 4 Plessey Road
- Presbytery, Church of Our Lady and St. Wilfrid, Waterloo Road
- St. Wilfrid's Infant School, Arthur Street
- Buffalo Community Centre, Regent Street
- Blyth and District Social Club Workmen's Institute, Keelman's Terrace
- Herron's Jewellers, 66 Regent Street
- 58 Regent Street
- The Pullman, 42 Regent Street
- Blyth and Tyne, 38 Regent Street

APPENDIX IX

CRITERIA USED IN DEFINING SETTLEMENT LIMITS

The definition of settlement limits in this Local Plan is closely related to the scale of development to be permitted in each settlement during the Plan period. Settlement limits are not intended as a means of determining the scale of housing development; that is the task of Structure and Local Plan policies - particularly housing policies. On the other hand, the scale of development to be allowed in a town or village will have a bearing on how its limits are defined.

Known opportunities for infilling and/or minor rounding off in the smaller settlements generally, have been taken into account in fixing settlement boundaries.

Within this framework, a number of considerations have been borne in mind when defining the settlement limits in this Local Plan.

Firstly, the limits have been drawn to provide a logical shape to the edge of the settlements. Thus, irregular extensions into open countryside have in general been avoided, as these may either extend ribbon development or result in further unplanned expansions of built-up areas as pressures arise to fill in the gaps between these extensions. It should be noted that the overall shape of settlements and patterns of development within them have been taken into account in relation to their overall functioning. Thus, for example, in defining limits for a settlement which has an elongated form, care has been taken not to add to the linear nature, if this is likely, say, to inconvenience residents in terms of accessing central faciliites.

Secondly, the limits have been drawn along features that are clearly identifiable on the ground and on the map. These include:

1 A firm edge to the existing built-up area;

2 A major road that is developed only on one side;

3 A railway line / embankment;

4 A stream or valley, particularly where built-up areas and country lie on opposite sides;

5 A break of slope;

6 A major change of land use;

7 Boundary walls, fences, hedges and lines of trees.

APPENDIX X

BUSINESSES WITHIN BLYTH VALLEY AUTHORISED UNDER PART B OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT 1990

E R COWLING, BEEHIVE GARAGE,SEGHILL	WASTE OIL BURNERS
D ELLIOT (MOTOR ENGINEERS),SEATO N DELAVAL	WASTE OIL BURNERS
N KEAY, PHILIPSON'S GARAGE, CRAMLINGTON	WASTE OIL BURNERS
P N THOMPSON, T & B GARAGE, BLYTH	WASTE OIL BURNERS
DOUGLAS BROS. (BLYTH) Ltd., NEWSHAM	WASTE OIL BURNERS
BRITISH COAL OPENCAST, BATES STAITHES	SHIPLOADING FACILITIES
TILCON Ltd., HORTON GRANGE COLLIERY YARD, BEBSIDE	
TILCON Ltd., EAST CRAMLINGTON	
AMERICAN AIR FILTERS LTD. SNYDER GENERAL BASSINGTON LANE	COATING PROCESS
SCHUR FLEXIBLE LTD., NELSON	
PARK INDUSTRIAL ESTATE	PRINTING
VALEO SECURITY SYSTEMS, BLYTH INDUSTRIAL ESTATE	COATING PROCESS
FASSON UK Ltd., NELSON INDUSTRIAL ESTATE	COATING PROCESS
CASCADE (UK) Ltd., BASSINGTON INDUSTRIAL ESTATE	AUTOMATIC PAINTING
FORBO-CP Ltd., CRAMLINGTON	PRINTWORKS
THE CREMATORIUM, BLYTH	CREMATORIUM
MALDEN TIMBER, BLYTH	TIMBERYARD
KEYLINE BUILDERS MERCHANTS, SPENCER ROAD, BLYTH	
LAWSON MARDEN PHARMAFLEX, NELSON PARK, CRAMLINGTON	
ASTLEY GARAGES, LINKS ROAD, SEATON SLUICE	PETROL VAPOUR RECOVERY
ASDA PETROL STATION, COWPEN ROAD	PETROL VAPOUR RECOVERY
BLYTH SERVICE STATION, COWPEN ROAD	PETROL VAPOUR RECOVERY
BLYTH VALLEY GARAGES LTD., COWPEN ROAD	PETROL VAPOUR RECOVERY
COLEBROOK AND BURGESS, FORUM WAY	PETROL VAPOUR RECOVERY
CONOCO EXHIBITION STATION, MOOR FARM ROUNDABOUT	PETROL VAPOUR RECOVERY
DALE GARAGE, ASTLEY ROAD, SEATON DELAVAL	PETROL VAPOUR RECOVERY
MAGPIE FILLING STATION, STATION ROAD, CRAMLINGTON	PETROL VAPOUR RECOVERY
SAFEWAY FILLING STATION, MANOR WALKS	PETROL VAPOUR RECOVERY
SAVE SERVICE STATIONS LTD., RENWICK ROAD	PETROL VAPOUR RECOVERY
TYRED & EXHAUSTED, FAIRWAYS, NEWSHAM ROAD	PETROL VAPOUR RECOVERY
TYRED & EXHAUSTED, PLESSEY ROAD	PETROL VAPOUR RECOVERY

APPENDIX XI

NOTIFIABLE INSTALLATIONS AUTHORISED UNDER THE PLANNING (HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES ACT 1990

WITHIN BLYTH VALLEY

BRITISH GAS NORTHERN PLC, BLYTH	(60m CONSULTATION DISTANCE)
PROCTOR & GAMBLE, SEATON DELAVAL	(300m CONSULTATION DISTANCE)
KNOLL PHARMACEUTICALS, CRAMLINGTON	(1000m CONSULTATION DISTANCE)
FOX VALLEY SYSTEMS Ltd., CRAMLINGTON	(175m CONSULTATION DISTANCE)

WITHIN NEIGHBOURING AUTHORITIES BUT WHERE PART OF THE CONSULTATION DISTANCE FALLS WITHIN BLYTH VALLEY

CHIREX LTD., DUDLEY, CRAMLINGTON N.B. Phosgene is no longer used and therefore the former 900 metre notifiable zone no longer applies.	(300m CONSULTATION DISTANCE) (N.B. This distance figure is currently being reassessed and may be revised)

APPENDIX XII

LIST OF STANDARD PLANNING CONDITIONS CURRENTLY IN USE AT BLYTH VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

N.B. It should be noted that this list is not intended to be comprehensive, in terms of the range of Conditions that could be imposed in relation to any given application.

STANDARD CONDITION FOR DURATION OF FULL PLANNING PERMISSION

1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of [five] years from the date of this permission.
Reason: To ensure that the development is commenced within a reasonable period of time from the date of this permission.

STANDARD CONDITIONS FOR DURATION OF OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION AND SUBMISSION OF DETAILS.

2 Approval of the details of the siting, design and external appearance of the building[s], the means of access thereto and the landscaping of the site (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be obtained from the local planning authority in writing before any development is commenced.
Reason: To achieve a satisfactory form of development.(This condition is appropriate in its entirety only where the outline application does not contain details of any of the "reserved matters".)

3 Plans and particulars of the reserved matters referred to in Condition [-] above, relating to the siting, design and external appearance of any buildings to be erected, the means of access to the site and the landscaping of the site, shall be submitted in writing to the local planning authority and shall be carried out as approved.

4 Application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the local planning authority before the expiration of [three] years from the date of this permission.

5 The development hereby permitted shall be begun either before the expiration of [five] years from the date of this permission, or before the expiration of [two] years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved, whichever is the later.

Reason: (Conditions 3,4 & 5) To ensure that the development is commenced within a reasonable period of time from the date of this permission.

CONDITIONS INTENDED TO DEAL WITH MATTERS OF DETAIL

External materials

6 The external materials to be used shall match in colour, size, shape and texture to those of the existing building.
Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

7 No development shall commence until precise details of the materials to be used in the construction have been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

Landscaping and related matters.

DESIGN PROPOSALS

8 No development shall take place until full details of both hard and soft landscape works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and these works shall be carried out as approved. These details shall include [proposed finished levels or contours; means of enclosure; car parking layouts; other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas; hard surfacing materials; minor artifacts and structures (eg. furniture, play equipment, refuse or other storage units, signs, lighting etc.); proposed and existing functional services above and below ground (eg. drainage, power, communications cables, pipelines etc. indicating lines, manholes, supports etc.); retained historic landscape features and proposals for restoration, where relevant.]

9 Soft landscape works shall include [planting plans; written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment); schedules of plants, noting species, plant sizes and proposed numbers/desities where appropriate; implementation programme.]

WORKS IMPLEMENTATION.

10 All hard and soft landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The works shall be carried out prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with the programme agreed with the local planning authority.

11 No development shall take place until details of earthworks have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include the proposed grading and mounding of land areas including the levels and contours to be formed, showing the relationship of proposed mounding to existing vegetation and surrounding landform. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

12 Details of any floodlighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before [the use hereby permitted commences] [and] [the building(s) is/are occupied]. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

13 No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority a plan indicating the positions, designs, materials and type of boundary treatment to be erected. The boundary treatment shall be completed before [the use hereby permitted is commenced] or [before the building(s) is/are occupied] or [in accordance with a timetable agreed in writing with the local planning authority]. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: (Conditions 8 - 13) In the interests of visual amenity.

MANAGEMENT PLAN.

14 A landscape management plan, including long term design objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules for all landscape areas, other than small, privately owned, domestic gardens, shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority prior to the occupation of the development or any phase of the development, whichever is the sooner, for its permitted use. The landscape management plan shall be carried out as approved.

15 No development shall take place until a schedule of landscape maintenance for a minimum period of [-] years has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The schedule shall include details of the arrangements for its implementation. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved schedule.

Reason: (Conditions 14 & 15) To ensure that the works are carried out and maintained in a proper manner.

LOCATION OF TREES ON AND ADJACENT TO DEVELOPMENT SITES.

(Conditions 16 - 17 are to be used in outline planning permissions)

16 The plans and particulars submitted in accordance with Condition [-] above shall include:
(a) a plan showing the location of, and allocating a reference number to, each existing tree on the site which has a stem with a diameter, measured over the bark at a point 1.5 metres above ground level, exceeding 75mm, showing which trees are to be retained and the crown spread of each retained tree.
(b) details of the species, diameter (measured in accordance with paragraph (a) above), and the approximate height, and an assessment of the general state of health and stability, of each retained tree and of each tree which is on land adjacent to the site and to which paragraphs (c) and (d) below apply;
(c) details of any proposed topping or lopping of any retained tree, or of any tree on land adjacent to the site;
(d) details of any proposed alterations in existing ground levels, and of the position of any proposed excavation, [within the crown spread of any retained tree or of any tree on land adjacent to the site] [within a distance from any retained tree, or any tree on land adjacent to the site, equivalent to half the height of that tree].
(e) details of the specification and position of fencing [and of any other measures to be taken] for the protection of any retained tree from damage before or during the course of development.
(In this condition "retained tree" means an existing tree which is to retained in accordance with the plan referred to in paragraph (a) above.
Reason: To ensure the retention and preservation of trees.

17 The plans and particulars submitted in accordance with Condition [-] above shall include details of the size, species and positions or density of all trees to be planted, and the proposed time of planting.
Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

PROVISION FOR TREE PLANTING.

(Conditions 18 - 20 are to be used in full planning permissions).

18 No works or development shall take place until full details of all proposed tree planting, and the proposed times of planting, have been approved in writing by the local planning authority, and all tree planting shall be carried out in accordance with those details and at those times.
Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

19 If within a period of [two years] from the date of the planting of any tree that tree, or any tree planted in replacement for it, is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, [or becomes, in the opinion of the local planning authority, seriously damaged or defective,] another tree of the same species and the size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place, unless the local planning authority gives its written consent to any variation.
Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

EXISTING TREES WHICH ARE TO BE RETAINED.

20 In this condition "retained tree" means an existing tree which is to be retained in accordance with the approved plans and particulars; and paragraphs (a) and (b) below shall have effect until the expiration of [1 year] from [the date of the occupation of the building for its permitted use].
(a) No retained tree shall be cut down, uprooted or destroyed, nor shall any retained tree be topped or lopped other than in accordance with the approved plans and particulars, without the written approval of the local planning authority. Any topping or lopping approved shall be carried out in accordance with British Standard [3998 (Tree Work)].
(b) If any retained tree is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, another tree shall be planted at the same place and that tree shall be of such size and species, and shall be planted at such time, as may be specified in writing by the local planning authority.
(c) The erection of fencing for the protection of any retained tree shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved plans and particulars before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought on to the site for the purposes of the development, and shall be maintained until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Nothing shall be stored or placed in any area fenced in accordance with this condition and the ground levels within those areas shall not be altered, nor shall any excavation be made, without the written consent of the local planning authority.
Reason: To ensure the retention and preservation of trees.

Means of access, parking and other transport related matters.

ACCESSES.

21 Means of permitted access to the permitted building shall be from ..... Road only.

22 The building shall not be occupied until a means of vehicular access has been constructed in accordance with the approved plans.

23 The building shall not be occupied until a means of access for [pedestrians and/or cyclists] has been constructed in accordance with the approved plans.

24 Development shall not begin until details of the junction between the proposed service [access] road and the highway have been approved in writing by the local planning authority; and the building shall not be occupied until that junction has been constructed in accordance with the approved details.

25 No structure or erection exceeding ..... metres in height shall be placed to the [east] of a line from ..... to ..... [as shown on the plan attached hereto].

SERVICE [ACCESS] ROADS.

26 No [dwelling] shall be occupied until that part of the service [access] road which provides access to it has been constructed in accordance with the approved plans.

PARKING.

27 No [dwelling] shall be occupied until space has been laid out within the site [in accordance with the plan attached] for [number] cars to be parked [and for the loading and unloading of [number] vehicles] [and for vehicles to turn so that they may enter and leave the site in forward gear].

28 No [dwelling] shall be occupied until space has been laid out within the site [in accordance with the plan attached] for [number] bicycles to be parked.

29 The building shall not occupied until the area shown ..... on the plan attached hereto has been drained and surfaced [or other steps as may be specified] [in accordance with details submitted and approved by the local planning authority], and that area shall not thereafter be used for any purpose other than the parking of vehicles.

Reason: (Conditions 21 - 29) In the interests of road safety.

TRANSPORT.

30 Development shall not commence until details of the proposed [bus/railway] station(s) or stop(s) have been approved in writing by the local planning authority; and the building(s) shall not be occupied until [that/those] station(s) or stop(s) have been constructed in accordance with the approved plans.
Reason: To ensure the provision of public transport facilities.

Contaminated land

31 Development shall not begin until a scheme to deal with contamination of the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

32 The above scheme shall include an investigation and assessment to identify the extent of contamination and the measures to be taken to avoid risk to the [public/buildings/environment] when the site is developed.

33 Development shall not commence until the measures approved in the scheme have been implemented.

Reason: (Conditions 31 - 33) In order to identify and deal with any contamination of the site.

Noise

34 .....[activities] shall not take place anywhere on the site except within building[s] [to be described].

35 The building shall be [constructed/adapted] so as to provide sound insulation against internally generated noise of not less than .....dB(A), with windows shut and other means of ventilation provided.

36 The level of noise emitted from the site shall not exceed [A]dB between [T] and [T] Monday to Friday and [A]dB at any other time, as measured on the [specified boundary/boundaries] of the site a [location(s) of monitoring point(s)]. (A = noise level, T = time of day)

37 No [specified machinery] shall be operated on the premises before [time in the morning] on weekdays and [time in the morning] on Saturdays not after [time in the evening] on weekdays and [time in the evening] on Saturdays, nor at any time on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

38 Before [any][specified plant and/or machinery] is used on the premises, it shall be [enclosed with sound-insulating material][and][mounted in such a way which will minimise transmission of structure borne sound] in accordance with a scheme to be approved in writing by the local planning authority.

39 Construction work shall not begin until a scheme for protecting the proposed [noise-sensitive development] from noise from the ..... has been submitted and approved by the local planning authority; all works which form part of the scheme shall be completed before [any part of] the [noise sensitive development(s)] is occupied.

Reason: (Conditions 34 - 39) In the interests of amenity.

Temporary permission

40 [The building hereby permitted shall be removed][The use hereby permitted shall be discontinued] and the land restored to its former condition on or before ..... [date] in accordance with a scheme of work submitted to and approved by the local planning authority.
Reason: The development is such that it could not be approved on a permanent basis.

Access for disabled people

41 Before the development hereby permitted is commenced a scheme indicating the provision to be made for disabled people to gain access to [ ] shall have been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. The agreed scheme shall be implemented before the development hereby permitted is brought into use.
Reason: In order to ensure adequate access for the disabled.

Personal permissions.

42 The use hereby permitted shall be carried on only by [name of person] and shall be for a limited period (of...years from the date of this permission, or the period) during which the premises are occupied by [name of person] whichever is the shorter.

43 When the premises cease to be occupied by [name of person] or at the end (of...years) whichever shall first occur, the use hereby permitted shall cease [and all materials and equipment brought on to the premises in connection with the use shall be removed].

Reason: (Conditions 42 & 43) Permission is given because of the applicants personal circumstances.

Drainage

44 All drainage to be rigidly separate.

45 No development shall commence until the means of treatment of foul water have been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority, including the means of disposal of any effluent and any sewer outfall.

Reason: (Conditions 44 & 45) In order to provide adequate drainage.

APPENDIX XIII

LIST OF SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

The following is a list of supplementary planning guidance produced by the Council. The guidance is currently applied when determining planning applications. The list is correct as at adoption date. Section 2.7.5 explains the importance of supplementary guidance within the planning process.

As suggested by its name, supplementary guidance is intended to be supplementary to the main policy framework set out in Local Plans. In writing this Local Plan, the approach has been taken of incorporating existing supplementary guidance into Local Plan policies wherever possible. Where this has been done, the Policy cross reference is given below.

It should be noted that it has not been possible to incorporate all of the items of supplementary guidance into Local Plan Policies. Nor has it been possible to redraft the whole of any particular piece of supplementary guidance as a planning policy. This is because not all such advice is strictly land use related. Much of the guidance is, in fact, intended to assist applicants with matters which, though related to their planning applications, are not within the bounds of planning control themselves.

Therefore, the guidance itself does not have the same status as Policies in this Plan, in deciding planning applications.

The guidance is available from the Planning and Development Department, Council Offices, Avenue Road, Seaton Delaval, NE25 0DX.

Title of Supplementary Guidance	**Policy Reference in Local Plan, if any.**
A Development Control Policy on Private Rest Homes	Policy H16
A Development Control Policy on Extensions to Dwellinghouses	Policy H22
A Development Control Policy on Hot Food Takeaways	Policy C22
Satellite Receiver Dishes. Guidance on Fixing Dish Receivers to: Dwellings, Other Buildings, Within Conservation Areas	Policy E27
Townsacpe and Design: Design Guidance on Shopfronts	Policy E20
Development Control Policy Statement on Small Scale Business and Commercial Uses operating in Residential Areas	Policy W8
Policy Statement on Advertisements, Cramlington Village Conservation Area	N/A
Heritage Policy Guidance 1: Listed Buildings and What it means to Live in One.	N/A
Development Control Policy on Portable Buildings in Association with Industrial Premises	N/A

APPENDIX XIV

SUMMARY OF THE COUNCIL'S HOUSING STRATEGY 1999 TO 2002

The text set out below is an extract from the Council's Housing Strategy 1999 to 2002

The role of the Council:

- To assess general, special and rural housing need.
- To produce a Local Plan which ensures that the Council's housing objectives are achieved.
- To develop a range of controls and guidance to ensure quality in housing provision.
- To embrace the enabling role to ensure that both Registered Social Landlords and the Private sector are encouraged to develop within the Borough to meet identified need.
- To use the available capital resources on schemes designed to reduce overall demands and allow individuals to remain in their home as long as they wish.
- To make the best use of housing stock available, including, where practical, preventing under-occupation of Council dwellings.
- To work in partnership with the Registered Social landlords within a framework of Social Housing Agreements.
- To consider all options in meeting the demand for housing.
- To ensure efficient management of its stock.
- To ensure good quality housing in the private sector by the regulation of landlords through an Approved Landlord Scheme.
- To produce a Housing Strategy.

The role of the Community:

- To operate Community facilities for householders.
- To identify services required from the Council and provide feedback on existing services.
- To provide counselling, advice and support to householders.
- To access resources through the lottery and other funding sources for community activities.

The role of Registered Social Landlords:

- Develop new and refurbish existing housing to meet a wide range of identified housing needs.
- Work in partnership with the Council within the framework of Social Housing Agreements.
- Contribute towards meeting needs through the effective use of relets of the existing stock.

The role of the Private Sector:

- To develop new housing to cater for the speculative housing market.
- To work in partnership with the Council towards improving energy efficiency and regenerating the Borough.
- In partnership with the Council to become involved with the provision of affordable housing.
- To provide a good quality private rented sector, through the Approved Landlords Scheme.
- Through the Landlords' Association, to advise the Council on policies in relation to the private rented sector.

The role of the Voluntary Sector:

- To assist in the direct provision of housing services to special needs groups.
- To assist in the identification of housing needs for vulnerable groups.
- To provide specialist advice and support for special and vulnerable groups.

The role of the Statutory Agencies:

- To assist in the prioritisation of adaptations and grants for the disabled and frail elderly.
- To provide advice on the assessment of special and individual needs.
- To ensure that the housing services within Blyth Valley are fully integrated in the Community Care Plan for Northumberland.

APPENDIX XV

ASSESSING THE NEED FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

INTRODUCTION

Circular 6/98 requires affordable housing policies to be based upon "a good understanding of the needs of the area over the period of the development plan", (para. 5). This Appendix sets out the 1993 assessment of the need for affordable housing, which is used as a basis for Policy H14. It then looks at the validity of the method before Appendix XVI supplements this with additional information on local income and housing costs.

Table Showing the Need for Affordable Housing Units in Blyth Valley, 1st June 1993 to 30th June 2006 based on 1993 Housing Needs Assessment.

N.B. Totals may not add due to rounding

	Accommodation Type			
	Elderly	Single	Family	**TOTAL**
Blyth	40	435	70	**545**
Cramlington	335	505	225	**1065**
Seaton Valley Area	125	365	265	**755**
TOTAL	**505**	**1300**	**560**	**2365**

It is intended to carry out new survey work leading to a new needs assessment. The results of any new assessment will be made available to interested parties and will then be used instead of the information in this Written Statement to support affordable housing being sought in relation to individual planning applications.

In 1993, the Local Housing Authority assessed the need for affordable housing as follows:

The Authority made use of its knowledge of the relationship between the housing stock, the supply of units, housing needs and expressed demands.

The result of this process was a set of figures on the annual requirement for new affordable housing units, which represents the "gap" in need / demand over supply. It showed that within each of the remaining years of the Plan period, some 180 affordable units would be required over and above the expected vacancy rate within existing public sector or other "affordable" units.

The biggest shortfall identified was in provision for single people below retirement age with the equivalent of 100 units per annum needed throughout the Plan period in Blyth Valley to eradicate the shortage. The shortage was found to be marked throughout the Plan area but proportionately greatest in the Seaton Valley area.

The elderly and families were found to be much better provided for although there were still substantial shortages, especially in Cramlington where, until now, this group had been, (relatively speaking), under-represented. Low cost family housing was also assessed as being in relatively short supply in Cramlington. A shortage of affordable accommodation for families was also identified in the Seaton Valley area.

The table on this page sets out the figures as assessed in 1993 for the three categories and the three sub-divisions of Blyth Valley, covering a thirteen year period from mid-1993 to the end of the Plan period. (Footnotes as current Footnotes 50 and 51 in Chapter 3 of the Written Statement).

The method used is now described briefly.

Sub-Division of Affordable Housing Requirement

The affordable housing requirement was divided into nine - i.e. each of the three areas used to allocate local authority housing, ("Blyth area", "Cramlington area" and "Seaton Delaval area").[1] It was further sub-divided into OAP, single and family dwellings groups which are relatively mutually exclusive in terms of their particular housing requirements - house type, size etc. The definitions have been employed by the Housing Department successfully as a way of managing the housing stock over the years.

Stage 1: Housing Stock

For each of the nine sub-divisions of affordable housing described above, the existing stock was estimated. This was taken to include all relevant Council housing plus known housing association stock for rent, together with an estimate of owner occupied housing known to have been provided as low-cost and/or shared ownership accommodation.

This was then projected forward on the initial assumption that, while losses from the stock would continue to occur, (primarily through rights to buy Council housing continuing at previous rates), no new units would be added.

Stage 2: Waiting List

Waiting lists for the nine sub-divisions were taken and demographic trends used to project these figures forward. These figures are by far the most accurate and reliable available for beginning an assessment of housing need.[2]

Following this, two downward adjustments were made to reflect typical levels for safeguarded applications, (i.e. those where the need does not materialise) and withdrawn applications. This gives "actual demand".

1 *The individual villages in the Seaton Delaval area are generally well linked with each other by public transport. All share one Local Housing Authority office - in Seaton Delaval.*

2 *Waiting list figures are the pivotal statistic used in arriving at the figures for affordable housing need. The figure derived in this way is that which would waiting lists stable over the Plan period. The numbers on the waiting lists are as accurate a picture of local affordable housing need that it is possible to obtain. Some possible criticisms are answered as follows: (1) Housing association waiting lists are known and are taken into consideration; (2) Those on housing benefit over a period are also normally included because they tend to seek cheaper accommodation, as the benefit often does not cover the full rent of their property; (3) Any cross border applicants from other districts are usually cancelled out by those coming from elsewhere; (4) Those simply seeking a transfer are taken off the calculations because (a) where voids would be created as a result, this is taken into account in stage 4 below and (b) where the demand came from a hidden household within a larger one, it would be ensured there was genuine need through the application of eligibility criteria and (c) if, in the latter case, the original house became underoccupied as a result of the move, this is also taken into account in the part of the calculation relating to supply management); (5) While that there may be a slight element of inaccuracy in the distribution of the need between the three housing sub-areas due to waiting list applicants being given an element of choice as to which part of the Council area they need to live, it is probably only in the Seaton Delaval area where it is inflated compared with the towns, which would not affect the predicted Borough-wide figure; (6) Any changes in demographic trends are impossible to predict and a "no change" scenario is the only one that can be applied with any confidence.*

Stage 3: Homeless Acceptances

Homelessness represents around a quarter of waiting list applicants and the trend has been upwards. The figure is incorporated into the waiting list total.

Stages 4 to 6: Various Subtractions

Properties becoming vacant for reasons such as death, migration from the Borough or movement within the stock are subtracted from the "actual demand" figure. This is projected forward on the basis of the reducing housing stock calculated in stage 1 above. [3] Other subtractions reflect recent initiatives to manage better the demand and supply of public sector housing, such as suggesting ways in which an applicant could afford to stay in the same property rather than moving to a less suitable one, or improving the turnaround times of void properties. [4]

Stage 7: The Adjusted Gross Requirement for Affordable Housing

"Having made the subtractions in Stages 4 to 6, the "actual demand" figure, set out in Stage 2, is transformed into a "gross new build requirement".[5] This was found to be 223 per annum for Blyth Valley as a whole.[6]

Conclusions on the Validity of the Method

The main conclusion that can be drawn from the above is that much of the problem which is being proposed for solution results from an accumulation of past under-supply of affordable housing, with further additions to needs groups over the coming years adding to this.

Overall, the assessment carried out by the Housing Department is still viewed with a high degree of confidence in terms of its coverage of the problem. On the supply side, it had a wider scope than just Council housing - Housing Authorities must now have an overview of the whole of the housing stock. On the demand side, it is probable that the vast majority of those genuinely in need of low cost housing are taken into consideration by the Housing Department's calculations. In terms of location, it is considered that some of the need identified for the Seaton Delaval area could be met within the two main towns without too much hardship.

3 *A further subtraction - of those nominated to housing associations - was necessary at the time of the 1993 assessment, as nominees were no longer considered to be waiting for affordable housing. As time progresses and the two sectors of provision merge, this subtraction will no longer be relevant. So far, this has only been a significant element in Blyth.*

4 *It could be argued that, unless these factors continue to improve over the Plan period, they should, to a certain extent following a time lag, be reflected in the figures on the withdrawals from the waiting list and in lower voids figures. There may therefore be a slight underestimate resulting from this element of the calculation.*

5 *In year one, this figure for the Borough as a whole comes to more than one thousand. This is because the waiting lists represented in year one do not just reflect those coming onto the list in that year but also a substantial backlog. Thereafter, the figure drops dramatically to around 30 for the following year on the artificial assumption that the whole demand of year one is met immediately. Thereafter it gradually rises again over the Plan period, such that by year 10 it has reached over 200. One adjustment necessary is therefore to average out the figures to arrive at an "average gross new build requirement per annum" - which is 223 for the Council area as a whole. It should be stressed that, by spreading the new build requirement for affordable housing evenly over the period, it is being acknowledged that, while there is a problem which has been accumulating, its solution will need to be spread over a period of a decade or more.*

6 *In their calculations, the Housing Department also examined the effects of the additional affordable properties on the stock, relets etc.*

APPENDIX XVI

AFFORDABLE HOUSING: AN EXAMINATION OF LOCAL INCOME AND RELATED INDICATORS

INTRODUCTION

In order to comply with Government guidance on Affordable Housing, it is necessary to supplement the information in Appendix XV with information on local income and local housing costs. These areas of information will form an integral part of any future revision of the needs assessment but, for the moment, they are examined using the best information readily available.

LOCAL INCOMES

The examination below makes use of directly available and surrogate information to draw some conclusions on local income

The main source of statistics on incomes is the New Earnings Survey. However, this does not look below County level there is a need to reach conclusions on Blyth Valley itself.

It is of note that:

- out of 62 Counties in the United Kingdom, Northumberland has variously been assessed, during the early 1990's, as being between the seventeenth lowest paid and the lowest paid County;
- between 1975 and 1990, low pay amongst men, while doubling nationally, increased threefold in Northumberland.

In 1994, average gross weekly earnings were as follows:

Great Britain	£326
Northern Region	£297
Northumberland	£288
European Decency Threshold	£222 (based on 37.5 hours at £5.91 per hour gross).

A method has been devised to give a broad assessment of where Blyth Valley stands in relation to regional and national income levels.

This makes use of the fact that:

1. The New Earnings Survey, which is published annually, contains a national split on male and female full time earnings in each of the nine main categories of the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC). (The 1996 Survey is the most recent and gives an up to date picture of earnings);
2. The 1991 Census of Population, (the latest available), in Table 81 of the 10 per cent sample data, contains figures for the total number of males and females working full time in each of the same nine SOC's.

The stages of the process are as follows:

Stage 1: Obtaining National Estimates of Average Weekly Full Time Earnings for Comparison Purposes and as a Check.

The 1996 earnings data on male and female full time earnings in each of the nine main SOC's, and 1991 Census (10 per cent sample data), figures on the total number of males and females working full time in each SOC for Great Britain, are obtained. These two figures are multiplied together to obtain an estimate for the total amount earned in Great Britain by males and females working in each SOC, (10 % sample). The sum of these figures for males and females gives the total earned per week by the ten per cent sample of each in Great Britain. Dividing these two figures by the total in each of the 1991 Census samples therefore gives an approximation of average Great Britain weekly full time earnings. The figures thus obtained are:

Males	£386.86
Females	£276.13

This can then be compared with the actual figures from the New Earnings Survey, 1996, as a check of the accuracy of the method. These figures are:

Males	£391.60
Females	£283.00

The under-estimate of just over 1 per cent in each case is considered to be acceptable in terms of applying the figures to obtain local earnings estimates. The difference possibly means that the proportions of people in the higher earning occupations increased slightly between 1991 and 1996 nationally.

Stage 2: Obtaining Northern Region and Blyth Valley Estimates of Average Weekly Full Time Earnings.

1991 Census (10 per cent sample data), figures on the total number of males and females working full time in each SOC for the Northern Region, Blyth Valley and its constituent parts are used. These figures are multiplied together with the national average full time weekly earnings figures obtained under stage 1 above. Estimates are thus obtained for the total amount earned, in the Northern Region, Blyth Valley and particular parts of Blyth Valley by males and females working in each SOC, (10 % sample).

The sum of these figures for males and females gives an approximation of the total earned per week by the ten per cent sample of each in the areas concerned. These figures are then divided by the total in each of the 1991 Census samples to give estimates of average Northern Region, Blyth Valley, Blyth, Cramlington and Seaton Valley area weekly full time earnings. The figures thus obtained are:

Northern Region

Males	£369.99 (= 95.6% of national)
Females	£268.42 (= 97.2% of national)

Blyth Valley:

Males	£371.70 (= 96.1% of national)
Females	£261.88 (= 94.8% of national)

Blyth (town):

Males	£356.17 (= 92.1% of national)
Females	£251.26 (= 91.2% of national)

Cramlington:

Males	£385.62 (= 99.7% of national)
Females	£270.37 (= 97.9% of national)

Seaton Valley Area:

Males	£374.09 (= 96.7% of national)
Females	£264.61 (= 95.8% of national)

The figures show that, based on the approximation, full time earnings in Blyth Valley as a whole are, like the Northern Region, somewhat below the national average. In the case of males, it would appear that they are roughly on a par with, or slightly above the Northern Region, while for females, they are markedly below the regional average.

Turning to individual parts of the Borough, it can be seen that Cramlington is the area which pulls Blyth Valley towards the regional average, while Blyth is significantly below the regional average and Seaton Valley area roughly on a par with it.

These figures therefore do not seem to suggest that Blyth Valley is low paid in regional terms, although they show that Blyth is particularly deprived in comparison with the rest of the Borough, and therefore the region.

As well as this geographical polarisation between Blyth and Cramlington, another form of polarisation could explain Blyth Valley's apparently good showing in relation to regional incomes. Table APP-XV-T1, which is based on the same 1991 Census figures as the analysis above, illustrates this point. It shows that the average incomes disguise a slight underrepresentation, as compared with the Northern Region, of medium to high-paid occupations among full time male employees, not just in Blyth, but

also Cramlington and the Borough as a whole.

Table APP XV-T2 looks at the full, economically active population at the time of the 1991 Census to ascertain whether there are other indications of the Borough having a greater than average proportion of low income households. However, it can be seen that, at that time, it was only the town of Blyth that fared significantly worse than the northern region in terms of levels of employment. Proportions of part time working, sometimes seen as a deprivation indicator, are actually slightly lower in Blyth Valley than in the Northern Region as a whole.

Conclusions on Local Income

The main conclusions reached are as follows:

- Blyth Valley is generally at or near the regional average in terms of income levels;
- Within the Borough, Blyth income levels for full time employees lag behind the regional norm, with some other indicators such as levels of employment supporting the view that Blyth is significantly more deprived than other parts of Blyth Valley.
- Cramlington is above the regional average on the basic indicators but there is some evidence of income polarisation so that it cannot be concluded that the town fares better than the regional average in every respect. In particular, there are signs that the town's income levels are buoyed up by a relatively few high earners while its representation of medium-high earners is actually lower than the regional average.

LOCAL HOUSING COSTS

There is very little conclusive information available to prove whether the cost of obtaining housing, unsubsidised on the open market, (i.e for sale or rent), is significantly lower than elsewhere in the region. Table App XV-T3 combines regional and national information on average prices of semi-detached houses with local information, for the same quarter, on the prices of three bedroom properties.

While the two sets of information are not directly comparable, it may nevertheless be concluded that house prices in the Borough for this type of house sit at or below regional averages. It is noteworthy that Northumberland, while being between the lowest and the seventeenth lowest paid region in the UK, is ranked 27th out of 60 Counties in terms of semi-detached house prices.

However this is only a partial view of the situation. It does not take account of smaller properties either for sale or for rent.

One or two bedroom flat prices in mid 1997 in Blyth Valley were not dissimilar to those in many parts of Tyneside. This type of accommodation commands significantly higher prices only in a relatively few parts of Tyneside, (Jesmond etc.) where demand is greater.

There is some evidence to show that low cost rented properties in the private sector are in short supply in the Borough. In the 1991 Census of Population 3.4 per cent of all households in Blyth Valley were in privately rented accommodation, compared with 5.5 per cent in the Northern Region and 7.1 per cent nationally.

LOCAL INCOME AND LOCAL HOUSING COSTS COMPARED

Comparing local income and local housing costs, the main question to pose is, whether there is a significant supply of unsubsidised housing in Blyth Valley that can be classified as "affordable" to those people whose income would not normally enable them to buy or rent appropriate to their needs at open market prices.

For this to be the case, it would be necessary, where incomes are below average, that housing costs were further below that average. The evidence shows that:

- income levels are approximately at regional averages (which are below national averages) but that there is an element of polarisation and there are areas, notably Blyth, where incomes are significantly lower;
- standard house prices appear to be below the regional averages, (which are well below national averages but these are distorted by the very high London prices), but there is also a shortage of more accessible low rent private accommodation compared with the rest of the region.

A three part conclusion can be drawn from all of the above:

1. Based upon income levels and with all other factors being equal, the level of need (per unit of population) for the cost of housing to be subsidised is similar to that in the Northern Region as a whole but with notable variations within the Borough.
2. However, due to house prices sitting slightly below the regional average, a small amount of this band of affordable housing need may effectively be being met by what may be termed a "market subsidy" - that is, market based decisions to set the price of a housing unit in Blyth Valley lower than a similar housing unit would cost on average in the region. (Reasons for this may include levels of demand, land prices or deliberate setting of the prices at a lower level by the builders, estate agents, sellers etc.).
3. Therefore there may be a case for a small percentage reduction in the amount of publicly subsidised housing required to cover the needs identified because those needs are partially met by "market subsidised" housing.

It is in recognition of this that "Element F" was put into the equation on the delivery of affordable housing, (see Sub-section 3.4.1 of the Written Statement). This element assumes that part of the potential supply of affordable housing will be met through 5 per cent of general housing built for sale on the open market being below affordability thresholds.

TABLE APP XV-T1
Percentages of Full Time Employment in Different Levels of Pay, According to Occupational Classes (NB Figures may not add up due to rounding). (Source: 1991 Census 10 per cent Sample Data (LBS) with reference to 1996 New Earnings Survey).

	% of Full Time Male Employees in Low Paid Occupations (SOC's 4 & 9)	% of Full Time Male Employees in Medium-Low Paid Occupations (SOC's 5,6,7,8)	% of Full Time Male Employees in Medium-High Paid Occupations (SOC's 2 & 3)	% of Full Time Male Employees in High Paid Occupations (SOC 1)
GREAT BRITAIN	16%	48%	17%	19%
NORTHERN REGION	16%	55%	16%	13%
BLYTH VALLEY	15%	58%	14%	15%
Blyth	15%	62%	10%	11%
Cramlington	15%	51%	15%	19%
Seaton Valley Area	15%	54%	18%	13%

TABLE APP XV-T2
Percentages Economically Active in Employment and Percentages of Males and Females Who are Part Time. (Source: 1991 Census 100 per cent Data (LBS)).

	% of Economically Active in Employment	% of Employed Males Who are Part Time	% of Employed Females Who are Part Time
GREAT BRITAIN	89.4%	4.3%	39.1%
NORTHERN REGION	86.1%	3.6%	43.5%
BLYTH VALLEY	87.7%	2.8%	39.9%
Blyth	84.4%	3.3%	40.4%
Cramlington	90.5%	2.4%	39.0%
Seaton Valley Area	89.7%	2.9%	40.2%

TABLE APP XV-T3
The Varying Cost of a Semi-Detached or 3 Bedroom House in the United Kingdom, Northern Region and Blyth Valley during the Second Quarter of 1996 (Sources: Halifax Building Society House Price Index, No.64 and Estate Agent Association House Price Survey. NB A Semi-detached house in the former survey was taken as equivalent to a 3 bedroom house in the latter).

	Average Price of a Semi-Detached / 3 Bed House (£)	As a Percentage of Average UK Price	As a Percentage of Average Northern Region Price
United Kingdom	63,799	100%	120%
Greater London	118,125	185%	223%
Northern Region	53,007	83%	100%
Stockton	47,250	74%	89%
Darlington	57,200	90%	108%
Tyne and Wear	55,673	87%	105%
Newcastle upon Tyne	57,950	91%	109%
Northumberland	59,351	93%	112%
Blyth	45,250	71%	80%
Cramlington	49,000	77%	92%
Seaton Delaval	56,650	89%	107%

APPENDIX XVII

PROPOSED CAR PARKING STANDARDS FOR DEVELOPMENT, NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT	CAR PARKING STANDARDS AS REFERRED TO IN POLICY M8		
	Column A	Column B	
		Max	Min
HOUSING (SEE END NOTE 1):			
General Purpose 1 to 2 Bed			
In Curtilage Parking	2 per dwelling	1 per dwelling	0
Communal Parking	1.5 per dwelling	0.75 per dwelling	0
General Purpose 3 Bed			
In Curtilage Parking	3 per dwelling	2 per dwelling	0
Communal Parking	2.5 per dwelling	1 per dwelling	0
General Purpose 4 + Bed			
In Curtilage Parking	4 per dwelling	3 per dwelling	1 per dwelling
Communal Parking	3 per dwelling	2 per dwelling	1 per dwelling
Aged Persons Non-Sheltered			
In Curtilage Parking	1 per dwelling	1 per dwelling	0
Communal Parking	1 per dwelling	0.5 per dwelling	0
AGED PERSONS			
Sheltered Housing			
Warden	1	1	0
Resident Staff	1 per 1 staff	1 per 2 staff	0
Residents	1 per 4 residents	1 per 6 reisdents	0
Visitors	1 per 4 residents	1 per 6 reisdents	0
Residential Homes / Care Homes			
Staff	1 per 1 staff at peak staff levels	1 + 1 per 2 staff	1 + 1 per 4 staff
Residents	1 per 4 bedrooms	1 per 8 bedrooms	0
Visitors	1 per 4 bedrooms	1 per 8 bedrooms	0
Operational	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. minimum
Day Care			
Staff	1 per 1 staff	1 per 2 staff	1 per 4 staff
Patients	1 per 10 patients	1 per 20 patients	1 per 40 patients
Operational	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. minimum
MEDICAL			
Hospitals			
Staff	1 per 3 staff	1 per 5 staff	1 per 10 staff
Out Patients	1 per 3 beds	1 per 5 beds	1 per 10 beds
Visitors	1 per 3 beds	1 per 10 beds	1 per 25 beds
Operational	200 sq.m. minimum + 100 sq.m. per 1000 sq.m. floorspace	200 sq.m. minimum + 100 sq.m. per 1000 sq.m. floorspace	200 sq.m. minimum + 100 sq.m. per 1000 sq.m. floorspace
Clinics / Surgeries			
Medical Staff	1 per 1 staff	1 per 1 staff	1 per 1 staff
Admin. Staff	1 per 3 staff	1 per 5 staff	0
Patients	4 per consulting room	2 per consulting room	1 per consulting room
Operational	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. Minimum

BLYTH VALLEY DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

WRITTEN STATEMENT, May 1999

APPENDIX XVII: PROPOSED CAR PARKING STANDARDS FOR DEVELOPMENT, NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT	CAR PARKING STANDARDS AS REFERRED TO IN POLICY M8		
	Column A	Column B	
		Max	Min
RETAIL			
Shops (up to) 1000sq.m.			
Staff	1 per 100 sq.m. gross	1 per 150 sq.m. gross	0
Customers	1 per 20 sq.m. gross	1 per 30 sq.m. gross	0
Operational	150 sq.m.	100 sq.m.	50 sq.m.
Supermarkets over 1000 sq.m.			
Staff	1 per 100 sq.m.gross	1 per 150 sq.m. gross	1 per 200 sq.m. gross
Customers	8 per 100 sq.m.gross	8 per 100 sq.m. gross	8 per 100 sq.m. gross
Operational	600 sq.m.	600 sq.m.	600 sq.m.
Non-Food Retail over 1000 sq.m.			
Staff	1 per 100 sq.m. gross	1 per 200 sq.m. gross	1 per 400 sq.m. gross
Customers	4 per 100 sq.m. gross	4 per 100 sq.m. gross	4 per 100 sq.m. gross
Operational	600 sq.m.	600 sq.m.	600 sq.m.
OFFICES			
Staff	1 per 30 sq.m. gross	1 per 50 sq.m. gross	0
Visitors	1 per 150 sq.m. gross	1 per 300 sq.m. gross	0
Operational	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. minimum
INDUSTRIAL			
Warehouses			
Staff	1 per 200 sq.m. gross	1 per 300 sq.m. gross	0
Operational			
Up to 1000 sq.m.*	150 sq.m. Min	100 sq.m. Min	70 sq.m. Min
Over 1000 sq.m.*	600 sq.m.	600 sq.m.	600 sq.m.
*Gross floorspace			
Industry			
Staff	1 per 50 sq.m. gross	1 per 75 sq.m. gross	0
Operational			
Up to 500 sq.m.	150 sq.m. Min	100 sq.m. Min	70 sq.m. Min
Over 500 sq.m.	+ 100 sq.m. per 1000 sq.m.	+ 70 sq.m. per 1000 sq.m.	+ 50 sq.m. per 1000 sq.m.
Car Repairs			
Staff	1 per 40 sq.m. gross	1 per 50 sq.m. gross	1 per 50 sq.m. gross
Customers	3 per 50 sq.m. Service Area	3 per 50 sq.m. Service Area	3 per 50 sq.m. Service Area
Operational (for break down truck)	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. minimum
SERVICE INDUSTRIES			
Hotel / Guest Houses			
Staff	1 per 3 staff	1 per 5 staff	1 per 10 staff
Guests	1 per 1 bedroom	1 per 1 bedroom	1 per 1 bedroom
Restaurant	1 per 5 sq.m.	1 per 10 sq.m.	0
Bar	1 per 2.5 sq.m.	1 per 5 sq.m.	0
Function Rooms	1 per 5 sq.m.	1 per 20 sq.m.	0
Operational	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. minimum
Restaurant			
Staff	1 per 3 staff	1 per 5 staff	0
Customers	1 per 5 sq.m.	1 per 10 sq.m.	0
Bar	1 per 2.5 sq.m.	1 per 5 sq.m.	0
Operational	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. minimum

TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT	CAR PARKING STANDARDS AS REFERRED TO IN POLICY M8		
	Column A	Column B	
		Max	Min
SERVICE INDUSTRIES continued....			
Public Houses (SEE END NOTE 2)			
Staff	1 per 3 staff	1 per 5 staff	0
Customers	1 per 2.5 sq.m.	1 per 5 sq.m.	0
Operational	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m.
EDUCATIONAL (SEE END NOTE 3)			
Nursery Schools, Playgroups etc.			
Staff	1 per 1 staff	1 per 1 to 1.5 staff	1 per 2 staff
Visitors	1 per 5 children	1 per 10 children	1 per 20 children
Operational	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. minimum
First Schools			
Teachers	1 per 1 teachers	1 per 1 teachers	1 per 1 teachers
Visitors	1 per 5 pupils	1 per 10 pupils	1 per 20 pupils
Operational	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. minimum
Middle Schools			
Teachers	1 per 1 teachers	1 per 1 teachers	1 per 1 teachers
Visitors	1 per 10 pupils	1 per 20 pupils	1 per 30 pupils
Operational	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. minimum
High Schools			
Teachers	1 per 1 teachers	1 per 2 teachers	1 per 4 teachers
Staff	1 per 3 staff	1 per 5 staff	1 per 10 staff
Visitors / Students	1 per 40 Students	1 per 40 Students	1 per 100 Students
Operational	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. minimum
Colleges			
Teachers	1 per 1 teachers	1 per 2 teachers	1 per 4 teachers
Staff	1 per 3 staff	1 per 5 staff	1 per 10 staff
Visitors / Students	1 per 5 Students	1 per 10 Students	1 per 20 Students
Operational	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. Minimum
MISCELLANEOUS			
Places of Worship	1 + 1 per 10 seats min. 10	1 + 1 per 25 seats min. 5	1 + 1 per 100 seats min. 2
Operational	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. minimum
Assembly Halls			
Staff	1 per 2 staff	1 per 5 staff	0
Visitors	1 per 5 sq.m.	1 per 20 sq.m.	0
Operational	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. Minimum
Garages, Car Sales			
Staff	1 per 40 sq.m. gross	1 per 50 sq.m. gross	1 per 75 sq.m. gross
Sales Customers	1 per 200 sq.m of Display Area	1 per 240 sq.m of Display Area	1 per 400 sq.m of Display Area
Operational	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. minimum
Libraries			
Staff	1 per 2 staff	1 per 3 staff	0
Customers	1 per 30 sq.m.	1 per 50 sq.m.	0
Operational	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. minimum	50 sq.m. minimum

END NOTES

(1) On Shared Surface developments additional on-street visitor parking will be required: 1 additional car space per 5 dwellings. This requirement will be reduced to between 1 per 7 and 1 per 10 where column B applies. Such spaces shall be distributed uniformly throughout the Shared Surface.
(2) If there are rooms to let or function rooms to let, consider as hotel.
(3) At Schools and Playgroups it is essential to provide space for parents and contract buses to set down pupils. The visitor provision shown includes an allowance for this facility.

APPENDIX XVIII

OUTDOOR PLAYING SPACE: LEVELS OF PROVISION

A: NATIONALLY RECOMMENDED STANDARD: OUTDOOR PLAYING SPACE

TAKEN FROM THE DOCUMENT "THE SIX ACRE STANDARD" BY THE NATIONAL PLAYING FIELDS ASSOCIATION WITH THEIR PERMISSION

A
Outdoor Sport
1.6 - 1.8 hectares
(4 - 4.5 acres)

(i) Facilities such as pitches, greens, courts, athletics tracks and miscellaneous sites such as croquet lawns and training areas owned by local authorities, whether at county, district or parish level;

(ii) Facilities described in "(i)" within the education sector and which, as a matter of practice and policy, area avilable for public use;

(iii) Facilities described in "(i)" which are within the voluntary, private, industrial and commercial sectors, and serve the leisure needs for outdoor recreation of their members, or the public.

NOTE Included within the broad 2.4 hectares (6 acres) standard is a specific allocation of 1.2 hectares (3.0 acres) per 1000 population for pitch sports.

+

B
Children's Playing Space
0.6 - 0.8 hectares
(1.5 - 2 acres)

(i) Outdoor equipped playgrounds for children of whatever age;

(ii) Other designated play facilities for children which offer specific opportunity for outdoor play, such as adventure playgrounds;

(iii) Casual or informal playing space within housing areas

MINIMUM STANDARD
Total Playing Space
2.4 hectares
(6 acres)

The NPFA recommendations

- The Outdoor Sport Standard and the Children's Playing Space Standard should be adopted by all planning authorities within statutory development and local plans and non-statutory policy documents;
- the standards should be met or exceeded in all new developments (subject to the detailed advice contained in this publication);
- Where for reasons of land scarcity the minimum standards cannot be met in any given plan period, the planning authority should adopt them as a target. It should set an intermediary standard for achievement and make specific land allocations in that period;
- Appropriate policies should be adopted to safeguard the existing recreational land bank for playing fields and playspaces.

B: SPORTS PITCH AND TOTAL OUTDOOR SPORTS PROVISION IN THE THREE SPORTS PROVISION SUB-AREAS

	Blyth		Cramlington		Seaton Valley Area	
	Sports Pitches Only (Note 1)	**All Outdoor Sport Provision (Note 2)**	**Sports Pitches Only (Note 1)**	**All Out-door Sport Provision (Note 2)**	**Sports Pitches Only (Note 1)**	**All Out-door Sport Provision (Note 2)**
AREA CURRENTLY AVAILABLE (NOTE 3)	30 hectares	31 hectares	18 hectares	19 hectares	14 hectares	16 hectares
TOTAL REQUIREMENT TO 2006 (NOTES 1 & 2)	46 hectares	61 to 68 hectares	42 hectares	56 to 63 hectares	17 hectares	23 to 25 hectares
SHORTFALL APPLYING THE APPROPRIATE NATIONAL STANDARD (NOTE 4)	16 hectares	30 to 38 hectares	24 hectares	37 to 44 hectares	2 hectares	7 to 10 hectares
COMMITTED OR PLANNE PROVISION (NOTE 5)						
North-East Cramlington Community Development Area (Northburn Playing Fields - see Proposal NE6 (a))	-	-	5 hectares	5 hectares	-	-
South West Cramlington Community Development Area (NOTE 6)	-	-	temporary provision	temporary provision	-	-
South Beach Community Development Area (See Proposal SB5) (NOTE 7)	4 hectares	4 hectares	-	-	-	-
West Blyth Community Development Area (See Proposals WB6, WB9, WB12) (NOTE 8)	4 hectares	4 hectares	-	-	-	-
East Cramlington	-	-	-	-	1 hectare	1 hectare

Notes on Table:

1 Sports pitches include pitches for soccer, rugby football, hockey, cricket and other similar competitive sports. The Sports Council recommends a minimum requirement for pitches of 1.2 hectares per 1000 population.

2 Outdoor Sports Facilities include the total of sports pitches and add in bowling and putting greens, outdoor tennis and badminton courts, athletics tracks and similar facilities. The National Playing Fields Association recommends a minimum standard of for outdoor playing space (for adult use) of 1.6 to 1.8 hectares per 1000 population.

3 The total area of pitches is calculated by applying "ideal pitch areas" as used by the National Playing Fields Association, (N.P.F.A.). The ideal areas take account of such factors as "run of the ball" buffer zones. Where the total of the ideal areas is equal to or greater than the total area of the park within which the pitches, courts etc. are situated, then the whole park is assumed to be devoted to outdoor sports use. Where the area of the park is greater than this total, then the additional area is assumed to be in "other open space" use.

4 The shortfall is simply the calculated total requirement at the end of the Plan period, (the year 2006), LESS the area currently available.

5 Planned provision: These figures only take account of programmed schemes or known future provision, (in Masterplans etc.). No account is taken of other opportunities that might arise - e.g. from additional dual use.

6 In the South-West Sector of Cramlington, although there will be some provision within the Plan period, it will be temporary at first - on the school site -(See Proposal SW6 (a)), and is therefore not counted in the overall total.

7 At South Beach, the calculation is based on two additional pitches

8 At West Blyth, the provision will be for the whole housing area, some of which will be built beyond the Plan period.

APPENDIX XIX

NATIONALLY RECOMMENDED AREAS NEEDED FOR MORE POPULAR SPORTS AND GAMES

TAKEN FROM THE DOCUMENT "THE SIX ACRE STANDARD" BY THE NATIONAL PLAYING FIELDS ASSOCIATION WITH THEIR PERMISSION.

The needs of individual sports referred to in this Appendix and the needs of the Borough will be part of a District Sport and Recreation Strategy, to be prepared prior to review of this Plan.

- The figures below have been calculated from "Space Requirements for the More Popular Outdoor Games", published by the NPFA in 1986. The areas allow for actual playing surfaces and marginal clearances and side movement. The end and side distances used are the minimum recommended by the NPFA for any particular activity.
- The figures are for the area required for playing from season to season. They do not include the additional area required for the run of the ball, which in the case of soccer may require 55 per cent more space. In cricket, a "six" may often travel beyond the boundary by a further 50 per cent on large playing fields. This area is normally accounted for by careful sisting of adjacent pitches, fencing across the boundary or appropriate arrangements during use to remove the possibilities of accidents.
- All areas given are those for senior use, and the figures are rounded up or down as appropriate. The information is provided for illustrative purposes only.

Description	Area in hectares	Area in acres
Athletics		
6 lane track	1.9	4.7
8 lane track	2.0	5.0
Tennis courts for recreational use		
1 court	0.06	0.17
2 adjacent courts	0.12	0.30
3 adjacent courts	0.18	0.44
for each further adjacent court	0.05	0.12
Association Football	0.82 - 0.90	2.00 - 2.22
Hockey	0.62	1.51
Netball	0.05 - 0.07	0.13 - 0.16
Rugby Union	1.26	3.10
Mini and 7-a-side hockey: for 2 pitches	0.50	1.24
Basketball	0.06	0.15
Lacrosse	0.65	1.60
Bowling greens: flat and crown	0.14	0.35
Cricket		
1 square plus 2 senior soccer pitches	2.05	5.07
1 square plus hockey, senior soccer	2.01	4.98
1 square with boundary of 46m	1.50	3.70

APPENDIX XX

REQUIREMENTS FROM DEVELOPERS IN RESPECT OF THE PREPARATION OF LAND FOR FUTURE PLAYING FIELD USE AND THE PROVISION OF CHILDREN'S EQUIPPED PLAY GROUNDS

This Appendix expands on the requirements outlined in Policies C2 (i)(b) and C4 (i)(g) of this Written Statement relating to the provision negotiated with developers, normally applying Policy G11, in respect of the preparation of land for future playing field use and the provision of children's equipped playgrounds.

It is intended to expand upon this Appendix at a later stage of this Local Plan - e.g. in relation to the positioning of sports pitches near housing, the provision of pavilions, cycle tracks and other items in Panel G-P1 on page 70 of this Written Statement.

A. FUTURE PLAYING FIELDS

Where it is required that areas of land are laid out for future playing field use, in line with Policy C2 (i)(b), the following shall be required, although the Council. will determine whether variations or additions need to be made.

Earthworks

- Prior to commencing works, the developer must establish all services which cross the site, so as not to cause any damage. Should any damage occur, all costs relating to repair / reinstatement, shall be borne by the developer.
- No top-soil must be removed from the site / disposed of.
- No material should be brought onto the site without prior written agreement from the Council.
- The sub-soil should be stripped to the full depth and stored on site as agreed with the Council.
- All areas which have been filled with the sub-soil during the operation shall be consolidated in 150 millimetre layers.
- Before top-soiling takes place, and after the Council has agreed the sub-soil levels, all areas to be top-soiled shall be ripped or routed, in two separate directions, at right angles to each other, to a depth of 300mm below formation, at 900mm centres to ensure even compacting across the site and facilitate drainage.
- All of the original top-soil, which has been stored on site, should be spread across the whole site to provide an even layer of top-soil to the depth it was originally, prior to earthworks taking place.
- All finished levels should be in accordance with those indicated on an agreed layout plan.
- All earthworks will only take place when weather conditions permit, so as to cause no detriment to the soil's structure.

Cultivation and Seeding

- This shall take place after any drainage works that may be required have been carried out.
- The developer is to include for the cultivation of all areas, as indicated on an agreed plan, to an agreed depth by either mechanical and/or hand operations, as determined by site conditions and plot sizes.
- The developer should include for levelling and grading, disc harrowing and chain harrowing (or the appropriate hand operations), to produce an even distribution of soil to a fine tilth.
- The developer shall remove all stones in excess of 25mm in any one plane and rubbish detrimental to the establishment and maintenance of a good grass sward, and destroy all growing weeds and their roots. This to occur before and after seeding.
- Depending upon soil testing by the Council, the developer may be required to supply and spread ground limestone, at a rate to be specified, according to prevailing conditions.
- The developer shall provide and spread a pre-seeding fertiliser, at a rate per hectare to be specified, in two equal applications, 7 to 14 days before the grass seed is sown. The fertiliser is to be incorporated into the top-soil by means of harrowing or raking, as determined by site conditions and plot sizes.
- The developer shall provide and sow grass seed, as specified by the Council. The seed is to be sown at a rate of 380kg per hectare, the sowing being followed by raking or harrowing and light rolling. The sowing shall be in two equal halves, spread in transverse directions by a broadcast distributor. Seed sowing is to be carried out during the months of April / May or September / October, in favourable weather conditions, when the soil seed bed is dry and friable, or at such times as the Council shall direct. Any sowing outside these periods, without the Council's agreement, will be entirely at the developer's own risk.

Reinstatement

- Where any grass seed fails to become established, the developer shall, at its own expense, carry out all or any of the foregoing operations, as necessary, to reseed the areas where the failure has occurred, immediately any failure has become apparent.
- Damages to services, roads and footpaths must be reported to the appropriate authority. The cost of reinstating these areas will be met by the developer at no expense to the Council.

Maintenance

- The developer shall include for the full maintenance of all grass areas for 24 months, following agreement of practical completion of the work, or until such time as the area is handed over and accepted by the Council for maintenance purposes. The first cut in all cases must be carried out by a rotary machine. Second and subsequent cuts must be made by a cylinder machine, or on large areas, tractor drawn gang units may be used.
- Grass should be cut at 14 day intervals and to a height of 50mm, until the Council accepts the site for maintenance purposes.

Defects Liability

- The defects liability period shall be deemed to be 24 months from the completion of seeding unless otherwise stated.

B. LOCAL EQUIPPED AREAS FOR PLAY

Local Equipped Areas for Play, as required under Policy C4 (i)(g) shall meet the following requirements:

Location / Site

Sites should be:

- at least 400 square metres in area;
- at least 20 metres from the boundary of the nearest residential property and far enough away from houses to reduce the likelihood of noise and general disturbance;
- well drained;
- level and away from steep downward slopes;
- accessible from pedestrian routes and, where appropriate, cycle routes;
- normally overlooked by houses or well used pedestrian routes
- away from high voltage electricity cables;
- away from any through road without traffic calming; where this is impossible, suitable fencing shall be provided, (see below)

Play Equipment

At least five types of of play equipment shall be provided to meet with B.S.5696 parts 1.,2 and 3. The Council reserves the right to specify precisely the pieces of equipment to be obtained. Metal Equipment will be required for most items in most locations. It is also likely that a high proportion of fixed rather than moving equipment will be more acceptable for maintenance and safety reasons.

Fencing

Unless the Council makes exception for site specific reasons, the installation of a paling fence of at least 1.1 metres height with capping rail, will be required around the play area. The fencing material shall be specified by the Council. 2 metre self-closing gates shall be included.

Surfacing

As a minimum, a rubberised safety surface will be required to be installed beneath each piece of play equipment to reach outwards from the equipment as far as the manufacturer's recommended safety margin. The Council reserves the right to require such surfacing over a larger part of the total area of the play space. On those parts of the play area where safety surfacing is not specified, a Bitmac surface will normally be required.

Furniture

Litter receptacles shall be installed as specified by the Council.

Seating shall be installed. The Council reserves the right to specify the amount and exact type of seating, which may, depending on the location, be required to include picnic tables.

Layout

The layout shall be such as to allow all equipment to be visible from all the seating areas installed.

Landscaping

Whether or not soft landscaping is required will be dependent on the location. Any landscape scheme shall be approved by the Council in line with Policy E6 of this Written Statement. It shall be of a type to allow full visibility of the playground from nearby houses or footpaths and to meet the layout requirements above.

Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play

These larger, wider ranging play areas are only likely to be provided in one or two new locations during the Plan period unless a policy of further concentrating play equipment in fewer locations is totally unavoidable. They shall be as above except that at least 8 pieces of equipment shall be provided and the minimum area shall be 1000 square metres with a buffer zone of at least 30 metres to the nearest residential property.

APPENDIX XXI

AREAS WHERE A SHORTAGE OF EQUIPPED CHILDREN'S PLAYING SPACE HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED

A AREAS NOT WITHIN 400 METRES OF AN EQUIPPED PLAYGROUND

Blyth

- Avondale Avenue area
- Weardale Ave. / Eskdale Ave. (Northern End)
- Monkdale Ave.
- Queens Gardens
- Walton Avenue
- North Farm Estate / Malvins Close
- Cowpen Quay
- W. part, Newsham Farm Est.
- Quayside Area
- Croft Road / Union Street
- Princess Louise Road
- Plessey Rd. Area
- The Avenues W. Part, Solingen Estate
- Warkworth Ave., Appledore Road, Osprey Drive
- N. End, Delaval Crescent

Cramlington

- Northburn Park / Northburn Grange
- Northburn Dale
- Hartford Dale and new development areas N. Of Horton Drive
- Westwood Grange
- Parkside Dale
- Parkside Grange
- Eastfield Chase
- Eastfield Green
- Mayfield Dale
- Mayfield Grange
- E. Part, Mayfield Glade
- Southfield Lea
- Barns Park

Rest of District

- Reedswood Crescent, East Cramlington
- Askirk Way, Melrose Ave., Seaton Delaval
- Front Street, Seghill

B AREAS WITHIN 400 METRES OF AN EQUIPPED CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND BUT WHERE A MAIN ROAD, DISTRIBUTOR ROAD OR RAILWAY HAS TO BE CROSSED TO REACH THE FACILITY

Blyth

- Eastern end of Swaledale Avenue / Bishopdale Avenue
- Devonworth Place
- Edendale Avenue
- Eastern Part of Newsham Farm Estate
- Twentieth Avenue
- Lynn Street
- Marine Terrace / Cypress Gdns.
- Rosmund Place / Woodbine Tce.
- Grantham Street / Gordon Road

Cramlington

- Parkside Grange, N. End
- W. Part of Mayfield Glade

Rest of District

- Acomb Ave., Denham Drive area, Seaton Delaval
- Southward Way, Seaton Delaval / Holywell
- Murrayfield etc., Seghill
- Hastigs Gardens, New Hartley
- Dorchester Court, Chipchase Court, New Hartley
- Southward, Seaton Sluice
- Westlands, Seaton Sluice

APPENDIX XXII

PROTECTED OPEN SPACES

This Appendix expands on Policy C7 (ii) which seeks to protect open spaces within the built-up areas from development. The reasons for protecting each are set out on the right hand side.

A* = *Strategic Open Space for the town or the locality - Policy C7

B* = *Visual Reasons - Policy E18

C* = *Nature Conservation Reasons - Policy E2

BLYTH

OB1	Lonsdale Avenue / Glendale Ave., north of Cowpen Road	B
OB2	Triangular area - r.o. Avondale Ave., Cowpen	A
OB3	Cowpen Recreation Ground	A+B
OB4	Playground, Brierley Rd., Cowpen	A+B
OB5	Monkdale Ave./Stardale Ave.	B
OB6	r.o. Bishopdale Avenue	A
OB7	Isabella Fields including reclaimed Colliery Area and Land r.o. HallsideRoad	A+B+C
OB8	Land at Jct. Druridge Drive and Wharton Street	B
OB9	Land r.o. Wharton Street	A
OB10	Ridley Park	A+B
OB11	The Oval, New Delaval	A+B
OB12	Cottingwood Green, South Newsham	A+B
OB13	Open land at Corner of Cowpen Rd, North Farm	B
OB14	Land along south side of Albion Way	B
OB15	Central Corridor of Open Space, Cowpen Farm	B
OB16	St John's Park, Cowpen Quay	A+B
OB17	Gladstone Street	B
OB18	Land at Millfield Gardens, Hodgsons Rd. Estate	B
OB19	Land at Crawford Street, Hodgsons Rd. Est.	A
OB20	Bolam Park	A+B
OB21	Land at Renwick Rd., Opposite Albion Depot	B
OB22	Broadway Circle	B
OB23	Open land between Newsham Road and the Avenues	A
OB24	Burns Avenue	B
OB25	Broadway Field	A+B
OB26	Eleventh Avenue Running Track Field	A
OB27	Crofton Moor	A+B+C
OB28	Recreation Ground, South Beach	A
OB29	Small Areas, South Beach	B
OB30	Corridor, Rotary Way	B
OB31	Corridor, Sandringham Drive	B
OB32	South Newsham Park	A+B

CRAMLINGTON

OC1	Chichester Avenue, Nelson Village	A+B
OC2	r.o Nelson Ave, Nelson Village	A
OC3	Beaconhill Park	A+B
OC4	Westfield Park	A+B
OC5	Barns Park / Southern Stream	B+C
OC6	Ann Welfare Sports Ground and Area to North	A+B
OC7	Alexandra Park	A+B
OC8	Malden Close	B
OC9	Hebron Way	B
OC10	r.o. Carlcroft Place	B
OC11	r.o. Coanwood Drive	B
OC12	Winster Place	B
OC13	Wreay Walk	B
OC14	Village Road	B
OC15	Hall Close Green	A+B
OC16	Central Park	A+B
OC17	Westwood Park	A+B
OC18	Eastfield Park	A+B
OC19	Land S. of Eastfield Grange	A+B
OC20	Corridors of Land at Eastfield	B
OC21	Horton Park	A+B
OC22	Corridor, Horton Burn	B
OC23	Dewsgreen	B
OC24	Dukesfield	B
OC25	Alexandra Way	B
OC26	Doxford Place	B
OC27	Sunniside, Station Road	A+B
OC28	Central Open Space, Parkside	A+B
OC29	Corridor, Northumbrian Rd., Horton Drive	B
OC30	Corridor, A1172, N. of Beaconhill	B
OC31	Corridor, Westmorland Way, Dudley Lane, Low Main Pl.	B
OC32	Corridor, Northumbrian Road (South)	B
OC33	Cragside	B
OC34	Corridor, Durham Road	B
OC35	Northburn Playing Fields	A+B

REST OF DISTRICT

OR1	Former Memorial Park, Seaton Delaval	B
OR2	Playground, Western Avenue, Seaton Delaval	A
OR3	Astley Park, Seaton Delaval	A+B
OR4	Hallington Drive, Seaton Delaval	B
OR5	Elsdon Avenue Pit Heap, Seaton Delaval	B+C
OR6	Bates Welfare, Seaton Delaval	A+B
OR7	Land south of Denham Drive, Seaton Delaval	B
OR8	Land between Acomb Avenue and Staward Avenue, Seaton Delaval	A
OR9	Northside Place, Seaton Delaval	A
OR10	Seaton Crescent, Holywell	B
OR11	Recreation Ground, Seghill	A+B
OR12	Deneside, Seghill	B
OR13	Front Street, Seghill	B
OR14	Corridor, Station Road, Seghill	B
OR15	Recreation Ground, New Hartley	A+B
OR16	Dorchester Court Open Space, New Hartley	B

(continued....

REST OF DISTRICT continued

OR17	Memorial Park, Seaton Sluice	A+B
OR18	Derwent Road, Seaton Sluice	A
OR19	Hartley Square, (Central Part), Seaton Sluice	A+B
OR20	Land at Millfield, Seaton Sluice	B
OR21	Area of the Links inland of the Main Coast Road, Seaton Sluice	B
OR22	Area around the Harbour, Rocky Island and Clifftops, Seaton Sluice	B+C
OR23	Scott Street, East Hartford	A+B
OR24	Mortimer Chase, East Hartford	B
OR25	Weldon Road, East Cramlington	A+B

ADDITIONAL FRONTAGES PROTECTED FOR TOWNSCAPE REASONS UNDER POLICY E13 (II)

OF1	School field frontage to Princess Louise Road, Blyth
OF2	School field frontage to Wharton Street, Blyth
OF3	St Paul's School field frontage to Dudley Lane, Cramlington
OF4	School Field etc. frontage to Northumbrian Road and East-West Link Road, north and east of Cramlington Village, Cramlington
OF5	Brockwell Middle School field frontage to Northumbrian Road, Cramlington
OF6	School field frontage to Astley Road / A192, Seaton Delaval
OF7	Astley High School field frontage to Avenue Road / A190, Seaton Delaval
OF8	Astley High School field frontage to Elsdon Avenue, Seaton Delaval
OF9	School field frontage to Beresford Road / A193, Seaton Sluice
OF10	Allotment frontage to Beresford Road / A193, Seaton Sluice
OF11	School Field Frontage, A190, Seghill

APPENDIX XXIII

BACKGROUND TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY OF BLYTH VALLEY

INTRODUCTION

This appendix provides the economic context within which the Policies and Proposals of this Local Plan are made. The following sections include an analysis of the trends in the national, regional and the local economy, looking at employment structure, workforce characteristics, commuting flows, unemployment, future prospects and local strategies for economic development.

THE NATIONAL ECONOMY

Structural Changes

The structure of the national economy has altered substantially over the last 40 years. The main features of change have been the decline of primary and manufacturing industry, with a major decline in levels of employment in coal mining, agriculture, fishing and forestry, metal manufacture, heavy engineering, ship building and vehicle manufacture, complemented by a growth of service sector employment, in particular among distribution, banking and other services. However the service sector has undergone a major restructuring since the recession of the early 1990's and as a response to new technology, with considerable job losses.

Employment Trends

During the decade from 1981 to 1991, the number of males in employment fell by 9% to 11.2 million whilst the number of females increased by 13% to 10.3 million, mainly as a result of an increase in the number of married women returning to the workforce. The percentage of part time employees also rose slightly between 1981 and 1991 from 20% to 27%, with the rate of increase being greater for females. By the 1990's part time working accounted for a significant proportion of females in employment (45%).

During the 1980's the growth in self employment (52%) was one of the most significant changes in the labour market, and by 1991 accounted for 12.5% of the labour force.

Unemployment and Vacancies

In the first half of the 1980's there was a sharp increase in the numbers unemployed in Great Britain reaching a peak of just over 3 million in 1986. From 1986 onwards the numbers of unemployed decreased continually to a figure of 1.5 million in March 1990. Following that, the underlying trend in unemployment was once again upwards as the economy moved into recession. More recently the trend has been downwards and by January 1998 the Great Britain unemployment fugure had actually fallen below the 1990 low of one and a half million.

During the 1980's most new jobs were created in the service industries which required differing skills to those held by the unemployed. Many of the vacancies were also filled by people who were previously economically inactive such as married women re-entering the labour force. The growing gap between skills required and jobs available has increased the level of long-term unemployment, to the point were it has become a much more significant problem than it previously was.

Future Trends

Studies of the economy and employment predict that nationally over the next decade the population of working age will grow by half a million, whilst growth in the labour force will be faster still due to continuing increases in the proportion of the population seeking work, particularly women. By 2001 women are expected to account for about 45% of the total labour force. The average age of the working population is also expected to increase with a reduction in the number of young people entering the labour market. Numbers of both employees and the self employed are similarly expected to grow.

Employment in the primary, utilities and manufacturing sectors are projected for long term decline, whilst employment in business services, education, public health, administration, tourism, leisure, distribution, transport and communications are projected to grow. The main areas of employment growth are expected to be among managerial, professional and associated professional jobs. In contrast the number of jobs for skilled manual workers, plant and machine operators and unskilled labourers is expected to fall substantially. Forecasters anticipate that self employment will have been a major growth sector throughout the 1990's accounting for over half of the national net increase in total employment.

THE REGIONAL ECONOMY

Structural Changes

The economy of the Northern region has generally followed national trends, although the impact of change was more severe during the period 1981-1991. The characteristics of the region include rapid restructuring with inward investment and company expansion in manufacturing industries taking place against a backdrop of high unemployment, continuing outward migration and a declining population, low economic activity rates and low rates of business formation. The 1990s has witnessed an influx of inward investment from the Far East, with a number of large electronic and component manufacturing companies opening prestigious new factories in the region. However the structure of the regional economy, with growth sectors such as the service industry being under represented and traditional industries continuing to decline, still renders it vulnerable to changes occurring in the national economy as a whole.

Employment Trends

The rate of growth during the 1980's in female employment was not as great in the northern region as nationally, however the loss of male employees in employment took place at a rate of three and a half times the national average. The vast majority of the growth in female employment was accounted for by part-time employment. The self employed sector has increased but the growth rate has not been as great as the national average.

Unemployment and Vacancies

The Northern Region has typically experienced one of the highest regional rates of unemployment in Great Britain. Its unemployment rate has consistently been higher than the average for the country as a whole, particularly during the period 1983-1987. The pattern was one of rapidly increasing unemployment in the early 1980's reaching a peak of 16.7% in 1985, followed by a significant decrease to 8.8% in 1990, before increasing to a level of 13.8% in 1993. By early 1998, the rate had once again fallen to below 10 per cent.

The Future of the Region and a Strategy for the Regional Economy

The setting up of the Regional Development Agency, "OneNorthEast" affords the opportunity for a Regional Economic Strategy for the North-East to be prepared. Initial work on this commenced shortly before the adoption date of this Local Plan. The strategy will be based upon a vision for the future of the region that takes account of the views of all stakeholders in the regional economy.

THE NORTHUMBERLAND ECONOMY

Structural Changes

A massive investment has been made over the last 30 years in transforming the environment of Northumberland. By the mid-1990's, some 1,600 hectares of land had been made available for industrial development, and 270,000 square metres of industrial premises had been provided. However Northumberland faces the prospect of increasing competition for investment and jobs, particularly as other parts of the Region benefit from Enterprise Zones, Urban Development Corporations, and City Challenge initiatives. Of fundamental concern is that Northumberland is experiencing an acceleration and broadening of long term structural change with the prospect of the loss of major employers at the heart of a declining coalfield economy.

The employment structure of Northumberland is significantly different from that of the Northern Region and the UK as a whole. Coal dominated the local economy from the early 19th century; however since the 1950's the Northumberland Coalfield has seen the closure of 32 collieries with the loss of 27,500 jobs (6000 in the last 7 years). The primary sector now accounts for a smaller proportion of total employment in the County than in any time during recent history, but still makes a considerably higher contribution to the County economy than nationally.

As a response the area has sought to replace lost jobs by attracting inward investment in the form of manufacturing employment. The 1980`s saw an overall growth in manufacturing employment throughout Northumberland, contrary to national trends. A large number of the net gains were in textiles, clothing, food and drink, timber and plastics manufacturers, with a smaller but significant proportion in electrical & electronic engineering and metals & chemical manufacture industries, including pharmaceuticals.

Growth in the service sector over recent years has been mainly due to a growth in the number of small businesses, in particular retail distribution, hotel and catering, road haulage and business and personal services. However the service sector still accounts for a lower proportion of employees in Northumberland than it does nationally. In 1996 it accounted for about 8,700 jobs, approximately 9% of employment in the County.

Employment Trends

The 1991 Census recorded that 84% of males of working age in the County were economically active, the majority of them were full time employees, and one in six were classified as self employed. Of females of working age over two thirds were economically active. Two out of five female employees were classified as part time, working 30 hours or less. Between 1981 and 1991 the male economic activity rate fell by 5.5%, compared with a 9% increase in the female activity rate in both full and part time jobs. The relative proportion of males and females in employment has converged over time due to the growth and decline in jobs in the different employment sectors. Females comprised 49% of all employees in the 1991 Census of Employment, a proportion that exceeds both the national and regional figures.

TABLE APP XXIII-T1: UNEMPLOYMENT RATES 1986 to 1999,
Source: Blyth Valley Borough Council, based upon Department of Education & Employment figures
(N.B. "E.O.A." means Employment Office Area)

	Blyth E.O.A.	Cramlington E.O.A.	Blyth Valley	N Region	GB
April 1986	17.2	13.3	15.0	19.5	13.9
April 1988	14.8	10.9	12.6	13.4	8.9
April 1990	9.7	6.3	7.8	9.9	6.4
April 1992	13.1	8.8	10.7	12.8	11.0
April 1994	14.6	9.8	11.9	13.2	11.1
April 1995	12.6	8.8	9.9	10.8	8.4
April 1996			9.0	10.3	7.8
April 1997			7.2	8.3	5.9
April 1998			6.0	7.9	5.2
April 1999			6.2		

TABLE APP XXIII-T2: BLYTH VALLEY UNEMPLOYMENT RATES 1986 to 1998
Source: Blyth Valley Borough Council, based upon Department of Education & Employment figures

	% Unemployed Males	% Unemployed Females	% Of Unemployed Who Were Under 30 Yrs Old	% Of Unemployed Who Had Been Unemployed For Over 12 Months
April 1986	17.5	11.1	45	34
April 1990	9.4	5.3	48	31
April 1994	15.5	6.4	43	33
April 1998	8.1	3.2	45	25

Unemployment and Vacancies

The pattern of change in unemployment has generally mirrored national and regional trends; however the rate of unemployment in Northumberland has been consistently higher than nationally. In January 1998 7.9% of the work force was unemployed, with an estimated three-quarters of this figure falling in the traditional coalfield areas of Blyth Valley, Wansbeck, and parts of Castle Morpeth & Alnwick Districts. The County-wide rate of unemployment conceals pockets of particularly severe, long term unemployment in many communities, particularly in the Northumberland coalfield.

Future Trends

Studies of the Northumberland economy predict that the decline in the primary industry sector, in particular fishing and agriculture, is expected to continue and is likely to have considerable knock on effects in terms of employment loss in other primary industries based in South East Northumberland such as Blyth Power Station. They consider, however, that with appropriate policy action, South East Northumberland has the potential to attract and generate future investment in the manufacturing sector, in particular pharmaceuticals, electronics and engineering. The overall forecast remains however for a 2% decline in manufacturing employment. Job creation in the service sector (particularly in relation to leisure and tourism) is expected to increase significantly, although, due to the nature of much of the work, many of the jobs are expected to be filled by females and on a part-time basis. The total population of working age in the County is expected to be little changed over the next 5 years, with further increases in the female labour force counter balanced by a substantial fall in the numbers of school leavers.

Strategy for the County Economy

The County Council's past Economic Development Strategies, during the 1990's have had main aims of reducing unemployment and raising income levels through employment and training opportunities which meet the long term needs of the County's residents.

More recently, this has been replaced by an approach which looks at the wider relationship between the local community, the local economy and also the local environment. Thus, the Action Plan of the Northumberland Partnership has the following strategic objectives:

- to enhance Northumberland's quality of life by improving existing facilities and developing new ones;
- to encourage sustainable growth and combat unemployment by creating a broad range of new "quality" jobs and ensure equality of opportunity in the job market through measures to eliminate barriers to employment;
- to promote and support development of the County's infrastructure, transportation and communication networks to improve accessibility and alleviate the effects of Northumberland's peripheral location;
- to raise awareness and improve perceptions of Northumberland both nationally and internationally;

- to tackle crime and the causes of crime and create a safe environment where communities and businesses feel secure;
- to ensure everyone has access to a high qualty educational and training opportunities;
- to provide resources and facilities to sponsor self-reliance within communities and ensure local people have the opportunity to participate in decisions which affect them;
- to improve housing conditions and ensure a choice of quality and affordable housing;
- to take steps to improve health and health awareness throughthe provisaion of quality health services, health promotion initiatives and measures to improve the social and physical conditions of communities;
- to combat poverty by increasing incomes and targeting resources towards areas and groups in greater need;
- to protect and improve the quality of the natural and built environment.

The Northumberland County Structure Plan

The Northumberland County Structure Plan sets out the land use framework for the County Council strategy for revitalisation of the economy. It seeks to safeguard and strengthen the economic base of the County by giving support for the expansion of existing firms, the establishment of new firms and the attraction of inward investment, particularly in areas suffering from heavy decline in traditional industries. The major component in this framework is the provision of a range of employment premises and land capable of accommodating major industry, high technology, research and development and business uses whilst meeting the needs of small and large scale standard industrial facilities in both the urban and rural areas.

Promotion of Economic Development in Northumberland

The County Council promote economic development by advising and supporting businesses through the Northumberland Business Centre; by offering various forms of support for small firms; by the promotion of prestige sites; the provision of new types of advance factories; programmes of environmental improvements; and analysis of the local economy and labour market. The Northumberland Training and Enterprise Council also has a role in the management of training and enterprise programmes.

Other initiatives include the Northumberland Strategic Partnership, (N.S.P.), which has already been mentioned above. This partnership is between Northumberland County Council, Government Departments, District councils, One NorthEast and the private and voluntary sectors, set up to tackle the economic, social and environmental regeneration and improvement of economic prospects for the whole of Northumberland. As well as the strategic objectives referred to above, the N.S.P.'s working parties have prepared a number of action programmes for the County.

THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Structural Changes

Within Blyth Valley, there has been a virtual elimination of employment in primary industries (agriculture, forestry, fishing, energy and water supply), a decline in the reliance on manufacturing employment (although still above the national average) and an increase in service sector employment. Amongst the manufacturing industries, pharmaceuticals, clothing, textiles and engineering are particularly important to the local economy, with major pharmaceutical firms such as Merck, Sharpe and Dohme, Knoll Pharmaceuticals and Bristol-Myers Squibb located within the Borough. Service sector employment in Blyth Valley is dominated by the public sector with education and local government being the most significant employers. The Borough economy has undergone several waves of new investment which has resulted in the current employment structure. During the 1960's and early 1970's there was significant investment by international companies, particularly at Cramlington. Restructuring led to some closures during the 1970's but Cramlington fared relatively well during the recession at the end of that decade. In the 1980's the local manufacturing sector developed with a greater independence from head offices allowing greater flexibility to respond to opportunities for expansion and less radical responses to economic downturn. Increasingly indigenous manufacturing companies are now making a significant contribution to local employment growth.

Employment Trends

Total employment within the Borough showed a 6% decline over the period 1981-1987. The district is closely following national workforce trends with a decline in male unemployment corresponding to an increase in female employment. However those female jobs which have been created are typically on a part time basis or low paid.

Unemployment

In general the performance of the economy in Blyth Valley has mirrored that of the Northern Region, with unemployment remaining on average 2-3% higher than that for Great Britain, although the relative position of Blyth Valley has recently improved as compared with the region as a whole.

At ward level, pockets of high unemployment persist and high unemployment rates have had a severe impact upon specific age groups within the population in the Borough. Since January 1988 the number of unemployed under the age of 30 has consistently been between 40% and 55% of the total unemployed. Meanwhile, the number of people claiming benefit for more than six months continues to be relatively high.

TABLE APP XXIII-T3
EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURE IN BLYTH VALLEY (%)
Source: Census of Employment and Northumberland County Council Surveys

	PRIMARY	MANUFAC-TURING	CONSTRUCTION	SERVICES
GREAT BRITAIN				
1981	5.0	28.4	5.1	61.4
1987	3.8	23.7	4.6	68.0
1989	3.4	23.1	4.8	68.7
1991	3.3	21.2	4.5	71.0
NORTH REGION				
1981	7.3	30.4	6.0	56.3
1987	6.0	24.0	5.2	64.8
1989	4.6	25.1	6.4	63.9
1991	4.2	24.3	6.1	65.4
NORTHUMBERLAND				
1981	18.6	22.4	6.1	52.9
1987	10.8	23.8	5.0	60.2
1989	9.4	22.5	4.7	63.5
1991	8.3	20.7	5.4	65.6
BLYTH VALLEY				
1981	11.4	39.5	4.7	44.4
1987	1.4	44.6	4.9	49.1
1989	1.1	39.8	3.8	55.2
1991	1.9	34.2	5.5	58.4

TABLE APP XXIII-T4: ECONOMIC POSITION OF RESIDENTS AGED 16+ IN BLYTH VALLEY
Source: 1991 Census

	Blyth			Cramlington		
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
All residents 16+	**13316**	**14732**	**28048**	**10529**	**11332**	**21861**
Total economically active	**9417**	**7206**	**16623**	**8458**	**6757**	**15215**
- full time employees	6508	3644	10152	6669	3702	10371
- part time employees	213	2506	2719	165	2373	2538
- self employed	826	262	1088	664	187	851
- on a Government scheme	374	202	576	175	155	330
- unemployed	1496	592	2088	785	340	1125
Total economically inactive	**3899**	**7526**	**11425**	**2071**	**4575**	**6646**
- student	371	372	743	381	393	774
- permanently sick	1038	615	1653	556	383	939
- retired	2393	2935	5328	1081	1446	2527
- other inactive	97	3604	3701	53	2353	2406

	Seaton Valley			BLYTH VALLEY		
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
All residents 16+	**5983**	**6418**	**12401**	**29828**	**32482**	**62310**
Total economically active	**4186**	**3270**	**7456**	**22061**	**17233**	**39294**
- full time employees	3059	1703	4762	16236	9049	25285
- part time employees	87	1160	1247	465	6039	6504
- self employed	500	173	673	1990	622	2612
- on a Government scheme	95	60	155	644	417	1061
- unemployed	445	174	619	2726	1106	3832
Total economically inactive	**1797**	**3148**	**4945**	**7767**	**15249**	**23016**
- student	225	181	406	977	946	1923
- permanently sick	404	207	611	1998	1205	3203
- retired	1136	1371	2507	4610	5752	10362
- other inactive	32	1389	1421	182	7346	7528

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN BLYTH VALLEY

History

The Council adopted employment creation as its first priority policy in 1983. Since that time it has pursued an active economic development programme providing accommodation, land, financial assistance and advisory services for local businesses as well as promoting the Borough to new investors and providing skills training and support for the unemployed in an attempt to diversify the narrow based economy.

Blyth Valley Economic Mission Statement and Strategy

An Economic Mission Statement and Strategy tackling the future prosperity of Blyth Valley, was issued in October 1995 to cover the period up to the millennium. The statement aims to achieve the following objectives:

- to reduce unemployment by 500 as a direct result of new initiatives;
- to attract at least one major new investor into the Borough; and
- to aid the start up of ten new community/co-operative businesses.

The Council has committed itself to a programme of investment and initiatives aimed at elevating the profile of economic development in the Borough and securing long-term economic improvement. The Council is actively encouraging a partnership between public and private bodies, agencies and other organisations in order to maximise investment, both from home and abroad. Within the year after adoption of this Plan, this strategy will be reviewed as part of the Blyth Valley Community Plan.

At present the whole of Blyth Valley has Development Area status, providing an important incentive to potential inward investors through the provision of central government grants, economic advice and other types of support. This is currently under review as is the status for European funding.

The Council also works in partnership with other agencies, such as One NorthEast, (the Regional Development Agency), and with new initiatives such as the Business Link scheme and the Single Regeneration Budget.

The Borough has been successful in obtaining SRB funds in rounds 2 and 4 to assist in the regeneration of the town of Blyth.

One NorthEast and the Northern Property Trust have the largest portfolio of factory units in the Borough with over 150 units ranging from large advance factories for inward investors to starter workshops for new businesses. There has been no recent speculative development of new factories by private developers and there has been no local authority funded property development in the past few years.

The Economy of Blyth

Blyth is the largest service and employment centre in South East Northumberland. The town and port grew with the development of coal mining, however the town has suffered high levels of unemployment as coal mining has contracted, culminating in the closure of Bates Colliery in 1986. Up until two years before its closure, the colliery employed approximately 1 in 3 of the total male workforce, or 1

TABLE APP XXIII-T5: PLACE OF WORK OF EMPLOYED RESIDENTS AGED 16+ IN BLYTH VALLEY
Source: Northumberland County Council

EMPLOYED IN (Administrative Areas)....	NUMBER	%
TOTAL EMPLOYED RESIDENTS	34,290	100
Blyth Valley	15,780	46
Newcastle	7,040	20
North Tyneside	5,300	15
Wansbeck	1,720	5
Castle Morpeth	1,620	5
Gateshead	1,010	3
Alnwick	80	1
Tynedale	70	1
Elsewhere	1,670	5

in 8 of the resident workforce of the town and was the largest single employer.

A large percentage of the town's remaining manufacturing jobs are taken by women and of these, many are in the clothing industry. Within the service sector, retailing, education, and government services are well represented. The Port of Blyth is also a major employer in the town.

Latest available figures show that, in 1991, of those residents who lived in the town about 50% worked in the town whilst 50% travelled elsewhere to Tyne and Wear, Cramlington and parts of Wansbeck District.

Blyth is one of the unemployment blackspots in the County. The general trend in unemployment between 1986-1990 was downwards, before rising in the early 1990's and then falling again to a level of 7.8% at the adoption date of this Local Plan. Particular blackspots include Central Blyth, Plessey and parts of the Cowpen area, with some localities having around 1 in 6 male unemployment. The problem is compounded by the relatively narrow range of job opportunities in growth industries, especially in the service sector. The skills of the unemployed male workforce relate to the declining mining industry and traditional manufacturing sectors and tend to be "blue collar" manual occupations, especially those requiring few skills; most advertised vacancies are in part time occupations demanding female labour. Long-term male unemployment has become an increasing problem.

Despite the availability of a good range of quality industrial sites, very little new inward investment has taken place on the Kitty Brewster or Cowpen Industrial Estates since 1984. About half of available land has been developed. Most of the land available at Blyth has been developed by the public sector. Private sector investment has tended to be focused on extensions to existing factories rather than speculative development of advance factories.

The Economy of Cramlington

Cramlington was established in 1962 as a new town for the whole of South East Northumberland in a unique partnership between the local authorities and developers. The aim was to create a single employment growth point with an infrastructure and environment of a sufficiently high standard to compete internationally for the attraction of manufacturing industry which would diversify the area's economy and reduce the damaging out migration of the young and skilled.

The town has been successful in attracting large numbers of manufacturing jobs, providing employment for those in the immediate area and for adjacent districts. It now provides approximately 5000 jobs on attractive industrial estates. A high level of grant aid has been crucial to this success.

The latest available data on place of work indicates a very strong link between Cramlington, the Seaton Valley settlements and Tyneside, with about half of the residents of Cramlington, (plus the villages of Hartley, Holywell, Seaton Delaval and Seghill), commuting to Tyne and Wear for service sector work.

Unlike Seaton Valley and Blyth, Cramlington also provides an important centre of manufacturing employment for areas beyond the Borough boundary. Over 40% of people commute to work in Cramlington from beyond the Borough boundary, from areas where unemployment levels are substantially higher than the national and regional levels. This is compared with less than 25% of those employed in the town of Blyth who commute from outside the Borough boundary. Cramlington also provides employment for 11% of the working residents of Blyth.

Although the overall unemployment rate is similar to the national average there are unemployment blackspots within Cramlington. In

TABLE APP XXIII-T6
SOCIO ECONOMIC GROUP OF ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE RESIDENTS IN BLYTH VALLEY
(% of Total) Source:1991 Census (10% sample)

	Blyth	Cramling-ton	Seaton Valley	Blyth Valley
Employers/managers in large establishments	4.3	6.1	5.0	5.1
Employers/managers in small establishments	4.9	6.9	7.9	6.2
Professional workers - self employed	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.3
Professional workers - employees	1.3	2.7	3.1	2.2
Ancillary workers and artists	7.9	12.1	10.7	10.0
Foremen and supervisors - non manual	0.9	1.2	0.4	0.9
Junior non manual workers	19.6	24.6	23.4	22.3
Personal services workers	4.0	4.1	4.7	4.2
Foremen and supervisors - manual	2.4	2.5	1.9	2.3
Skilled manual workers	17.3	13.0	12.8	14.8
Semi-skilled manual workers	18.0	12.3	12.8	14.8
Unskilled manual workers	6.7	5.2	4.0	5.6
Own account workers (not professional)	4.1	3.4	5.6	4.1
Farmers-employers and managers	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.1
Farmers- own account	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Agricultural workers	0.2	0.2	0.7	0.3
Members of the Armed Forces	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.5
Inadequately described/non stated	4.7	2.4	3.1	3.6

particular 1 in 8 males are unemployed in the Hartford and West Cramlington area. The level of unemployment in Cramlington began to rise in the late 1980s reflecting the worsening situation in the national economy, however recent years have seen a slow decline to a below 5% at the adoption date of this Local Plan.

Most of the industrial land developed in the Borough has been at Cramlington. This has taken the form of large purpose built units for manufacturing activities and speculatively built advance factory units. Cramlington has been very successful in attracting foreign investment and has been the main location in the County for inward investment, attracting a range of firms particularly from Europe and the Far East. Of the 270 hectares of industrial land available at the time of adoption of this Local Plan, over 80% has been leased or sold, with no new large sites available. Cramlington is at an advantage in terms of location because of good road accessibility, its proximity to Tyneside, workforce characteristics and its track record of attracting major international investment.

The Economy of the Seaton Valley Villages

In the Seaton Valley settlements there are no large employment areas, and most employment opportunities are in the service sector. The only major manufacturing firm is the Health & Beauty Care factory at Seaton Delaval, however there are local employment sites in the settlements of Seaton Delaval and Seghill.

APPENDIX XXIV

LAND AVAILABLE / REQUIRED FOR GENERAL AND LOCAL EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS PARK USE

(This Appendix forms a background to Policy W1 in Chapter 6 of the Written Statement)

A. LAND AVAILABLE ON INDUSTRIAL ESTATES AND BUSINESS PARKS AT DECEMBER 1998

Source: Northumberland County Council

	Total Area (not including ancillary uses) (hectares)	Available (hectares)	Under Option (hectares)	Total Available or Under Option (hectares)
Blyth Bebside	6.82	0	0	0
Blyth Cowpen	20.45	5.68	0	5.68
Blyth Kitty Brewster	25.68	6.38	0.62	7.00
Blyth Harbour South	22.76	0	0.97	0.97
Blyth Crofton Mill	1.58	0	0	0
New Delaval	0.45	0	0	0
Blyth Bates	19.19	19.19	0	19.19
Sub-total, Blyth	**96.93**	**31.25**	**1.59**	**32.84**
Cramlington Bassington	55.04	9.00	0	9.00
East Cramlington	9.42	0	0.77	0.77
South Cramlington	35.59	23.13	0	23.13
Cramlington Windmill	63.35	0	0	0
Cramlington North Nelson	36.07	0	0	0
Cramlington Nelson Park West	26.74	20.13	0	20.13
Cramlington Nelson Park	26.54	8.97	0	8.97
Cramlington Crosland Park	5.75	2.69	0	2.69
Cramlington Nelson Park East	8.90	0	0	0
Cramlington South Nelson	11.19	2.95	0	2.95
Sub-total, Cramlington	**278.59**	**66.87**	**0.77**	**67.64**
Double Row	10.68	0.30	0	0.30
Avenue Road, Seaton Delaval	10.91	0	0	0
Seghill	4.82	0	3.50	3.50
Sub-total, Seaton Valley Area	**26.41**	**0.30**	**3.50**	**3.80**
GRAND TOTAL	**401.93**	**98.42**	**5.86**	**104.28**

N.B. This appendix does not include future allocations under Policy W2 - for individual users.

APPENDIX XIV: LAND AVAILABLE / REQUIRED FOR GENERAL AND LOCAL EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS PARK USE

(This Appendix forms a background to Policy W1 in Chapter 6 of the Written Statement)

B. EXTRACT FROM NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPLACEMENT STRUCTURE PLAN: ECONOMY TOPIC PAPER, JULY 1992, SHOWING CALCULATIONS OF LAND AVAILABLE QUESTION REQUIRED FOR GENERAL AND LOCAL EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS PARK USE

Source: Northumberland County Council

	Land Developed at 1981	Land Available 1981	Additional Land Identified post 1981	Land Developed 1981 to 1991	Annual Average, 1981 To 1991	Land Available, end 1991*
Blyth Town						
Existing Sites	34.15	19.95	-	4.39	-	15.56
Plessey Road	-	-	0.45	0.45	-	-
Bates	-	-	20.00	-	-	20.00
Sub-total	**34.15**	**19.95**	**20.45**	**4.89**	**0.54**	**35.56**
Cramlington						
Bassington	33.31	8.75	-	0.75	-	8.00
East Cramlington	1.85	6.81	-	-	-	6.81
Nelson	51.20	57.17	-	20.21	-	36.96
South Cramlington	5.00	24.88	-	-	-	24.88
Windmill	27.35	5.63	-	1.85	-	3.78
Sub-total	**118.71**	**103.24**	**-**	**22.81**	**2.30**	**80.43**
Other	**23.08**	**5.51**	**-**	**1.36**	**0.15**	**4.15**
TOTAL	**175.94**	**128.70**	**20.45**	**29.06**	**2.73**	**120.14**

* Excludes land held for expansion by existing firms - includes land under option.

APPENDIX XXV

RETAIL FRONTAGE POLICY APPLIED TO PRINCIPAL SHOPPING AREA OF BLYTH TOWN CENTRE

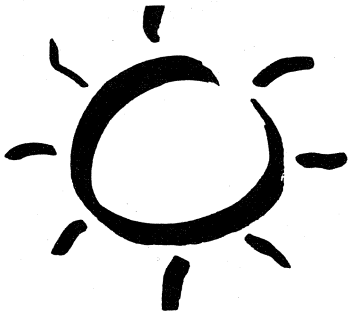
BLOCK	*NAME OF BLOCK*	*DESCRIPTION OF BLOCK*	*CHANGE TO NON-RETAIL USE PERMISSIBLE*
i	***Market Street***	*2 to 31 Market Street, 1 to 5 Regent Street and 3 to 9 Church Street.*	*None on ground floor frontage*
ii	***Keel Row***	*Units 1 to 20 of the Keel Row Shopping Centre.*	*No more than 10% of the net retail floorspace of the whole centre*
iii	***Other Street Frontages***		
iii a	*Commercial Road and Seaforth Street*	*1 to 5 Delaval Terrace, 16 to 18 Church Street, 1 to 20 Commercial Road, 13 to 17 and 38 to 40 Regent Street, 1 to 7 (all) Seaforth Street.*	*No more than 20% of the total measured length of the ground floor frontage of the block*
iii b	*Bowes Street North and Simpson Street*	*12 to 42 Bowes Street, 12 to 14 and 15 to 17 Church Street, 11 and 32 to 36 Regent Street and 1 to 7 Simpson Street.*	*No more than 20% of the total measured length of the ground floor frontage of the block*
iii c	*Bowes Street South*	*1 to 29 Bowes Street, 11 to 13 Church Street, 7 Regent Street and 1 to 3 Ebor House, Bowes Street.*	*No more than 20% of the total measured length of the ground floor frontage of the block*
iii d	*Regent Street South*	*2 to 30 Regent Street and 1 to 9 Bridge Street.*	*No more than 20% of the total measured length of the ground floor frontage of the block*
iii e	*Havelock Street and Parsons Street.*	*2 to 17 (all) Havelock Street, 2 to 10 Parsons Street, 2 to 16 Bridge Street and 21 to 29 Waterloo Road.*	*No more than 20% of the total measured length of the ground floor frontage of the block*
iii f	*Waterloo Road*	*31 to 73 and 40 to 56 Waterloo Road and 1 Coomassie Road, plus Department Store*	*No more than 20% of the total measured length of the ground floor frontage of the block*
iv	***Supermarkets***		
iv a	*Large Supermarket, Regent Street.*	*Supermarket Store at junction of Regent Street and Commercial Road*	*Not unless there is prolonged vacancy and a change of use is considered beneficial*
iv b	*Smaller supermarket, Bowes Street.*	*Supermarket Store at junction of Bowes Street and Wanley Street*	*Not unless there is prolonged vacancy and a change of use is considered beneficial*

N.B. Retail Use is defined as that falling within Class A1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987.

APPENDIX XXVI

ENERGY EFFICIENCY GUIDELINES FOR NEW HOUSING SOUTH-WEST CRAMLINGTON

INTRODUCTION



This Appendix expands on Proposal SW1 in the Chapter 11 of this Written Statement, (see page 11-3). It is based upon a document issued by the Council in November 1992 as a discussion document. The document, entitled "Energy Efficiency and Conservation: For major housing developments with particular reference to the South West Sector, Cramlington", had a generally favourable reception.

The Appendix concentrates on those parts of the document which would come under the influence of planning control. The full document also deals with factors which are within the remit of the building control or architects themselves but, because they are internal to the building, are not subject to planning control.

The principles below and those in the full document, will be applied, (in all but the most exceptional circumstances), in implementing a comprehensive energy efficient housing policy as a pilot scheme in South-West Cramlington. This would be a pilot scheme towards implementing an overall policy for housing throughout the Plan area, as set out in Policy HO22 of Chapter 3, which in turn reflects the overall energy conservation aims of Policy EP23 of Chapter 1.

Why Energy Efficient Housing?

In the UK, the energy used in buildings is thought to account for over half the country's energy consumption, resulting in a similar proportion of carbon dioxide emissions - nearly 300 million tonnes annually. At the same time research has indicated that by employing cost-effective energy conservation and efficiency measures, UK carbon dioxide emissions could be reduced by 25%.

With land use patterns and the form of a built environment influencing energy demand it is important that energy considerations are looked at alongside more traditional planning concerns. South West Cramlington, as an entirely new development area, provides the best opportunity within the Plan area to put this into effect.

Most of the measures outlined below are based on simple principles and will result in little or no additional cost if incorporated in the initial planning and implementation stages. They should not be treated in isolation but should be regarded as part of a comprehensive energy conservation / efficiency plan.

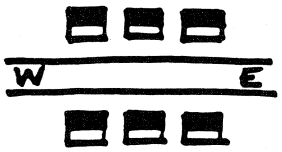
THE GUIDELINES

The South West Sector is a greenfield site sloping gently from north west to south east and with much of the area proposed for built development in Chapter 11 of this Written Statement. On sites of this size and nature it is generally possible to orientate roads and buildings to account for gains that can be made in passive solar energy. Whilst harnessing passive solar energy will require some departure from conventional practice it does not necessitate repetitive or low density layouts.

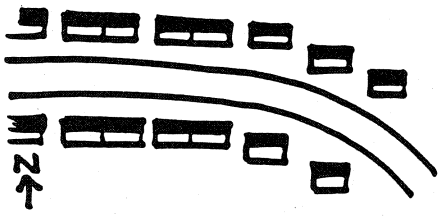
Siting and Orientation

It is estimated that around 20% of the energy requirements of a 'typical' house can be met if careful attention is given to siting and orientation. Southern facades offer the greatest potential in terms of passive solar gain. They receive sunshine for most of the day in winter, the radiation received being roughly equal to the total radiation gained by eastern and western facades. Therefore, **in order to maximise solar gain within housing layouts, buildings should be orientated so the main habitable rooms have a southern aspect**. Significant solar gains however will still be made where the orientation deviates from this. Therefore **an angle of 30 degrees from south in either direction will generally be taken as a southern aspect in terms of the above guideline.**

On an east to west road axis this presents few problems. Where the road axis is south-west to north-east or south-east to north-west buildings can often be orientated within the plot to accommodate a main southern facade. This is easier with detached houses. Therefore **in considering a housing layout it may be taken as preferable for terraced and semi-detached houses to be placed on roads running east to west and detached on roads where orientation may be more difficult.**

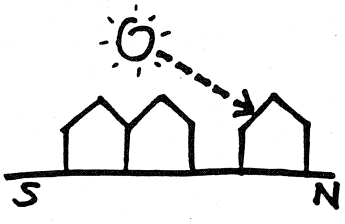


Orientation on road running east to west



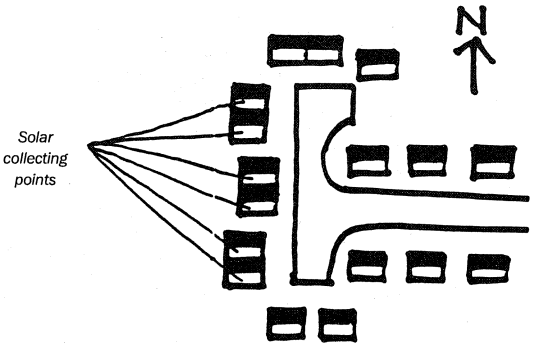
Placement of detached houses where orientation more difficult

Where factors dictate a north to south road axis it may not be possible to make use of southern facades. It is however possible to make effective use of the roof for passive solar collection, through the installation of roof windows. Therefore, **in order to maximise solar gain where there is a north south road axis houses should be built gable-on to the road.**

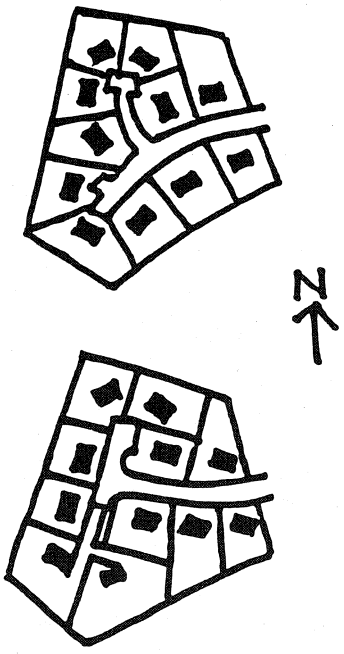


Solar access to south facing roofs

The layout of culs-de-sac often present a problem in that they incorporate both east to west and north to south sections of road. **Where layouts include culs-de-sac, the proportion of north to south road should be minimised so that the majority of dwellings can be orientated within 30 degrees of south as described above, with roofs maximising solar gain where a southern aspect is not feasible.**



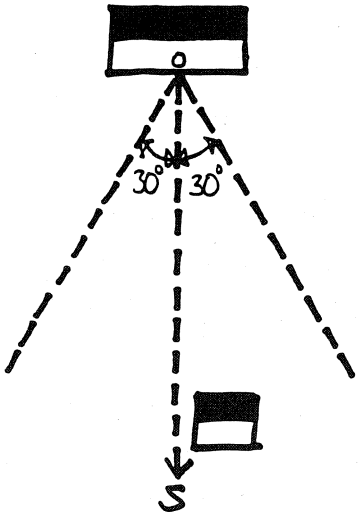
Layout of houses within cul-de-sac

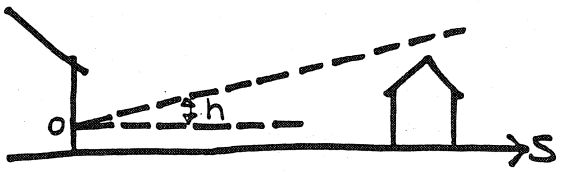


Adjustment of road layout to reduce amount of road running north to south
(Source: ETSU 1988, A Study of Passive Solar Housing Layout)

Overshadowing

The benefits of passive solar power will be lost if the southern facades are overshadowed by other buildings. As a general rule **houses should be no less than a 3:1 ratio of facade to ridge height apart. Care should also be taken to ensure that houses are not overshadowed by garages, fences and other structures. In order to ensure at least 3 hours possible sun per day over winter, structures built within 30 degrees either way south of the solar collecting facade of a dwelling should not exceed the critical angle "h" in height on the lower of the two diagrams below, where "h" is 65 degrees minus latitude and "O" is the centre of the solar collecting facade.**





Source: Littlefair P. 1992.

Interior Layout and Orientation

In addition to the above orientation considerations, the relationship between the interior layout of the house and its orientation can also be a vital part of the energy efficiency equation. The following, if observed by builders in South-West Cramlington, would assist in the implementation of an overall energy conserving house building programme.

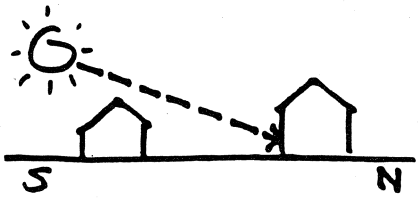
It is sometimes preferred to situate the main habitable rooms to the rear of the house. If this happens to be the northern facade then the use of `through' rooms should be considered.

Where access to the house would normally be via the southern facade, side entrances should be considered. This will allow the southern facades to be used for the main habitable rooms only.

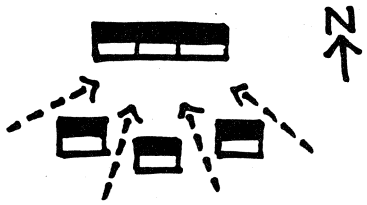
If more than one dwelling type is being used in a scheme, then higher buildings should be situated to the north of lower buildings, e.g. two-storey to the north of bungalows. Similarly, **more tightly packed blocks of building should be north of less tightly packed blocks**, e.g. terraced or semi-detached houses should be located to the north of detached houses.

Trees can also overshadow buildings. In some cases this overshadowing can be beneficial. Deciduous trees are effective in shading southern and western facades in summer whilst allowing sufficient solar penetration in winter. However, **trees in any landscaping scheme associated with the residential development of south-west Cramlington, should be situated so as to minimise sunlight obstruction in winter.**

There are a number of other methods which can be used to reduce overshadowing but it may not be possible to apply them in all cases. For instance, it helps if buildings can be orientated towards the northern end of plots but this can result in the larger garden being at the front which is not always desirable. It is recommended that this should at least be considered as an option.



Location of bungalow to south of 2 storey house



Detached houses to south of semi-detached / terraced allowing solar access through gaps

Wind Protection

Britain is one of the windiest countries in the world. Without good shelter, strong winds will find their way into buildings through cracks, chinks, ventilators etc. A number of measures should be taken to moderate wind speeds before there is any impact with building surfaces.

Firstly, shelter belts to the north of buildings will provide protection from unfavourable winds. A good shelter belt can reduce heating costs by at least 5 per cent. Shelter belts normally comprise of a band of trees of mixed species. Hedges and earth mounding, preferably with tree planting on top, can also be effective.

Chapter 11 of this Written Statement set out the parameters of a sector-wide landscape structure. However, below this level, each individual housing area will include a landscape structure to be planted in advance by agreement with developers. It is these structures that will include most of the required shelter belts, although further shelter belts may be included within an individual housing estate if practicable in advance of its construction.

For best results the **shelter belts should be planted 2 to 3 times the building height away and be at least 15 times the building height in length**. The area sheltered will be maximised if the average porosity of the belt is around 50 per cent - slightly less in the upper two thirds of the shelter belt, slightly more below. Generally, a mixture of birch, Scots pine and willow will suffice, although **the exact composition of shelter belts shall be determined by the Council at the time of planting.** The trees mentioned are fast growing and should provide an effective shelter belt within ten years. Given the length of time taken to establish the belt, **shelter belt planting should be undertaken at the earliest point possible, i.e. before and not after development.**

Openings in the shelter belt should be staggered to prevent wind funnelling. Care should also be taken to ensure that the shelter belt does not overshadow existing properties.

Hedges, walls or fences around front and back gardens etc. will provide good immediate shelter for a distance of 4 to 5 times the height of the hedge or structure. Perforations in the lower third of the wall or hedge will provide additional protection. **Consideration should be given to introducing hedges, walls or fences within the layouts of estates, where this will assist the overall energy conservation aims, so long as they do not cause problems - e.g relating to security.**

At the initial design stage developers should be aware of the local climate conditions, the subtle details of the surrounding landscape, and be able to assess and take into account the likely impact of the wind on proposed developments. The way winds are likely to flow between buildings under differing conditions will not only influence heat losses and gains but also the microclimate zone in which people circulate.

Polluted Air

Another way in which net solar gain can be reduced is if the air is polluted with dust, smoke or other particles. These can absorb up to 50 per cent of solar energy. **A well as the other reasons, outlined above and elsewhere in this Written Statement, for introducing tree cover into new housing areas, developers should take into account the fact that well treed areas of open space create efficient air filters and can reduce airborne particles by a factor of 4 or 5.**

Building Design - External Appearance

The more complete guidance produced for developers of the south-west sector of Cramlington includes substantial advice on building design aspects which are outside the immediate remit of planning control, relating to such internal matters as lighting, boilers pipes, windows, shutters etc..

Nevertheless, the external appearance of new houses is a material consideration in the determination of the detailed planning application and these aspects are dealt with here. It has already been mentioned that the main habitable rooms should have southerly aspects. **Developers should note that it may be preferred if windows are made larger on southern facades and/or that there are south facing conservatories, so as to enhance solar collection; and that rooms with northerly aspects should have smaller windows to reduce heat loss while still allowing in light and so that these rooms can act as a buffer zone.**

Solar Panels

Savings on household fuel costs can be made if solar energy is actively harnessed. In spite of the apparent benefits, take up of solar heating technologies in Britain has generally been low. Most people have limited knowledge of the technology and the pay-back period, 5 to 15 years depending on hot water consumption, will often exceed the length of time people expect to stay in the same house.

The provision of solar heating systems in new houses however could be conducive to a persons decision to buy, particularly if the benefits were made known. The provision of solar panels would also constitute a visible sign of the developers commitment to energy conservation and could become a primary feature of the marketing campaign.

Developers of housing in the South West of Cramlington should note that the placement of solar panels on or around houses will, as far as possible, be looked upon favourably when determining the visual aspects of detailed planning applications for housing and, in general, will be treated as a positive aspect of the development.

Local Transport

If energy is to be saved within the transport sector, on a local level this means reducing the need for movement, in other words, providing local shops, employment opportunities, schools and other community facilities. In turn these should be easily accessible by foot, cycle and public transport.

The complete version of the guidance contains energy saving advice on the local transport system in South West Cramlington. Within this Written Statement, these aspects are covered in Chapter 7.

APPENDIX XXVII

LIST OF SITES OF REGIONAL AND LOCAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE

The following list is reproduced from the County Sites and Monuments Record held by Archaeology & Building Conservation Service, Northumberland County Council. This reproduction should not be regarded as the definitive list for all sites in Blyth Valley and any further queries should be directed to the above service.

Abbreviations

BA	*Bronze Age*
EM	*Early Medieval*
IA	*Iron Age*
M	*Medieval (1066-1540)*
ME	*Mesolithic*
MO	*Modern*
NE	*Neolithic*
PA	*Palaeolithic*
PM	*Post-medieval*
RO	*Roman*
U	*Uncertain*
UM	*Uncertain, early medieval or later*
UP	*Uncertain, prehistoric or Roman*

Sites and Monuments Record number	NAME OF SITE	PERIOD AND TYPE
NZ 27 NW 3	*Hartford Bridge*	M Bridge
NZ 27 NW 4	*Bronze Age 3 Cinery Urns, Plessey Quarry*	BA Pottery BA Cinerary Urns
NZ 27 NW 5	*Plessey Hall*	M Manor PM House PM Manor
NZ 27 NW 6	*Plessey, manorial demesne settlement*	M Manor M Village U Earthwork
NZ 27 NW 7	*Chapel, Plessey*	M Chapel
NZ 27 NW 17	*Rectangular Ditched Enclosure*	U Rectangular Enclosure U Site
NZ 27 NW 22	*Whitehall, deserted medieval village*	M Deserted Village
NZ 27 NW 23	*Arcot Hall Golf Course, ridge and furrow*	M Ridge and Furrow
NZ 27 NW 24	*Bassington, deserted medieval village*	M Deserted Village
NZ 27 NW 29	*Plessey Mill*	M Corn Mill PM Corn Mill
NZ 27 NW 30	*Old windmill 700m south-west of Plessey Checks roundabout*	PM Windmill
NZ 27 NW 31	*Dovecote 50 m north-west of Plessey North Moor Farmhouse*	PM Dovecote
NZ 27 NW 35	*Railway Viaduct over the River Blyth*	M Railway Viaduct
NZ 27 NW 36	*Bank Top Farm*	PM Farm
NZ 27 NW 37	*Quarrying associated with coal mining*	PM Coal Workings
NZ 27 NW 38	*Wagonway*	PM Wagonway
NZ 27 NW 39	*Pit and waste heap*	PM Mine Shaft PM Spoil Heap
NZ 27 NW 40	*Hartford West Farm*	PM Farm
NZ 27 NW 41	*Old Wagonway*	PM Wagonway
NZ 27 NW 42	*Well Pit*	PM Coal Workings
NZ 27 NW 43	*Plessey Station*	PM Railway Station
NZ 27 NW 44	*Bassington Quarry*	PM Quarry

Sites and Monuments Record number	NAME OF SITE	PERIOD AND TYPE
NZ 27 NE 1	*Horton Castle*	M Fortified Manor House M Moat PM Fortified Manor House PM Moat
NZ 27 NE 2	*St Mary's Chapel, formerly Horton Chapel*	M Chapel PM Chapel PM Parish Church
NZ 27 NE 3	*Horton (Sheriff), shrunken medieval village*	M Shrunken Village PM Shrunken Village
NZ 27 NE 4	*Chapel of St Nicholas*	M Chapel PM Chapel
NZ 27 NE 5	*Cist, Seghill*	BA Axe Hammer BA Cist BA Inhumation NE Battle Axe
NZ 27 NE 6	*Cramlington New Town 2, cropmark enclosure*	RO Settlement RO Site RO Square Enclosure
NZ 27 NE 7	*Cramlington New Town 1, cropmark enclosure*	IA Double Ditched Enclosure or M Moated Enclosure M Pottery U Rectangular Enclosure
NZ 27 NE 8	*Double-ditched, rectilinear enclosure crop mark*	RO Double Ditched Enclosure RO Rectilinear Enclosure
NZ 27 NE 9	*Rectilinear enclosure crop mark*	U Double Ditched Enclosure
NZ 27 NE 10	*A rectilinear ditched enclosure*	RO Rectilinear Enclosure
NZ 27 NE 11	*Stickley, deserted medieval village*	M Deserted Village
NZ 27 NE 12	*Hartford, deserted medieval village (?site of)*	M Deserted Village
NZ 27 NE 13	*Possible rectilinear crop mark*	UP Rectangular Enclosure
NZ 27 NE 14	*Bell pits*	PM Bell Pit
NZ 27 NE 15	*Rig and furrow*	PM Field System
NZ 27 NE 16	*West Farm, Seghill, crop mark*	U Palisaded Settlement U Rectangular Enclosure
NZ 27 NE 17	*West Hartford, deserted medieval village*	M Deserted Village
NZ 27 NE 18	*West Cramlington, deserted medieval village*	M Deserted Village
NZ 27 NE 19	*Arcot Hall Grassland and Ponds, site of special scientific interest*	U Natural Feature
NZ 27 NE 20	*East Cramlington, double-ditched square enclosure cropmark*	UP Double Ditched Enclosure UP Square Enclosure
NZ 27 NE 21	*Possible rectilinear ditched enclosure*	IA Rectilinear Enclosure RO Rectilinear Enclosure
NZ 27 NE 22	*West Hartford Hall*	PM House
NZ 27 NE 23	*Coal Mining*	PM Bell Pit
NZ 27 NE 24	*Bakers Pit*	PM Mine Shaft PM Spoil Heap
NZ 27 NE 25	*Favourite Pit*	PM Mine Shaft
NZ 27 NE 26	*Plessey Wagonway*	PM Mine Shaft
NZ 27 NE 27	*Possible promontory site*	U Promontory Fort U Linear Feature
NZ 27 NE 29	*Cramlington Station*	PM Railway Station
NZ 27 NE 30	*Church of St Nicholas*	PM Parish Church
NZ 27 NE 31	*Tileworks*	PM Clay Pit PM Tile Works
NZ 27 NE 32	*Clay pits*	PM Clay Pit
NZ 27 NE 33	*Mareclose Well*	PM Well

APPENDIX XXVII: LIST OF SITES OF REGIONAL AND LOCAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE

Sites and Monuments Record number	NAME OF SITE	PERIOD AND TYPE
NZ 27 NE 34	*Low Cramlington Colliery (Engine Pit)*	PM Blacksmith's Workshop PM Colliery
NZ 27 NE 35	*Cramlington Wagonway (Anne Pit branch)*	PM Wagonway
NZ 27 NE 36	*Brickfield*	PM Brickfield
NZ 27 NE 37	*Cramlington Colliery (Amelia Pit)*	PM Colliery
NZ 27 NE 38	*Cramlington Wagonway (Amelia Pit branch)*	PM Wagonway
NZ 27 NE 39	*Cramlington Colliery (Anne Pit)*	PM Colliery
NZ 27 NE 40	*Brickfield and Clay Pits*	PM Clay Pit PM Brickfield
NZ 27 NE 41	*West Cramlington Colliery*	PM Methodist Chapel PM Mechanics Institute PM Workers' Village PM Colliery
NZ 27 NE 42	*Brickfield*	PM Clay Mill PM Clay Pit PM Brickfield
NZ 27 NE 43	*Smithy*	PM Blacksmith's Workshop
NZ 27 NE 44	*East Cramlington Colliery (Dicky's Pit)*	PM Colliery
NZ 27 NE 45	*Elbow Well*	PM Well
NZ 27 NE 46	*Rodney Well*	PM Coal Workings
NZ 27 NE 47	*Old wagonway*	PM Wagonway
NZ 27 NE 48	*Old coal working*	PM Coal Workings
NZ 27 NE 49	*Parish boundary between Cramlington and Seghill*	U Boundary Ditch U Boundary Bank
NZ 27 NE 50	*Former wagonway/railway*	PM Railway PM Wagonway
NZ 27 NE 51		MO Aircraft Obstruction
NZ 27 NE 52		U Circular Enclosure
NZ 27 SE 2	*Seghill Tower*	M Tower
NZ 27 SE 4	*Crop mark of an enclosure*	IA Rectangular Enclosure
NZ 27 SE 5	*Annitsford North, Seghill, rectangular enclosure*	RO or PM Enclosure RO Settlement
NZ 27 SE 11	*Seghill, deserted medieval village*	M Deserted Village
NZ 27 SE 12	*Rectangular enclosure*	M Ridge and Furrow U Rectilinear Enclosure
NZ 27 SE 13	*Brickfield*	PM Brickfield
NZ 27 SE 14	*West Holywell Colliery*	PM Colliery
NZ 27 SE 15	*Seghill Colliery*	PM Gas Holder PM Colliery
NZ 27 SE 16	*Coke ovens*	PM Coke Oven
NZ 27 SE 17	*Seghill Station*	PM Railway Station
NZ 27 SE 18	*Cramlington Wagonway (Dudley Branch)*	PM Wagonway
NZ 27 SE 19	*Seghill Mill*	PM Mill Race PM Corn Mill
NZ 27 SE 20	*Smithy*	PM Blacksmith's Workshop
NZ 27 SE 21		PM Blackearth Pit
NZ 27 SE 22	*Seghill Reservoir*	PM Reservoir
NZ 28 SE 1	*Bebside Hall, tower*	M Grange M Tower PM House
NZ 28 SE 2		PM House
NZ 28 SE 4	*Cowpen Mill*	M Mill
NZ 28 SE 5	*Windmill*	M Windmill PM Windmill
NZ 28 SE 8	*Watermill*	PM Water Mill
NZ 28 SE 10	*Bebside, deserted medieval village*	M Shrunken Village M Village PM Village
NZ 28 SE 12	*Plateway*	PM Plateway
NZ 28 SE 17	*Bebside Road crop mark settlement*	IA Enclosed Settlement IA Ring Ditch IA Site RO Enclosed Settlement RO Ring Ditch RO Site
NZ 28 SE 20	*Penannular enclosure*	NE Curvilinear Enclosure NE Henge
NZ 28 SE 22	*Humford deserted medieval village*	M Deserted Village
NZ 28 SE 23	*Cowpen deserted medieval village*	M Deserted Village
NZ 28 SE 24	*Bebside Viaduct*	PM Viaduct
NZ 28 SE 26	*Bedlington Ironworks*	PM Wagonway PM Blast Furnace PM Ironworks
NZ 28 SE 27	*Stable block, possibly associated with Bedlington Ironworks*	PM Stable
NZ 28 SE 31	*Prehistoric antler-hammer from Newsham*	BA Macehead NE Macehead UP Animal Remains UP Hammer
NZ 28 SE 33	*Coal workings*	PM Bell Pit
NZ 28 SE 35	*Anti Aircraft Battery*	MO Anti Aircraft Battery
NZ 28 SE 37	*Huntingdon Beaumont's Bebside wagonway*	PM Wagonway
NZ 28 SE 45	*Bebside Quarry*	PM Quarry
NZ 28 SE 46	*Smithy*	PM Blacksmith's Shop
NZ 28 SE 48	*Hawthorn Well*	PM Well
NZ 28 SE 49	*Bebside Well*	PM Well
NZ 28 SE 51	*Bebside Mill*	PM Mill
NZ 28 SE 52	*Drift Mine*	PM Drift Mine
NZ 28 SE 84	*War Memorial to west of junction with Briardale Road, Cowpen Road (south side)*	MO War Memorial
NZ 28 SE 85		MO Enclosure
NZ 37 NW 1	*Seaton Delaval*	M Tower PM Tower
NZ 37 NW 2	*Church of Our Lady*	M Chapel M Parish Chapel PM Parish Chapel
NZ 37 NW 3	*Delaval battery*	M Battery PM Battery
NZ 37 NW 4	*Hartley*	M Deserted Village PM Deserted Village
NZ 37 NW 5	*Salt Pans, Seaton Sluice*	M Salt Works PM Salt Pan
NZ 37 NW 6	*Seaton Delaval, shrunken village*	M Shrunken Village PM Shrunken Village
NZ 37 NW 7	*Newsham, deserted medieval village (site of)*	M Deserted Village PM Deserted Village
NZ 37 NW 8	*Polished stone axehead*	NE Axe
NZ 37 NW 9	*Two crop-mark enclosures*	U Rectilinear Enclosure U Rectilinear Enclosure
NZ 37 NW 10	*Hartley West Farm 1, crop mark*	U Rectangular Enclosure
NZ 37 NW 11	*Hartley West Farm 2, crop mark*	U Rectilinear Enclosure
NZ 37 NW 13	*Cropmark enclosure*	U Curvilinear Enclosure U Double Ditched Enclosure U Rectilinear Enclosure
NZ 37 NW 14	*Cropmark enclosure*	U Rectilinear Enclosure
NZ 37 NW 15	*Newsham Colliery 2 crop mark*	U Rectilinear Enclosure
NZ 37 NW 16	*Lookout Farm crop mark enclosure*	U Oval Enclosure
NZ 37 NW 17	*Hartley West Farm 3 crop mark*	U Rectilinear Enclosure
NZ 37 NW 18	*Lookout Farm possible causewayed enclosure*	NE Causewayed Enclosure
NZ 37 NW 19	*The Hall, Seaton Delaval*	PM Country House
NZ 37 NW 20	*Seaton Sluice, village*	M Deserted Village PM Village

BLYTH VALLEY DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

WRITTEN STATEMENT, May 1999

APPENDIX XXVII: LIST OF SITES OF REGIONAL AND LOCAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE

Sites and Monuments Record number	NAME OF SITE	PERIOD AND TYPE
NZ 37 NW 21	*Lysdon, deserted medieval village*	M Deserted Village
NZ 37 NW 22	*Seaton Sluice, limekiln*	PM Lime Kiln
NZ 37 NW 23	*Seaton Delaval garden and grounds*	PM Formal Garden PM Landscape Park PM Orangery PM Ornamental Pond PM Pavilion PM Tree Avenue
NZ 37 NW 24	*Blyth Coast Defence Battery*	MO Blockhouse PM Fort MO Gun Emplacement MO Magazine MO Searchlight Battery
NZ 37 NW 25	*Defence Electric Light emplacements*	MO Searchlight Battery
NZ 37 NW 26	*Engine House for Defence Electric Light installation*	MO Engine House PM Public Convenience
NZ 37 NW 27	*Gloucester Battery*	MO Battery
NZ 37 NW 31	*Seaton Sluice Harbour*	PM Harbour PM Sluice PM Sluice Gate
NZ 37 NW 33	*The Octagon, Seaton Sluice*	PM House PM Office
NZ 37 NW 34	*Seaton Lodge Farm, horse wheel house*	PM Horse Wheel
NZ 37 NW 35		BA Axe BA Chisel
NZ 37 NW 36	*Hartley Links pillbox*	MO Pillbox
NZ 37 NW 37	*Sandy Island pillbox*	MO Pillbox
NZ 37 NW 38	*Seaton Sluice limekiln*	PM Lime Kiln
NZ 37 NW 39	*Crag Point earthwork*	U Earthwork
NZ 37 NW 40	*Possible enclosure visible on aerial photographs*	U Enclosure
NZ 37 NW 41	*Stable and cartsheds 20m east of Avenue Farmhouse North*	PM Cart Shed PM Dovecote PM Stable
NZ 37 NW 42	*Bridge over Seaton Burn on track to Hartley West Farm*	PM Bridge
NZ 37 NW 43	*New Hartley Colliery*	PM Colliery
NZ 37 NW 44	*Seaton Delaval Mausoleum*	MO House PM Bridge PM Ha Ha PM Mausoleum
NZ 37 NW 45	*Hartley Colliery Memorial Cottages*	MO Almshouse
NZ 37 NW 46	*Possible square enclosure visible on aerial photographs*	U Rectilinear Enclosure
NZ 37 NW 47	*Rectilinear Enclosure*	U Rectilinear Enclosure U Rectilinear Enclosure
NZ 37 NW 48	*Mill Race*	PM Mill Race
NZ 37 NW 49	*Hartley Mill*	PM Mill Bay
NZ 37 NW 50	*Drift Well*	PM Well
NZ 37 NW 51	*Smithy*	PM Blacksmiths Workshop
NZ 37 NW 52	*Colly Well*	PM Well
NZ 37 NW 53	*Ironworks*	PM Iron Works
NZ 37 NW 54	*Spout Well*	PM Well
NZ 37 NW 55	*Seaton Sluice Mill*	PM Corn Mill
NZ 37 NW 56	*Mill Pit*	PM Coal Workings
NZ 37 NW 57	*Round Well*	PM Well
NZ 37 NW 58	*Hartley Bottle Works, Seaton Sluice*	PM Waste Dump PM Tunnel PM Bottle Works
NZ 37 NW 59	*Gravel Pit*	PM Gravel Pit
NZ 37 NW 60	*Wagonway to New Hartley Harbour*	PM Wagonway
NZ 37 NW 61	*Old shaft*	PM Ventilation Shaft
NZ 37 NW 62	*Old Coal Pit*	PM Coal Workings
NZ 37 NW 63	*Dairy House*	PM Farm
NZ 37 NW 64	*Old coal shaft*	PM Ventilation Shaft
NZ 37 NW 65	*Fishpond*	PM Fishpond
NZ 37 NW 66	*Sand Pit*	PM Sand Pit
NZ 37 NW 67	*Boiling Well*	PM Well
NZ 37 NW 68	*Hartley Station*	PM Railway Station
NZ 37 NW 69	*Blyth Waterworks*	PM Reservoir PM Waterworks
NZ 37 NW 70	*Newsham Quarry*	PM Engine House PM Quarry
NZ 37 NW 71	*Lysdon Quarry*	PM Quarry
NZ 37 NW 72	*Brickfield*	PM Brickfield
NZ 37 NW 73	*Newsham Colliery*	PM Colliery
NZ 37 NW 74	*Lysdon Well*	PM Well
NZ 37 NW 75	*Wagonway*	PM Wagonway
NZ 37 NW 76	*Seaton Delaval Colliery*	PM Windlass PM Mine Pumping Works PM Mine Shaft PM Gas Holders PM Colliery
NZ 37 NW 78	*Robert's Battery*	MO Pillbox MO Battery
NZ 37 NW 79	*Gate Pier at entrance to Link House Farm*	PM Gate Pier
NZ 37 SW 5	*A spherical stone of granite*	U Site
NZ 37 SW 8	*Holywell Grange crop mark*	U Rectangular Enclosure
NZ 37 SW 9	*Holywell Dene crop mark enclosure*	RO Rectangular Enclosure RO Site
NZ 37 SW 10	*Footbridge on west of road bridge over Seaton Burn*	PM Foot Bridge
NZ 37 SW 11	*Holywell anti-glider defensive ditch system*	MO Aircraft Obstruction
NZ 37 SW 12	*Rectilinear enclosure*	RO Settlement RO Settlement RO Rectilinear Enclosure RO Rectilinear Enclosure
NZ 37 SW 13	*Rectilinear enclosure*	RO Rectilinear Enclosure RO Rectilinear Enclosure
NZ 37 SW 15	*The Old Mill*	PM Mill Bay
NZ 37 SW 16	*Old coal shaft at Silver Hill*	PM Mine Shaft
NZ 37 SW 17	*Golden Hole*	PM Farm
NZ 37 SW 18	*Possible enclosure north west of Holywell*	UP Enclosure
NZ 38 SW 1	*Blyth, Bronze Dagger*	BA Dagger
NZ 38 SW 2	*Aynewick*	M Village
NZ 38 SW 3	*Salt pan, Cowpen Square*	M Salt Works
NZ 38 SW 5	*Bronze Age spear head and rapier, skulls, animal bones found in R.Blyth*	BA Animal Remains BA Human Remains BA Rapier BA Spear
NZ 38 SW 6	*Roman coin, Blyth dry dock*	RO Coin
NZ 38 SW 7	*Freehold Street, site of camp(?)*	U Earthwork
NZ 38 SW 10	*Blyth Harbour*	PM Port PM Staith M Pier PM Drydock PM Harbour M Harbour
NZ 38 SW 11	*High Light, lighthouse*	PM Lighthouse
NZ 38 SW 14	*Pillbox*	MO Pillbox
NZ 38 SW 15	*Central Methodist Church*	PM Wesleyan Methodist Chapel
NZ 38 SW 16	*Blyth United Reformed Church, Waterloo Road (south side)*	PM United Reformed Church PM Presbyterian Chapel
NZ 38 SW 17	*Huntingdon Beaumont's Cowpen wagonway*	PM Wagonway
NZ 38 SW 18	*Blyth Station*	PM Railway Station
NZ 38 SW 19	*Nos 5 - 10 (consecutive) Bath Terrace*	PM Terraced House
NZ 38 SW 20	*No 11 Bath Terrace*	MO Bath House PM Terraced House
NZ 38 SW 21	*No 12 Bath Terrace*	PM Terraced House
NZ 38 SW 22	*No 13 Bath Terrace*	PM Terraced House

Sites and Monuments Record number	NAME OF SITE	PERIOD AND TYPE
NZ 38 SW 23	*Kings Head Hotel, Bridge Street*	PM Hotel
NZ 38 SW 24	*Harbour Commissioner's Offices, Bridge Street*	MO Office
NZ 38 SW 25	*Boathouse Tavern, Bridge Street*	PM Public House
NZ 38 SW 26	*Lloyds Bank, Bridge Street*	PM Bank (Financial)
NZ 38 SW 27	*Police Station, Bridge Street*	PM Police Station
NZ 38 SW 28	*Gates and screen wall at entrance to Cowpen Cemetery, Cowpen Road*	PM Wall PM Gate
NZ 38 SW 29	*Pair of Chapels in Cowpen Cemetery, Cowpen Road*	PM Cemetery Chapel
NZ 38 SW 30	*Fynes memorial in Cowpen Cemetery, 75m SE of cemetery chapels*	PM Commemorative Monument
NZ 38 SW 31	*Church of St Cuthbert, Plessey Road (south side)*	PM Parish Church
NZ 38 SW 32	*Straugham tomb, 6m west of St Cuthbert's Church Hall, Plessey Road (south side)*	PM Table Tomb
NZ 38 SW 33	*Watts and English headstones, 8m south of St Cuthbert's Church Hall, Plessey Road (south side)*	PM Gravestone
NZ 38 SW 34	*Church of St Mary, Wanley Street (east side)*	PM Parish Church
NZ 38 SW 35	*The Wallaw Cinema, Union Street*	MO Theatre MO Cinema
NZ 38 SW 36	*House 10m north of Church of St Mary, Wanley Street (east side)*	PM House
NZ 38 SW 37	*Church of Our Lady and St Wilfrid, Waterloo Rd (north side)*	PM Roman Catholic Church
NZ 38 SW 38	*Nos 4 and 6 Wensleydale Terrace (east side)*	PM House
NZ 38 SW 39	*Front garden walls to Nos 4 and 6 Wensleydale Terrace (east side)*	PM Garden Wall
NZ 38 SW 40	*Cowpen Colliery, Pit A*	PM Colliery
NZ 38 SW 41	*Cowpen Colliery, Pit B*	PM Colliery
NZ 38 SW 42	*Link House Brewery*	PM Brewery
NZ 38 SW 43	*Cowpen Quay*	PM Quay
NZ 38 SW 44	*Cowpen Coal Mine*	PM Colliery
NZ 38 SW 45	*Salt Pans at Blyth Snook*	M Salt Works
NZ 38 SW 46	*Fishery at Blume*	M Fishery
NZ 38 SW 47	*Road, from Blyth to Seaton Sluice*	M Road
NZ 38 SW 48	*Blyth Chapel*	PM Chapel
NZ 38 SW 49	*Presbyterian Meeting Place*	PM Presbyterian Chapel
NZ 38 SW 50	*Lordship of Newsham* *Newsham Estates*	M Estate PM Estate
NZ 38 SW 51	*Coaling Quay, Cowpen*	PM Quay
NZ 38 SW 52	*Coaling Quay*	PM Quay
NZ 38 SW 53	*Ballast Quay*	PM Quay
NZ 38 SW 54	*Pilot's Watch House, Blyth*	PM Watch House
NZ 38 SW 55	*Lighthouse*	PM Lighthouse
NZ 38 SW 56	*North Pier, North Dyke, Eastern Breakwater*	PM Pier PM Breakwater
NZ 38 SW 57	*Coal Staiths*	PM Staith
NZ 38 SW 58	*Customs House, Blyth*	PM Custom House
NZ 38 SW 59	*Salt Pans, Blyth*	PM Salt Works
NZ 38 SW 60	*Salt Pans, Sluice Bridge, Blyth*	PM Salt Works
NZ 38 SW 61	*Low Yard, Ship Building Yard*	PM Shipyard
NZ 38 SW 62	*Ship Building Yard*	PM Shipyard
NZ 38 SW 63	*Ship Building Yard*	PM Shipyard
NZ 38 SW 64	*Ship Building Yard and Wharf*	PM Wharf PM Shipyard
NZ 38 SW 65	*Ropery*	PM Ropery
NZ 38 SW 66	*Ropery*	PM Ropery
NZ 38 SW 67	*Stob Mill, Buck's Hill*	PM Mill
NZ 38 SW 68	*Crofton Mill*	PM Mill
NZ 38 SW 69	*Brewery*	PM Brewery
NZ 38 SW 70	*Claypole Field Brickworks*	PM Brickworks PM Ironstone Pit
NZ 38 SW 71	*Cowpen Square*	PM Terraced House
NZ 38 SW 72	*Keelmen's Row*	PM Terraced House
NZ 38 SW 73	*Ballast Crane*	PM Crane
NZ 38 SW 74	*Coal Staiths*	PM Staith
NZ 38 SW 75	*Western Breakwater*	PM Breakwater
NZ 38 SW 76	*Coaling Berths*	PM Berth
NZ 38 SW 77	*Coaling Berths*	PM Berth
NZ 38 SW 80	*National School*	PM School
NZ 38 SW 81	*Ship Building Yard*	PM Shipyard
NZ 38 SW 82	*Ship Building Yard*	PM Shipyard
NZ 38 SW 83	*Ship Building Yard, Cowpen Quay*	PM Shipyard
NZ 38 SW 84	*Dry Dock*	PM Dry Dock
NZ 38 SW 85	*Slipway*	PM Slipway
NZ 38 SW 86	*Cowpen Dy Docks, number 1, 2, 3, 4*	PM Dry Dock
NZ 38 SW 87	*Harpoon Shop, Blyth*	PM Shop
NZ 38 SW 88	*Alkali Works, Blyth*	PM Alkali Works
NZ 38 SW 89	*Half Moon Inn*	PM Inn
NZ 38 SW 90	*The Ship Inn, Crofton*	PM Inn
NZ 38 SW 91	*Smithy*	PM Blacksmith's Workshop
NZ 38 SW 92	*Lime Kiln*	PM Lime Kiln
NZ 38 SW 93	*The Horse and Waggon Public House*	PM Public House
NZ 38 SW 94	*The Mason's Arms, Crofton*	PM Public House
NZ 38 SW 95	*Buffalo Inn*	PM Inn
NZ 38 SW 96	*Dunn Cow Inn*	PM Inn
NZ 38 SW 97	*Smithy*	PM Blacksmith's Workshop
NZ 38 SW 98	*Ridley Place*	PM House
NZ 38 SW 99	*Ford*	PM Ford
NZ 38 SW 100	*Brick Field*	PM Brickfield
NZ 38 SW 101	*Smithy*	PM Blacksmith's Workshop
NZ 38 SW 102	*Timber Yard*	PM Timber Yard
NZ 38 SW 103	*Timber Yard*	PM Timber Yard
NZ 38 SW 104		PM Saw Mill
NZ 38 SW 106	*Gasometer*	PM Gas Works
NZ 38 SW 107	*Crofton Mill*	PM Mill
NZ 38 SW 108	*Beacons*	PM Beacon
NZ 38 SW 109	*Blyth Station*	PM Railway Station
NZ 38 SW 110	*Brewery*	PM Brewery
NZ 38 SW 111	*Blyth Ferry*	PM Ferry
NZ 38 SW 112	*Methodist Church*	PM Methodist Chapel
NZ 38 SW 113	*Blyth and Tyne Railway*	PM Railway
NZ 38 SW 114	*Wagonway/Railway from Cowpen Isabella Pit to Blyth and Tyne Railway*	PM Railway PM Wagonway
NZ 38 SW 115	*Wagonway from Cowpen B Pit to Blyth and Tyne Railway*	PM Wagonway
NZ 38 SW 116	*Wagonway*	PM Wagonway
NZ 38 SW 117	*Commercial Inn*	PM Inn
NZ 38 SW 118	*Arrow Head, Blyth*	PM Arrowhead

APPENDIX XXVIII

NOISE EXPOSURE CATEGORIES, (WITH REFERENCE TO POLICY E25)

A Noise need not be considered as a determining factor in granting planning permission, although the noise level at the high end of the category should not be regarded as a desirable level.

B Noise should be taken into account when determining planning applications and, where appropriate, conditions imposed to ensure an adequate level of protection against noise.

C Planning permission should not normally be granted. Where it is considered that permission should, for example because there are no alternative quieter sites available, conditions should be imposed to ensure a commensurate level of protection against noise.

D Planning permission should normally be refused.

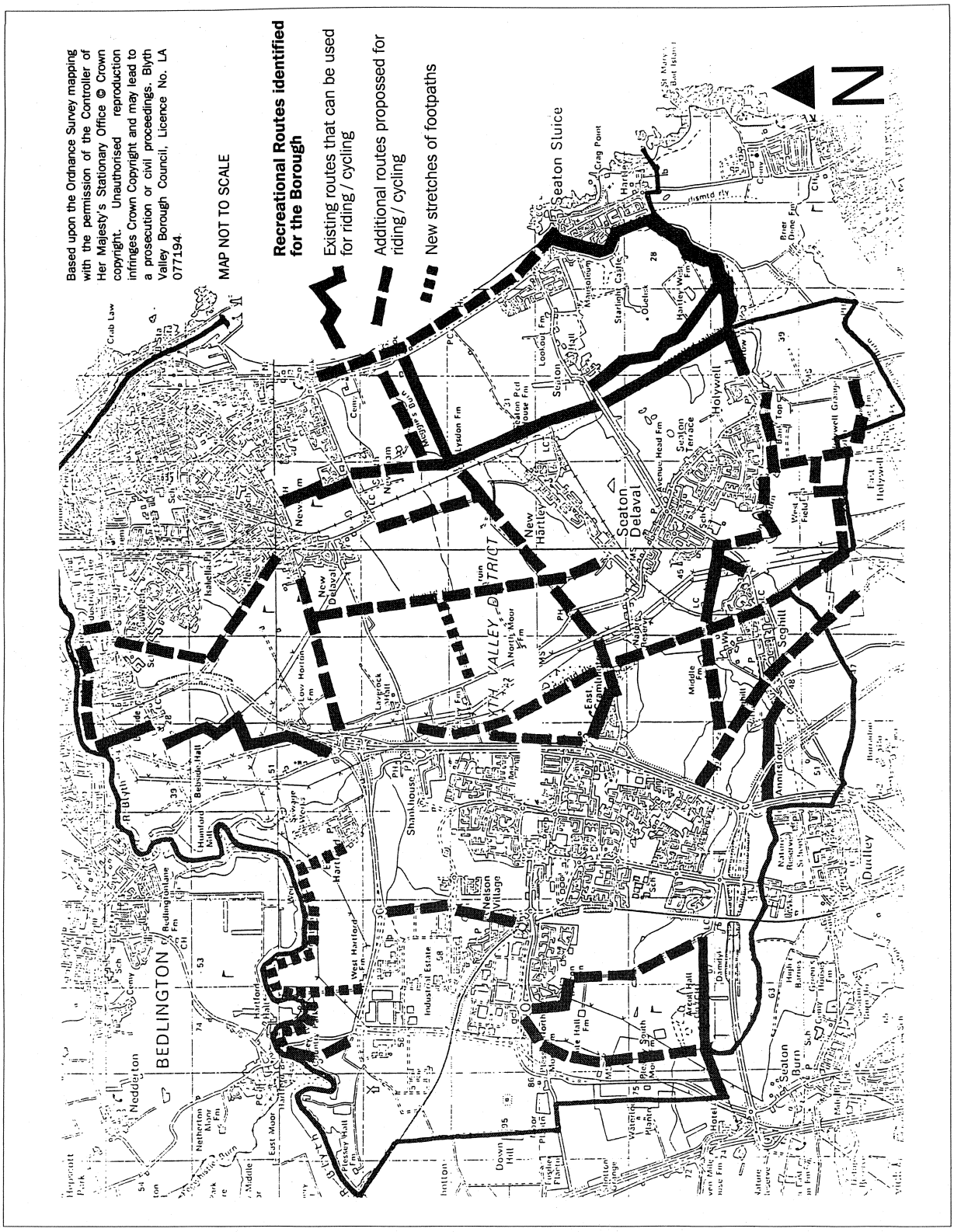
RECOMMENDED NOISE EXPOSURE CATEGORIES FOR NEW DWELLINGS NEAR EXISTING AIR TRAFFIC NOISE

Air Traffic	**Noise Exposure Category**			
	A	B	C	D
0.700 - 23.00	Less that 57	57 to 66	66 to 72	Over 72
23.00 - 07.00	Less than 48	48 to 57	57 to 66	Over 66

APPENDIX XXIX

MAP SHOWING RECREATIONAL ROUTES NETWORK DEFINED IN SUB-SECTION 5.5.2

N.B. These routes were agreed as part of the Network Strategy with the Relevant Bodies during a Consultation Exercise in 1992.



GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED

ABANDONMENT *Refers to the former use of land or buildings. If this use ceases and is not resumed within a period of time, the use can be deemed to have been abandoned, necessitating a new application for planning permission if the applicant wishes to resume the use.*

ACCESS *The means by which, (i.e. the physical features along or through which), premises or facilities are reached, whether on foot or otherwise.*

ACREAGE CONTRIBUTION
See "Commuted Payments"

ADAPTATION *The alteration of existing units within the housing stock to accommodate the needs of disabled people and the long term sick.*

ADOPTED PLAN *A Plan which has been through all its stages of consultation and official scrutiny and can become part of the statutory Development Plan for the area.*

ADVANCE FACTORY UNITS
Premises constructed especially to meet the needs of small scale starter or growing manufacturing businesses.

ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT
Required for the display of advertisements, in certain circumstances, outside or visible from outside buildings.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING
Affordable Housing can be defined as housing which is available to those people whose income does not enable them to buy or rent in the locality, at open market prices and appropriate to their needs.
On the basis of this definition of affordability, the Local Planning Authority will undertake and regularly update an assessment of affordable housing need in the Plan area, taking into account local income levels, local housing costs and the existing supply of affordable housing

AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION
Categorisation of land quality defined by Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries which ranges from Grade 1 (excellent quality) to Grade 5 (very poor quality).

ALLOTMENTS
See Sub-section 4.5 on page 140.

AMENITY *The level of pleasantness and local advantages enjoyed at a particular location which is a focus of human activity, especially a place of residence, but also a workplace / school / place of assembly etc. See also "Residential Amenity".*

ANCIENT WOODLANDS *Site where there has ben continuous woodland cover since the last Ice Age.*

ANCILLARY USE / FACILITY *A land use which, though different to the main land use, is functionally linked to the main use, and forms only a small element of the total use of the land.*

AREAS OF HIGH LANDSCAPE VALUE
see "LANDSCAPE".

ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS
These are issued under the General Permitted Development Order and tighten planning controls by removing certain permitted development rights

ASSISTED AREA STATUS
The status given by central Government to areas where grants are available for the location or relocation of work activity.

BLYTH TOWN CENTRE LOCAL PLAN
A superseded local plan covering Blyth town centre. The Local Plan formed part of the statutory Development Plan for the area prior to the adoption of this Plan.

BLYTH VALLEY EAST LOCAL PLAN
A superseded local plan covering around half of Blyth Valley, including the Seaton Valley villages. The Local Plan formed part of the statutory Development Plan for the area prior to the adoption of this Plan.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT, THE
The environment of the built-up area, particularly as experienced from a particular point on the ground or from within a building or while moving through the area.

BUILT-UP AREA *Area within which the majority of land is occupied by buildings or their curtilages, or areas of formal public access such as roads, footpaths and parks.*

BULKY GOODS *Goods which are of a size or weight that, if purchased in a retail outlet, would require collection by vehicles. A retail outlet may be classified as a bulky goods outlet if:*
a *its main sales in terms of quantity or turnover are bulky goods;*
b *large amounts of display / storage space are needed;*
c *delivery of the goods to the customer is not normally practicable;*
Some goods sold in such an outlet, while related to the bulky goods sold, may be of a smaller size.

BUSINESS PARK *An area planned for work activities to set up and grow in an attractive and spacious environment.*

CAPACITY *Term normally applied to a future housing site to describe the number of dwellings it will be likely to accommodate, given various policies and constraints.*

CARAVAN *Any structure designed or adapted for human habitation which is capable of being moved from one place to another and any motor vehicle so designed or adapted, with the exception any railway rolling stock currently in use or any tent.*

CARE IN THE COMMUNITY
Support for those in special need because of mental or physical illness or disability, so that they can live at home or in small institutions within the community.

CENTRALISATION OF FACILITIES
The process where community facilities are concentrated in one location rather than being distributed around the community. Such has been the case with G.P. practices in Blyth.

CENTRAL SHOPPING AREA
Areas within Blyth and Cramlington town centres where priority is given to retail uses.

CLEARANCE *Demolition to create a usable space or development site.*

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AREA
A term applied to the six, largely residential, area proposals, where a comprehensive approach will be taken.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FUNDS
Funds set up specifically to provide community facilities for a named area, into which developers contribute, normally by means of "commuted payments".

COMMUNITY HEALTH FACILITIES
An overall term taking in hospitals, clinics, doctors' surgeries, dentists and other similar facilities.

COMMUNITY HOSPITAL *A small hospital which serves a limited range of hospital needs for a town or local area.*

COMMUNITY FACILITIES
Services occupying land or buildings which provide for people living in a locality. This is expanded upon on page 125.

COMMUTED PAYMENTS / SUMS
A payment or series of payments made by a developer - possibly into a community development fund - under a Planning Agreement in order that works necessary to the proposed development, which are not otherwise being provided for, are (eventually) carried out. Such payments are most likely to be required where the works concerned would serve a number of developments or where they are not required immediately - e.g. where the development is in a number of phases.

COMPARISON SHOPPING
Shopping for those types of goods that are normally durable and purchased infrequently and where there is an element of comparing goods and prices before a purchase is made.

CONSERVATION AREA *An area designated by the Council under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as of special architectural or historic interest. These may contain Listed Buildings and Structures but are also likely to include non-Listed items as well as areas of Highway and possibly open spaces or countryside. They are normally goegraphically contiguous.*

CONTAMINATED LAND *Defined in the Environment Protection Act 1990 as land which appears to the local authority to be in such a condition by reason of substance in, on or under it that significant harm is being caused or there is a significant possibility of such harm being caused; or pollution of controlled waters is being or is likely to be caused.*

CONVENIENCE SHOPPING *Shoppi ng for essentials that are purchased on a regular basis - especially food.*

CRAMLINGTON CDA MAP *A plan plus documents produced in the 1960's to guide the development of Cramlington new town. The document has been superseded by the Northumberland County Structure Plan and this Plan.*

CULTURAL FACILITIES *This term is used to define a particular sub-group of community facilities, usually buildings, which provide for the gathering together of people from the community for the purposes of religious or secular meetings, non-statutory education, the arts, entertainment, leisure (but not including sports), or relaxation.*

CURTILAGE *A small area of land forming part or parcel with a house or building which is contained within it or to which it is attached. For a house with a fenced garden, drive etc., the definition is simple. However this is not always so and can be open to interpretation.*

DECOMMISSIONED PORT LAND
Land released from the requirement that it be held exclusively for Port-related uses.

DEEMED PLANNING PERMISSION
Planning permission which is automatically granted for certain categories of development, which are set out in the General Development Order - i.e. no application is required.

DENSITY *The density of a development is a measure of the proportion of the land taken up by buildings. In this Local Plan, this term is most often applied to housing, where density is measured in terms of the number of dwellings per acre.*

DERELICT LAND *Land rendered unproductive for development purposes by past industrial or extractive activity.*

DESIGN GUIDANCE *This will be in the form of a publication available to developers, aimed at achieving development of sufficient quality to satisfy the Local Planning Authority on the basis of the special requirements of the proposal site or the use proposed.*

DEVELOPMENT *"Development" is defined in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as meaning "the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land or the making of any material change in the use of any building or other land". This definition is used for the purposes of development control. There are exceptions: (i) the maintenance of buildings; (ii) highway works; (iii) the works of authorities and statutory undertakers, (i.e. those who provide essential services under various legislation, such as electricity, gas and water); (iv) Uses incidental to dwellings; (v) agriculture; (vi) Use Classes Order - certain classes of use, changing between which does not constitute development; (vii) demolition (although some demolition is development).*
The use of the term "development" in this Written Statement most usually refers to the development of buildings on land, most usually where no buildings exist at present. Where buildings do exist, the term "redevelopment" is more likely to be employed.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL *The process of assessing individual planning proposals normally involving the determination of planning applications, which are either granted permission or refused.*

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL POLICY NOTE *A type of supplementary planning guidance which assists in making consistent development control decisions on a particular topic.*

DEVELOPMENT PLAN *The document(s) which set out the planning policies and proposals for a particular administrative area. In Blyth Valley the Development Plan comprises the currently approved version of the Structure Plan plus this Local Plans which have been adopted through statutory procedures..*

DISTRIBUTOR ROAD *Roads which literally distribute traffic to destinations within an urban area, (rather than taking traffic through it). They include "Local Distributor Roads" which form the third tier in the Highway Authority's system, (below Primary and Secondary routes), as well as lower tier roads which serve individual estates. Typically both sub categories might form loops running away from and back to primary or secondary routes. Estate distributor roads are sometimes non-through routes which terminate in a number of residential culs-de-sac.*

DUAL USE *The use by the public, as community facilities, of faciliites which are not generally accessible to the public, normally because they are owned / used by an institution or private group.*

ENFORCEMENT *Action taken in various circumstances where the terms of a planning permission are not being complied with or where development occurs without the necessary planning consent.*

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY
A non-departmental, public body established by the Environment Act 1995. The agency has taken over the functions of the National Rivers Authority, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution, waste regulation authorities and some parts of the Department of the Environment. The agency is required to 'protect or enhance the environment, as a whole, as to make the contribution that Ministers consider appropriate towards achieving sustainable development.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
A method of assessing the quantitative and qualitative effects on the environment of a project. The document which presents the results of such an assessment, in a way which enables the importance of the predicted effects and the scope for modifying / mitigating any adverse effects to be properly evaluated before a decision is made.

ENVIRONMENT, THE *The surroundings of any place or point in space; in particular, that part of the surroundings in which there is an interaction between that which occupies the space, whether this is inanimate or living, and some aspect of the surroundings. This interaction may be visual, aural, chemical etc. The environment may include the earth / water below and the air above, as well as the land around. It is not always possible geographically to define the environment of a specific land use as its effects can be carried away from the location - e.g. wind or water borne.*

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY
One of the main four aims of this Plan. It refers in particular to equalising the accessibility of community facilities, housing, workplaces etc. as far as is possible through planning decisions.

ESTATE ACTION *A concentration of resources, including outside funding, into the improvement of a particular Local Authority housing area.*

ESTATE DISTRIBUTOR ROAD
A term applied to a certain type of local road for the purposes of this Local Plan. See also "Distributor Road".

EXECUTIVE HOUSING
see definition on page 105.

FIRST SCHOOL
A school for 5 to 8 year olds.

FIVE YEAR SUPPLY *A measure used for the planning of supply of housing land.*

FOOTPATH-CYCLETRACK / FOOTPATH-CYCLEWAY *A route which is separated from the road system used by motor vehicles, designed for use by pedestrians and cyclists. They are usually split into a cycle and a footpath lane by a central white line or kerb.*

FOOTPRINT *The term used to describe the exact position of a building on the ground.*

FREIGHT *Goods in transit by road, rail or other means.*

GENERAL AND LOCAL EMPLOYMENT, LAND FOR *Land set aside for work activity uses within Use Classes B1, B2 and B8 of the Use Classes Order, that does not necessarily have any special quality of environment or conditions for businesses to expand etc..*

GENERAL PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT ORDER
A "Statutory Instrument" which sets out those types of development which are deemed to be granted planning permission without the need to apply. This list is often updated.

GREEN BELT *A formal, long term designation which protects areas around the major conurbattions from unrestricted, built development.*

GYPSY *Defined in the Caravan Sites Act 1968 as persons of nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin, but does not include members of an organised group of travelling show(people), or of persons engaged in travelling circuses, travelling together as such.*

HABITAT *see "Wildlife Habitat"*

HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES *Substances that would present a major fire, explosion or toxicity risk to people in the vicinity.*

HEALTH AUTHORITY *There is a tiered structure. The Northumberland Health Authority covers the area for most local planning purposes.*

HIGH SCHOOL *A school normally for 13 to 18 year olds.*

HIGHWAY *The statutory Highway includes any land over which the public has a right to pass and repass whether adopted by the Highway Authority (for the purposes of maintenance) or not.*

HIGHWAY AUTHORITY *At present, this is Northumberland County Council. Blyth Valley Borough Council acts as agents to the Highway Authority for the purposes of maintaining the adopted Highway and various features situated thereon.*

HOUSING AUTHORITY *At present, this is Blyth Valley Borough Council. The Housing Authority has responsibility for that part of the housing stock in its ownership. However it must also ensure that there is an adequate supply of housing, (irrespective of tenure), so as to meet housing needs within its area.*

HOUSING REQUIREMENT *The number of new housing units for which it is estimated, for planning purposes, that provision will need to be made in a defined area over a particular time period.*

HOUSING STOCK *All existing housing in a given area.*

INFILL SITES *This normally refers to housing, although it could be applied to other forms of development. Sites that are not allocated as housing sites in a Local Plan on account of their size and sometimes also because they are subsequently identified. They are most commonly found in older parts of built-up areas often as gap sites between houses.*

INFRASTRUCTURE *Services which need to be in place in order that a completed development can function - e.g. roads, footpaths, electricity cables, water supply pipes and sewers.*

INNER BOX *A system of roads providing links between the four sectors of Cramlington within the town and forming an approximate box shape on the map.*

INWARD INVESTMENT *The setting up of a business or office in an area by a company or organisation based outside that area.*

KICKABOUT AREAS *A term used by recreation managers to describe an area of grass or tarmac, large enough to kick a football around without a high risk of a nuisance being caused to surrounding properties.*

LAND ALLOCATIONS *Proposals that land be developed for specified uses during the Plan period, not including land where there is already a commitment.*

LANDSCAPE
Definition given on page 6.

LANDSCAPE - AREAS OF HIGH LANDSCAPE VALUE *Areas within which the landscape is considered to be of a value sufficient to warrant its preservation. This is based on the local value of the landscape in relation to the landscape of surrounding areas as well as the absolute valuation of its component parts.*

LANDSCAPE BUFFER *An area of landscaping which has, as an aim, the reduction of noise or visual conflict between two adjoining uses.*

LANDSCAPING *The inclusion in development, or the addition within the existing landscape or built-up area, of a scheme of planting and or "hard" landscaping (e.g. paving / fencing / seating).*

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY *A document produced by the Council which sets out its aims for the preservation and enhancement of the Landscape and gives guidance to developers, farmers and others.*

LANDSCAPE STRUCTURE / STRUCTURE PLANTING *The introduction of landscaping in a planned way over a larger development area, normally in advance of development commencing. The resulting landscaping may form strips of planting which define development sites.*

LAYOUT *The placing of buildings and other features within a development, in relation to eachother, the landform and the surrounding area.*

LISTED BUILDING *Any building or other structure, (plus ancillary objects or structures, fixed thereto or within its curtilage), which is for the time being contained in the List, compiled by the Government, as being of special architectural or historic interest.*

LIVING OVER THE SHOP *The name given to a policy to encourage the use of vacant upper floors of properties in Blyth Town Centre for residential purposes.*

LOCAL DISTRIBUTOR ROAD
The third tier of the Highway Authority's classification of roads. See also "Distributor Road".

LOCAL EQUIPPED AREA FOR PLAY
A particular category of equipped children's playground, designed to serve a local neighbourhood, (approx 300 households).

LOCAL HOUSING PLAN *A document produced by the Council's Housing Department to plan resources in relation to the supply and demand for housing units in Blyth Valley.*

LOCALLY LISTED BUILDINGS *A non-statutory list prepared by the Local Planning Authority of individual buildings or groups of bulidings that are considered to be of local importance.*

LOCAL NATURE RESERVE
Sites owned, leased or managed under agreement by local authorities which are designated under the terms of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

LOCAL PLAN *This document plus the Proposals Map. See also "Development Plan".*

LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY
Blyth Valley Borough Council.

LOW DENSITY (EXECUTIVE) HOUSING
see definition on page 105.

MASSING *An assessment of the size of a building in terms of the relationship between its cubic volume and the site on which it is situated.*

MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS
The collective term for the factors which need to be taken into account when deciding whether or not to grant planning permission.

MATERIALS *Term normally used to refer to the building materials used in a proposal.*

MEADOW *An area of field where wild flowers and other wild grasses etc. are allowed to propogate and are managed.*

MIDDLE SCHOOL
A school for 9 to 12 year olds.

MINERAL PLANNING AUTHORITY
Northumberland County Council

MINIMUM SEPARATION DISTANCE
See Sub-section 3.6.3 on page 116.

MIXED DEVELOPMENT *A mixture of uses permitted on a development site - e.g. housing with an element of compatible workshop use.*

MOBILE CLASSROOMS *Temporary buildings used to expand the teaching areas of schools..*

NATIONAL NATURE RESERVES
A National Nature Reserve is an area of national wildlife importance. National Nature Reserves may have populations of threatened plants and/or animals found in few other sites in the United Kingdom.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, THE
Those aspects of the environment which exist in spite of or relatively independently from the activities of human beings. The natural environment exists to a greater or lesser degree in all areas, including the built up areas.

NATURE CONSERVATION *The conservation of the natural environment through its preservation and possible enhancement.*

NEIGHBOURHOOD *There is no set definition of this term. For example, in referring to equipped children's playgrounds, a "Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play" would serve a large area as its central facility - e.g. that proposed for the South-West Sector of Cramlington, whereas, in terms of local shopping centres, the term "neighbourhood shopping centres" is used to refer to centres that primarily serve a much more concentrated areas of households.*

NETWORK STRATEGY *A Council produced document setting out the shortcomings and potential of the public rights of way system in the countryside areas of the Borough, including footpaths, bridleways and cycleways. It includes a suggested programme for their selective improvement.*

NOISE EXPOSURE CATEGORIES
Recommended range of noise levels, banded A to D, that assist local authorities in their consideration of planning applications for residential development near transport-related noise sources.

NON-POWERED MOVEMENT
The traditional users of pavements and footpaths - pedestrians (of whatever mobility), including those pushing prams or pushchairs, and wheelchair users, as well as cyclists and horse riders.

NURSERY SCHOOL *Facilities, often attached to First Schools, for children of pre-school age.*

OCCUPANCY CONDITIONS
Planning conditions which have the purpose of limiting those occupying a dwelling to particular groups or individuals - e.g. essential workers.

OFF-SITE WORKS *Normally refers to works that need to be carried out outside an application, in order to enable the development to go ahead.*

OPERATIONAL LAND *Refers to the Port of Blyth. Within the operational land, the Port Authority has certain rights to make use of, develop and operate on the land, granted to it via an Act of Parliament.*

ORIENTATION *The placing of a dwelling or other building within a layout, especially in relation to the points of the compass / the direction of the sun.*

OUTDOOR PLAYING SPACE
Land which is devoted to outdoor sport or children's play.

OUTER BOX *The primary or trunk routes which follow the outer edge of Cramlington in an approximate box shape, when viewed on a map.*

OVERDEVELOPMENT *The situation where the proportion of building on a site has the effect of reducing the remaining open areas, (land and airspace) to inadequate levels, applying fixed standards, (spacing etc.), as well as a more qualitative assessment of the level of amenity.*

OVERLOOKING *A qualitative assessment of the degree of visibility of the living areas (indoor or out) of one dwelling, as viewed from another or from other occupied premises such as workplaces.*

OVERSHADOWING *The cutting of of direct sunlight from one building or its curtilage by another.*

PARK AND RIDE *A scheme where car parking is provided in an accessible location away from a centre of attraction and from where a very frequent public transport service takes people to the centre.*

PASSENGER RAIL HALT *A small, ustaffed railway station with a platform and shelter for passengers.*

PASSIVE SOLAR ENERGY *The energy received from the sun by a building, without the aid of solar panels etc.*

PEDESTRIAN PRIORITY AREA *Traffic zone where access is restricted to certain types of vehicles at certain times in order to reduce pedestrian/vehicle conflicts.*

PERCENT FOR ART *A scheme whereby developers of civic or other large schemes make a contribution towards a specially commissioned work of art, usually on the site.*

PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS *The situations where planning permission is deemed to have been granted without the need for an application for planning permission. These are set out in the General Permitted Development Order*

PHASING *The mechanism which ensures that development occurs in a certain order - usually achieved by the imposition of planning conditions or the signing of a suitable Planning Agreement,*

PLAN AREA *The whole of the Borough of Blyth Valley.*

PLANNING AGREEMENT / OBLIGATION *A legal agreement entered into either jointly by an applicant and the Council or as a "unilateral undertaking" by the applicant alone, relating to the granting of planning permission for development. In either case, the developer is bound to carry out certain, specified works and/or to meet certain requirements which are necessary for the development to be acceptable from a planning point of view.*

PLANNING APPLICATION *A form plus plans submitted to the Council, (for a fee), when development is proposed. (Some forms of development automatically have "deemed" planning permission and a planning application is not required).*

PLANNING CONDITIONS *A list of requirements attaching to planning permission. Permission is issued on condition that these requirements are met.*

PLANNING PERMISSION
Granted when a planning application is approved by the Council.

PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE NOTE
Advice setting out the Government's policies on different aspects of planning.

PLAN PERIOD *The period from 1st July 1991 to 30th June 2006.*

PLANTATION WOODLAND
Areas of woodland deliberately planted in the period since the 1960's as a way of enhancing reclaimed land and other areas such as transport corridors.

POLICY *In this document, a policy is a statement which sets down the approach that will be taken in making decisions on proposals for a particular type of development and/or gives positive encouragement to particular forms / types of development. It may also list, as cross references, particular proposals which assist the implementation of the policy.*
Policies, along with Proposals, carry more weight in decision making than the remaining text of this document.

POLLUTION *Unwanted secondary effects of a development or the use of land, namely the waste substances and surplus energy generated.*

PRIMARY ROAD *The top tier of the Highway Authority's classification of roads.*

PORT DEVELOPMENT AREA
The area of Blyth within which port uses are favoured.

PROFESSIONAL AND FINANCIAL SERVICES *Office uses that provide a service for the public or other businesses.*

PROPOSAL *In this document, proposals are detailed statements of the intended course of action on a particular site. It may also cross refer to Policies the implementation of which will be assisted by the Proposal. Proposals, along with Policies, carry more weight in decision making than the remaining text of this document.*

PROPOSALS MAP *An Ordnance Survey based map of the Local Plan Area illustrating the location of site -specific Proposals - see back pocket of document.*

PROTECTED SPECIES *Certain plant and animal species, including all wild birds, that are legally protected whereby it is an offence to kill, injure, sell or take them or intentionally to damage, destroy or obstruct their places of shelter.*

PUBLIC OPEN SPACE
Any open area to which the public has access, ranging from large parks and commons down to small sqares and verge areas. It may include playing space, formal parkland, naturalistic areas etc. but must be accessible to the public. Heavily planted, fenced off areas may therefore not count, even if they provide a visual amenity for the public.

PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY *Unsurfaced paths or routes which, under a mixture of common and statue law, all members of the public have a right to pass over. Specific designations are footpaths, bridleways and byways open to all traffic.*

RAIL-COAL HANDLING FACILITY
A sophisticated system of conveyors etc, constructed on part of the site of the former Bates Colliery, in order to assist the transfer of coal from rail to ship.

RAMSAR SITES *Sites of International Importance identified under the Convention of Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat.*

REFURBISHMENT
see "Renovation".

REGION *May refer to the Government defined Northern Region, taking in Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, Durham, Cleveland, plus Cumbria, or to the North-East, which would include all the above apart from Cumbria.*

RENEWABLE ENERGY *A term used to describe energy that flows naturally and repeatedly. It includes energy from the sun, wind, oceans and water falling.*

RENOVATION / RENEWAL / REFURBISHMENT *Works on an existing building to modernise it or make it usable.*

RESIDENTIAL AMENITY *This term is a way of describing the level of pleasantness and site specific advantages of the situation of a particular house. Residential amenity can be reduced by, for instance, the introduction of blocks of buildings overshadowing the property or blocking views or by the building of noise emitting use nearby.*

RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES
Residential accommodation that provides support for, usually elderly, people no longer able to cope with the practicalities of living in their own homes, even with the help of domicillary services.

REST OF DISTRICT *A definition used for the purposes of planning housing figures. The area outside the settlement limits of Cramlington and Blyth.*

RETAIL FRONTAGE POLICY
A policy applied in Blyth Town centre to ensure the vitality and viability of ther centre by ensuring that a certain proportion of the shopfront premises remain in retail use.

RETAIL PARK *An agglomeration of at least three retail warehouses.*

RETAIL WAREHOUSE *Large, single-level store specialising in the sale of household goods (such as carpets, furniture and electrical goods) and bulky DIY items, catering mainly for car-borne customers and often in out-of-centre locations.*

ROLL-ON ROLL OFF FACILITY
A facility which allows large numbers of containers to pass on and off ships rapidly but relies on substantial storage space in which to hold goods.

SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONU-MENTS
A national designation for the most important archaeological sites.

SCREENING *The insertion of a barrier made up of landscaping and/or mounding and/or fencing/walling, the aim of which is to reduce the visibility of one area as seen from another.*

SEATON VALLEY AREA / VILLAGES
The area consisting of Seaton Delaval, Holywell, Seghill, New Hartley and Old Hartley / Seaton Sluice, plus the intervening countryside.

SEATON VALLEY URBAN DISTRICT
The pre-1974 Council which covered the area of Cramlington and most of the Seaton Valley Villages, plus some areas outside the current Blyth Valley.

SECONDARY COMMERCIAL AREA
An area of Blyth Town Centre surrounding the Principal Shopping Area, within which preference will be given to a range of commercial and other non-residential uses.

SECONDARY ROAD *The second tier of the Highway Authority's classification of roads.*

SECTOR *A word applied to one of the four sub-divisions of Cramlington. The existing South-East Sector is largely residential, as is the developing North-East Sector and as will be the future South-West Sector. The North-West Sector mainly comprises work activity uses.*

SELF-BUILD HOUSING *Housing built by individuals or groups of individuals on plots of land (usually infill plots) or on specially prepared sites within small areas set aside for that purpose.*

SEMI-NATURAL WOODLAND
Areas of tree cover which include fully mature trees and have existed as woodland for at least a century or so, (whether or not originally deliberately planted). It may include areas of ancient woodland likely to have existed since the last Ice Age.

SERVICE CENTRE *A focus of commercial activity providing services for a surrounding area.*

SETTLEMENT *A settlement is any grouping of buildings which contains more than one separate dwelling.*

SETTLEMENT LIMITS *An imaginary line on the ground, indicated on the proposals map, encircling the built-up areas of larger settlements. Built-up areas will generally not be permitted to expand beyond it within the Plan period.*

SETTLEMENT POLICY *The policy or set of policies which sets out the relative importance attached to Cramlington, Blyth and the smaller settlements within Blyth Valley, in terms of the application of other policies.*

SHARED SURFACES *Paved surfaces within the highway which are shared between pedestrians and vehicles, where there is no distinction between "road" and "pavement". Mostly these occur at the closed end of residential roads where there is no through traffic.*

SHOP FRONT USES *Uses which occupy shop front style premises, e.g. normally having a window display.*

SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD
Information, held and constantly updated by Northumberland County Council, about all locations where archaeological remains are known or thought likely to exist.

SITES OF NATURE CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE, (S.N.C.I.'s)
Non - statutory designations, identified by Wildlife Trusts, which aim to highlight regional or local features of wildlife interest.

SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST, (S.S.S.I.'s) *Sites defined under the Wildlife and Countryside Acts by English Nature on account of their national importance due to their flora, fauna, geological or physiographical interest.*

SOCIAL SERVICES AUTHORITY
Northumberland County Council.

SPECIAL AREAS OF CONSERVATION, (S.A.C's) *Sites of international importance recognised under the European Community Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora.*

SPECIAL DESIGN SITES *These are sites allocated for housing development where a requirement will be that the design of the housing is distinct from that of surrounding housing developments. Whether or not it is so will be decided by the Council. In some cases design guidance will be produced in advance.*

SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING
Housing which is intended to meet a defined need, such as that of elderly or disabled people.

SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA, (S.P.A.) *Sites of international importance to birds recognised under the European Community Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds.*

STREET FURNITURE *The various objects that can be found in the Highway to assist the movement and control of traffic and othe road users. They include signposts, bollards and street lights, as well as pedestrian facilities such as seating.*

STRUCTURE PLAN *A strategic land use planning document covering the whole of Northumberland, produced by Northumberland County Council, with which this Local Plan has to conform.*

STRUCTURE PLANTING
see "Landscape Structure".

SUB-REGION *A sub-area of the region, variously referring to south-east Northumberland, south-east Northumberland plus northern parts of Tyneside or the whole of the area which looks towards Newcastle for a wide range of services.*

SUB-REGIONAL GROWTH POINT
A term applied to the role of Cramlington as a settlement and explained fully on page 53.

SUPERMARKET *Single level, self-service store selling mainly food, with a gross trading floorspace of between 500 and 2500 square metres, often with their own car parks.*

SUPERSTORE *Single level, self-service store selling mainly food, or food and non-food goods, usually with at least 2500 square metres gross trading floorspace with dedicated car parks at surface level.*

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE *Detailed guidance produced by the Council, in order to ensure that developers have minimum difficulty in achieving planning requirements or expected standards of design, layout etc..*

TELECOMMUNICATIONS *All forms of communications by electrical or optical wire, cable and radio signals (whether terrestrial or from satellite), both public and private.*

TERRACE HOUSE *A house which is part of a building containing a row of three or more houses.*

THOROUGHFARE *A route taking a significant through movement of traffic, pedestrians etc.*

TOWNSCAPE *"Visual character" as it applies to town areas.*

TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES
Physical measures taken within the existing Highway to slow down traffic - such as road humps, ("sleeping policemen"), chicanes etc.

TRAFFIC GENERATION *The additional vehicular traffic added by a new land use.*

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT MEASURES
Physical measures taken within the existing Highway to improve the flow of traffic and possibly to reduce the level of conflict between moving vehicles, parking vehicles, pedestrians and other road users.

TRANSPORT CORRIDOR *Any of the main rail and road routes through the Plan area, along with areas of land on either side which could form the location for landscaping schemes.*

TREE PRESERVATION ORDER
An Order made by the Council under Section 198 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990, (or its predecessors), to prevent the felling or pruning of trees, considered to be of high amenity value, without its consent.

TYNESIDE CONURBATION *The area of a continuous built-up nature on either side of the river Tyne, including Newcastle, Longbenton, Whitley Bay, North Shields and Wallsend.*

UNILATERAL UNDERTAKING
The proposal, by an applicant for planning permission, to carry out certain works etc., to be secured through a Planning Agreement, in order to meet certain requirements of the Local Planning Authority.

URBAN FRINGE *This term refers to the fact that the Plan area lies on the edge of the Tyneside conurbation. As such, it tends to serve the purpose of absorbing certain uses that are pushed out of the city areas. One of the strategic roles of the countryside areas is to serve the recreational needs, not just of the Blyth Valley population but also parts of Tyneside, where it may be less easy to find the space to pursue certain types of activity. The most familiar example of an urban fringe recreational activity is horse riding.*

USE CLASSES ORDER *A "Statutory Instrument" setting out a number of categories of land use. Each category consists of a list. Changes between uses within each list are not classified as development; changes between categories are classified as such.*

VISITOR ACTIVITIES *The activities pursued by people visiting an area. These could be tourists or residents on daytrips from Tyneside, within the Borough or elsewhere. They would include leisure pursuits as well as the accommodation and movement associated with these.*

VISTA *A view from a particular point in a particular direction, which may include features of interest.*

VISUAL CHARACTER *The overall effect of an area on the eye, as determined by the topography, the architecture, layout and features of buildings and other features such as trees, shrubs and street furniture. The effects of development proposals on the visual character of the area will be assessed, as explained on page 31.*

VITALITY AND VIABILITY *A quantitative and qualitative assessment of the "health" of a shopping centre, which takes account of the numbers of pepole visiting the centre, the quantity of empty shop units, the quality and range of shops and other services and the general environment for shoppers.*

WAREHOUSE CLUB *Out of town businesses specialising in bulk sales of reduced priced, quality goods in unsophisticated buildings with very large car parks where access may be limited to businesses, organisations or classes of individual.*

WATER AUTHORITY *There are at present two of these. One deals entirely with water supply for part of the Plan area. The other deals with sewerage for the whole area and water supply for part of it.*
Wider drainage and ecological effects of water movement are dealt with by the National Rivers Authority.

WETLAND *A marshy area with characteristic flora and fauna.*

WILDLIFE CORRIDOR *A linear feature or a linear linking of wildlife habitats, which has the effect of allowing wildlife to move freely, relatively undisturbed by human activity.*

WILDLIFE HABITAT *A particular place or type of place, with a mix of natural and/or artificial features such as to encourage the existence of defined or a range of wildlife species.*

WINDFALL SITE *A site not allocated for any form of development in this Local Plan - normally because it is already in some other use which is not due to or thought likely to cease - which nevertheless becomes avilable for development or redevelopment and is considered suitable for the use proposed, (applying other policies in this Plan). References to windfall sites in this Plan tend to refer to housing sites but could equally apply to other uses.*

WIND TURBINE *A modern windmill that has the function of generating electricity.*

WORK ACTIVITY *This is self explanatory. Land is allocated for work activity, where the activity concerned is the primary use of the land and requires land distinct from other day-to-day human activities. Examples would be factories and offices. Where work activity is incidental or ancillary to other human activity - e.g. in shops and other community facilities, or in leisure facilities such as hotels, the land use is not classified as land for work activity. Instead, it is categorised as land for community facilities, land for leisure activities etc.*

INDEX

NOTE: THIS INDEX COVERS ALL TOPICS AND PROPER NAMES IN THE INTRODUCTORY CHAPTERS AND THE MAIN CHAPTERS (1 to 19). HOWEVER, IT ONLY REFERS TO MAIN TOPICS IN THE 29 APPENDICES AND DOES NOT COVER THE GLOSSARY.

Access *see also under "Pedestrians etc. Provision / Accessibility" see also under "Roads"*
Access Ways to Properties *31, 33, 66, 75, 103, 104, 105, 107, 111, 112, 113, 115, 117, 170, 206, 243, 259*
Acreage Contributions *see under "Commuted Payments"*
Advance Factory Units *see under "Work Activity - Premises"*
Advertisement Control *36*
Affordable Housing *see under "Housing"*
Agriculture (including Agricultural Land) *1,* **12 to 14**, *18, 19, 27, 39, 62 to 68, 74, 76, 77, 104, 106, 109, 111, 112, 113, 115, 120, 121, 122, 123, 156, 159, 170, 171, 177, 179, 225, 226, 258, 297, 298*
Agricultural Dwellings *14, 62, 63, 64, 65,* **120 to 122**
Agricultural Land Clasification *13*
MAFF *see under "Ministry"*
Other Agricultural Buildings *14, 27, 62 to 68, 120 to 123, 166, 170*
Aircraft Noise **40, 42, 43, Appendix XXVIII**
Airport *42, 43, 169, Appendix XXVIII*
Albion Way, Blyth *141, 202, 221*
All Weather Surfaces *see under "Playing Space - Outdoor"*
Alcan, Lynemouth *188*
Alexandra Park, Cramlington *270*
Allendale *56*
Allotments *35, 125, 126, 138,* **140 to 141**, *297,* **299 to 301**, *309, 312, 324*
Alteration of Buildings *see under "Buildings - Conversion of", "Listed Buildings" and "Locally Listed Buildings"*
Amenity
General **75 to 77**
Residential *see under "Residential Amenity"*
Amersham Road *see also under "South Beach" 281, 282, 285, 320*
Amphibians *2*
Amusement Arcades *239*
Ancient Monuments, Scheduled *20*
Angling *308*
Annitsford *61*
Annitsford Pond *2*
Anns Row *226*
Antennae *see under "Dish Aerials", "Satellite Dishes", "Telecommunications"*
Antique Shops *154*
Archaeology *ii, 2, 14, 19,* **20 to 23**, *111, 113, 177, 226,* **Appendix XXVII**
Architecture *see under "Visual Character of Built Environment" or "Buildings"*
Arcot Hall *9, 258*
AHLV *7, 8, 258, 262*
Designated Sites etc. *2, 8, 257, 258, 266, 270*
Golf Course *257, 258*
Arcot Lane, Cramlington *175, 258, 266, 268*
Arcot site, Cramlington, (Land immediately East of Beacon Lane and South of Southern Stream) *261, 262, 266*
Areas of High Landscape Value *see under "Landscape - AHLV's"*
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty *7*
Areas of Special Control *see under "Conservation Areas, Advertisement Consent within"*
Article 4 Directions *see under "Permitted Development Rights - Removal of"*
Art in the Environment *see under "Percent for Art"*
Arts Centre(s) **162 to 163**
Assisted Area Status *55, 179, 186, Appendix XXIII*
Astley High School *see under "Schools"*
Astley Park, Seaton Delaval *138*
Astley Road, Seaton Delaval *37, 296, 298, 302, 303 see also under "Roads - A192"*
Athletics Tracks *127, 128, 130, 131, Appendix XIX*
Avenue Head area, Seaton Delaval *216, 217, 219,* **295 to 296**, *297, 298,* **302 to 303**
Avenue Road *see under "Roads - A190"*
Avenue Road Industrial Area, Seaton Delaval *180, 183, 184, 185,* **199 to 200**, *326*
Avenues, The, Blyth *203, 205 see also under "Fifteenth Avenue"*
Avenue, The *see under "Roads - A190" or "Seaton Delaval Estate"*
Baby Changing *164, 168*
Badgers *5*
Back Lanes Policy, Blyth Town Centre *246 to 247*
Backworth Lane *see under "Roads - B1322"*
Balconies *117*
Ballast Hill, Blyth *180, 183, 184, 185, 196, 306*
Banks *191, 239, 302*
Barras Avenue / Barras Avenue West, Blyth *281*
Bassington Industrial Estate *see under Cramlington - North-West Work Activity Areas*
Bates Colliery, former, site of *19, 152, 155, 180, 184, 185, 188,* **195 to 197**, *216, 326*
Bates Cottages *57*
Bath House, Bath Terrace, Blyth *26*
Bath Terrace, Blyth *26, 190, 218*
Beach *see under "Coastline" or "Blyth Links"*
Beach Way *189*
Beacon Lane, Cramlington *175, 221, 258, 261, 262, 263, 264, 266, 267, 269, 270*
Beacon Lane, Land East of ... and South of Southern Stream, Cramlington *see under "Arcot site"*
Beaconhill *257, 264, 266*
Beaconhill Glade, (Land South of), Cramlington *see under "Westfield"*
Beaconhill Park *264, 267*
Beaconsfield Street, Blyth *216, 217, 242*
Bebside
General / Miscellaneous References *175, 180, 207, 208, 228*
Land for Work Activity *180, 185,* **196 to 197**
Reclamation Site *19*
Belgrave Crescent, Blyth *216, 217*
Betting Shops *168, 239, 286*
Biogas *46*
Birds *2, 3*
Black Steps, Blyth *308*
Blighting of Land *28, 108, 189, 244*

BLYTH VALLEY DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

WRITTEN STATEMENT, May 1999

INDEX

Blyth
N.B. There are numerous references to Blyth throughout the document. Below are the main townwide references
Allotments in ***140***
Housing *86,* ***90 to 92***
Movement in ***202****, 213*
Playing Space Provision in *127 to 137*
Role of, as a Settlement *52,* ***54 to 57****, 61*
Tourism role *170*
Blyth Central Conservation Area *26, 30*
Blyth Community Hospital *160, 161, 214, 232, 238*
Blyth Estuary *see under "River Blyth"*
Blyth Ferry ***226***
Blyth Golf Course *92, 292*
Blyth Harbour *see under "Port of Blyth"*
Blyth Industrial Estates *180, 183, 184, 185, 189,* ***194, 195, 197***
Blyth Links
General / Miscellaneous References *ii, iii, 11, 30, 37, 108, 109, 170, 171,* ***173****, 174, 219, 220, 227,* ***315 to 320****,* ***325***
Caravan Site ***315****, 318, 319*
Hotel Accommodation *170, 171,* ***315 to 319***
Wartime Structures *30, 315, 316, 317, 325*
Blyth Market Place *see under "Blyth Town Centre"*
Blyth Quayside *ii, iii, 30, 37, 97, 141, 162, 172,* ***173****, 183, 184, 185, 188, 192, 193, 195, 196, 218, 219, 220, 221, 223, 227, 237, 238, 242, 244,* ***305 to 308****,* ***324***
Blyth, River *see under "River Blyth" and "Blyth Estuary"*
Blyth Sports Centre *141, 142, 143, 172*
Blyth Town Centre
General / Miscellaneous References *iii, 11, 30, 36, 37, 99, 148,* ***149 to 152****, 153, 154, 155, 157, 158, 162, 172,* ***173****, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 202, 204, 210, 211, 213,* ***214, 216, 217****, 218, 227, 229,* ***237 to 247****, 286, 289, 302, 305, 309, 310, 311, 313, 320,* ***323***
Access Roads to ***214, 216, 217****, 238, 244*
Area into Which Town Centre Activities may expand ***244 to 245***
Bus Station *210, 211, 238, 240, 244, 245,* ***246****, 247*
Central Shopping Area *37,* ***150 to 153****, 157, 167, 192, 193,* ***239 to 241****, 242, 244, 245*

Blyth Town Centre continued....
Inner Relief Road *see under "Roads"*
Keel Row *149, 150, 214, 238, 239, 240, 241, 244, 245, 246 N.B. for references to individual retail outlets, see under "Shopping"*
Living over the Shop Policy *98, 99, 239,* ***242 to 243***
Market / Market Square *26, 150, 172, 237, 238, 239, 240,* ***241****, 323*
Northern Opportunity Site (Seaforth St.) ***244 to 245***
Retail Frontage Policy / Shopping Block Policy *150, 151, 168, 193, 238, 239,* ***240 to 241****, 302,* ***Appendix XXV***
Secondary Commercial Area *167, 192, 193, 194, 195, 239,* ***242 to 243***
Shopping Block Policy *see above under "Blyth Town Centre - Retail Frontage Policy"*
Town Centre Management ***239***
BMX Tracks *19, 132, 297 see also under "Seaton Delaval - Wheatridge Park" which includes former BMX track site*
Boghouses *223*
Bolam Avenue *202*
Bolam Park *142*
Bondicar Terrace, Blyth *242*
Bondicar Terrace Conservation Area *26*
Bowes Street, Blyth *214, 239, 241, 247*
Bowling Alley *162*
Bowling Greens *127*
Bowls, Indoor *142, 143*
Briardale Rd., Cowpen *158*
Bridge House, Blyth *242*
Bridge Street, Blyth *26, 190, 214, 216, 217, 218, 237, 238, 242, 244, 245, 246, 305, 306, 307, 308*
Bridleways *see under "Horses / Horse Riding / Bridleways" or "Network Strategy"*
Brierdene Burn *15*
Brierley Road, Cowpen *92, 158*
Broadway Circle, Blyth *158,* ***221****, 278*
Brockwell Centre, Cramlington *88, 144, 158, 250, 252, 253, 256*
Buggy Access *see under "Pedestrians etc. Access"*
Building Materials *27, 31, 33, 67, 68, 75, 115, 118, 155, 219, 220, 253*
Building Regulations *36*

Buildings
Conversion of *14, 40, 44, 58, 62, 63, 64, 65, 80, 81, 93, 98, 99, 100, 103, 104, 105, 120, 121, 122, 156, 157, 162, 163, 166, 170, 171, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 242, 265, 308, 318, 319*
Curtilage of *N.B. This is a term employed throughout the document - see glossary*
Derelict / Vacant in Green Belt etc. *see under "Green Belt" and "Housing in the Countryside"*
Features of in the Green Belt, beyond Settlement Limits *31 to 33 see under "Settlement Limits - Restrictions on Development beyond"*
Scale, Height and Massing of *27, 31, 33, 44, 67, 114, 115, 118, 123, 190, 316, 317, 318, 319*
Temporary, (incuding Mobile Classrooms) *7, 104,* ***147****, 162, 163, 286*
Building Societies *36, 168, 191, 239, 302*
Built Environment ***24 to 38*** *N.B. There are numerous other references to the Built Environment or Built-up Areas throughout the document*
Bulky Goods *see under "Shopping"*
Burnside First School *162*
Burt Street, Blyth *180, 185, 196, 242*
Buses / Bus Stops/Stations/Garages / Bus Only Routes etc. *see also under "Public Transport" and "Blyth Town Centre - Bus Station" iii, 70, 71, 111, 113, 192, 193, 201,* ***208 to 211****, 214, 216, 233, 234, 238, 240, 244, 245, 246, 247, 269, 273, 284, 286, 287, 298, 300*
Business Parks *see under "Work Activity - Land for ..."*
Businesses, Small *see especially under "Work Activity" and "Mixed Uses"*
Business Uses in Residential Areas / from the Home *see under "Mixed Uses"*
Butterflies *2*

Cafes *see under "Hot Food Take-Aways / Restaurants"*
Camping *see under "Visitor Accommodation"*
Caravans *see under "Visitor Accommodation", "Gypsies - Accommodation Needs" or "Blyth Links"*
Care in the Community *104*
Carlton Street, Blyth *242*
Cars *see under "Roads - Traffic ..."*
Car Parking *see under "Parking"*
Car Show Rooms *196, 197*
Castle Morpeth *61, 305*

BLYTH VALLEY DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

WRITTEN STATEMENT, May 1999

INDEX

Catchment Area Plans, (relating to rivers) *15*
Cemeteries *61 to 65*
Census *see under "Population"*
Central Government Planning Guidance ***74*** *N.B. This is referred to intermittently throughout document*
Central Park, Cramlington *5, 130, 138, 139, 231, 232,* ***254 to 255***
Chase Farm, Blyth
see under "West Blyth"
Chase Farm Drive
192, 273, ***274 to 275***
Chestnut Avenue, Blyth *92*
Childcare away from the Home
125, 132, ***164 to 165****, 192*
Children's Playing Needs *see also under "Playing Space" and area specific references*
General / Miscellaneous References *ii 35, 72, 111, 113, 126,* ***132 to 135****, 136,* ***137****, 164, 292,* ***Appendix XVIII***
Equipped Playgrounds *70,* ***132 to 135****, 136 to 140, 148, 161, 254, 255, 266, 267, 270,* ***276****, 278, 279, 282, 283,* ***289****, 292, 293, 298, 299, 301, 310, 311, 316, 317, 322,* ***Appendices XVIII, XX and XXI***
Churches
see under "Religious Buildings"
Church of Our Lady *24, 26*
Church Street, Blyth *214, 241*
Cinema *160, 172*
Circulars *see under "Central Government - Planning Guidance"*
Clay Pigeon Shooting *176*
Clearance *see under "Demolition"*
Cliffs *6, 8, 26*
Clifton Road, Cramlington
154, 157, 158
Climatic Change *16*
Coal Mining
see under "Mineral Extraction"
Coastline *1, 2, 6, 7, 8,* ***14 to 16****, 47, 60, 61, 106, 168, 169, 170, 171,* ***174 to 175****, 205, 315, 316, 317, 319, 320*
see also "Seaton Sluice Dunes"
see also under "Sea Level Changes"
Heritage Coast *169*
Collywell Bay *61*
Commerce / Commercial Concerns/Properties *see under relevant subject - e.g "Shops"*
Commercial Road, Blyth *214, 239*
Community Centres etc.
70, 126, 145, 146, ***160 to 163****, 265, 270, 282*
Community Disruption *75, 77, 171*
Community Facilities *N.B. There are numerous references to Community Facilities generally throughout the the document*
See also under Area Specific Headings
ii, ***69 to 73****, 79,* ***110****, 113,* ***125 to 168****, 179, 206, 227, 228, 230,* ***264, 265, 267****, 270, 292*
Community Hospitals
see under "Hospitals" or "Blyth Community Hospital"
Community Provision Funds
69 to 73*, 110, 254, 282, 283*
Commuted Payments *9, 10, 11, 12, 69, 70, 71,* ***72 to 73****, 110, 134, 142, 160, 310*
Commuters *see under "Housing"*
Composting *17*
Concessionary Fares Schemes *209*
Concordia, Cramlington
141, 143, 162, 163, 230, 270
Conference Centre *see under "Visitor Accommodation"*
Conservation ***24 to 30***
Conservation Areas *see also under individual Conservation Areas*
8, 9, 24, 25, ***26 to 30****, 31, 32, 33, 36, 37, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 63, 64, 66, 104, 107, 114, 117, 118, 173, 177, 189, 211, 227, 244, 245, 299, 305, 306, 307*
Areas of Special Control of Advertisements within *28 to 29*
Dangerous Structures within *28 to 29*
Demolition within ***26 to 29***
Enhancement Measures within ***30***
New Development within ***26 to 27 & 29***
Tree work within *9 to 11,* ***28 to 29***
Conservation Area Consent ***27 to 29***
Conservatories *117, 118*
Construction Activity *20, 75 to 77, 179, 201, 220, 279, 282, 299, 307*
Contaminated Land *ii, 14,* ***20****, 39*
Contamination *see under "Pollution"*
Conversion of Buildings *see under "Buildings - Conversion of"*
Coppicing *46*
Corner Shops
see under "Shopping - Corner"
Countryside ***60 to 68***
references throughout dicument; only the main ones given here
see also under "Housing - In the Countryside"
Countryside Recreational Activities
ii, 62, 63, 65, 66, 169, ***174 to 175****, 205, 219, 220,* ***Appendix XXIX***
Cowpen *140*
Numerous other references throughout document; see individual street refs. etc.
Cowpen Farm *163*
Cowpen Industrial Estate *see under "Blyth Industrial Estates"*
Cowpen Quay *159, 212, 214*
Cowpen Road *144, 180, 183, 184, 185, 188, 192, 195, 196, 197, 202, 212,* ***216****, 217, 221, 228, 271, 276, 277, 278*
Cramlington *N.B. There are numerous references to specific parts of Cramlington throughout the document. Below are given only the town-wide or unspecific references*
Allotment provision within *140*
Housing, (Cramlington-wide) ***86 to 89****, 249, 250*
Movement (Cramlington-wide) ***202****, 208, 213, 220, 221, 223, 266, 268, 269, 270*
Playing Space Provision, (Cramlington-wide) *127 to 137*
Role of as a Settlement / New Town / Sub-Regional Growth Point for Employment and Housing
52, ***53 to 55****, 61, 249, 257*
Visitor Accommodation *170*
Cramlington Comprehensive Development Area Plan *53, 249, 257*
Cramlington, North-East
General / Miscellaneous References *iii, 5, 11, 86, 227,* ***249 to 256****, 257, 261, 268,* ***323***
Community Facilities *133, 135, 138, 139,* ***144 to 145****, 160, 161, 163,* ***252 to 256***
Housing *86, 87,* ***88 to 89****, 99, 114, 249,* ***250 to 252****, 261*
1974 Agreement *249*
Master Plan *249, 254, 256*
Pedestrian - Cycle Facilities
202 to 205, 249, 251, 252, ***253 to 254***
Road Provision
221, 223, 249, 253, 256
Cramlington, North-West Work Activity Areas *180, 181, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187,* ***196 to 198****, 268, 326*
see also under "West Hartford Farm"
Cramlington, South-West
General / Miscellaneous References *ii, iii, 9, 10, 175, 208, 227,* ***257 to 270****, 291, 322,* ***323***
Community Facilities, (including playing space) *128, 129 130, 131, 134, 135, 138, 139, 142, 143, 144,* ***145****, 159, 161, 163,* ***264****,* ***265****,* ***267****, 269, 270*
District Centre *159, 262, 263, 264, 265, 267, 270*
Energy Conservation in
48, ***112, 115, 259, 261,*** ***Appendix XXVI***
Housing *48,* ***86****, 99, 106, 107, 112, 250, 257, 258,* ***259 to 263****, 266, 269, 270, 291, 323,* ***Appendix XXVI***
Landscape *11, 257,* ***258****, 259, 261, 262,* ***265 to 267****, 270*
Master Plan *257, 258, 259, 261, 263, 265, 266, 270*
Pedestrian - Cycle Facilities
202, 204, 261, 263, 264, 266, ***269****,* ***270***

BLYTH VALLEY DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

WRITTEN STATEMENT, May 1999

INDEX

Cramlington, South-West continued....
Public Open Space *138 to 140,* ***266 to 267***
Road Structure *220, 221, 223, 225, 258, 261,* ***266, 268 to 269****, 270*
Work Activity Area ***186 to 187****, 192, 193, 198, 257,* ***264 to 265****, 266, 269, 270*
Cramlington Station *see under "Cramlington Town Centre" or "Railways - East Coast Main Line"*
Cramlington Town Centre
see also under "Concordia"
see also under "Shopping - Retail Warehouses"
General / Miscellaneous References *ii, iii, 11, 54, 138, 139, 141, 148,* ***149 to 152****, 153, 154, 155, 157, 158, 160, 161,* ***162****, 163, 170, 171, 191, 193, 202, 203, 204, 205, 207, 208, 210, 211, 219, 220, 227,* ***229 to 235****, 246, 250, 253, 254, 266, 270,* ***323***
Central Shopping Area ***150 to 153****, 157, 167, 192, 193,* ***230***
Central Square *138, 139, 230*
Manor Walks *149, 150, 151,* ***230****, 233*
Northern Expansion Site *160, 161, 162, 163, 192, 193, 202, 204, 205,* ***230 to 232****, 233, 250, 323*
Police Station *230*
Retail Frontage / Shopping Block Policy *150, 151, 168, 193*
Cramlington Village *229, 233*
Conservation Area *26*
Crêches *164 to 165*
Cricket *127, 254, Appendix XIX*
Crime Prevention *36, 75, 77, 111,* ***112, 113, 115****, 219, 239, 247, 259, 274*
Security Shutters *36, 37*
Crofton shopping area *158*
Crofton Mill, (Existing Industrial Area and Surrounding Land - including Crofton Field / Moor areas)
see also under "Mixed Uses"
General / Miscellaneous References *ii, iii, 134, 135, 145,* ***146****, 180, 194, 195, 227,* ***309 to 313, 324 to 325***
Housing *91, 92,* ***108****, 109*
Master Plan *310*
Croft Road *242*
Culs-de-sac *115*
Cultural Facilities *ii, 79, 113, 125,* ***160 to 163****, 232, 286, 287*
Curtilage of a Building
see under "Buildings"

Cycle Routes/Facilities / Footpath - Cycleways *iii, 7, 70, 77, 79, 111, 113, 115, 131, 136, 143, 144, 152, 175,* ***201 to 206****, 212, 216, 225, 231,* ***232, 233****, 249, 250, 251, 252,* ***253****, 261, 263, 264, 266,* ***269 to 270****, 273, 274, 276, 278, 279, 281, 282, 283, 284, 286, 287, 288, 289, 292, 293, 310, 311, 313, 320, 323, 324, 326*
Mountain Biking *176*
Damdykes *7, 207, 269*
Dangerous Structures
see under "Conservation Areas - Dangerous Structures within
Darras Hall *105*
Daylighting
see under "Residential Amenity"
Deep Coal Mining
see under "Mineral Extraction"
Delaval Street Workshops *180, 185, 196*
Delivery Arrangements to Shops *154, 246*
see also under "Heavy Goods Vehicles" and "Back Lanes Policy, Blyth Town Centre"
Demolition
see under "Conservation Areas - demolition within"
see under "Housing - Demolition etc."
see under "Listed Buildings - demolition / removal of"
Density of Development in general *31, 33, 53, 114, 115, 120, 250, 251, 259, 264, 265*
see also Under Housing - High Density
see also Under Housing - Low Density (Executive)
Dentists' Surgeries
see under "Health"
Department of Culture, Media and Sport
see especially under "Conservation"
Department of Education and Science
see especially under "Education"
Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions
see in particular "Central Government - Planning Guidance"
Depots *see under "Work Activity - Storage"*
Derelict Buildings *see especially under "Housing" and "Green Belt"*
Derelict Land and its Reclamation *ii, 6, 8, 10, 14,* ***18 to 19****, 108, 138, 139, 195, 197, 254, 297, 298, 311, 313, 326,* ***Appendix VI***
Design *This is an important aspect of the Local Plan and there are references throughout the document, but see in particular, under "Visual Character of Built Environment"*
Design Guidance *36, 114, 115, 186*
Detached *see under "Housing - Semi-Detached / Detached"*

Development Contribution
see under "Commuted Payments"
Development Control ***74 to 77****,* ***321****,* ***Appendix XII***
see also "Planning Permission"
Development Control Scheme *147*
Development Plan, The *iii, iv,* ***74****, 321*
Dewley Place, Hall Close Grange, Cramlington *109, 158*
Disabled People
Access (general) / Facilities for *see under "Pedestrians etc. Access"*
Adaptations / Access to Dwellings *see under "Housing - Adaptations" and "Access Ways to Properties"*
as Drivers *246, 247*
Dish Aerials *44*
see also under "Satellite Dishes"
Distributor Roads
see under "Roads"
District Centre
see under "Shopping"
Doctors' Surgeries
see under "Health"
Do-It-Yourself Stores *see under "Shopping - Retail Warehouses"*
Double Row *145, 146, 180, 183, 184, 185,* ***200****, 208, 219, 220, 298, 326*
Drainage ***14 to 15****, 19, 66, 67, 68, 77, 109, 128, 131, 171, 249, 270, 276, 278, 282, 291, 324*
Drives
see under "Access Ways to Properties"
Druridge Bay *7*
Druridge Drive
see under "Newsham Farm"
Dual Use of Facilities *127, 129, 131, 137, 142, 143, 162, 252, 265, 277, 279*
Dudley *61, 187*
Dudley Lane *184, 185, 187, 198, 199, 234*
Dun Cow Quay
see under "Blyth Quayside"
Durable Goods
see under "Shopping - Comparison"
Durham, County *53, 222*
Durham Road, Cramlington *256*
Dwellinghouses / Dwelling Stock
see under "Housing"

Earsdon *8*
Earth Summit *i*
East Coast Railway
see under "Railways"
East Cramlington *iii, 52,* ***57 to 59****, 60, 61, 93, 134, 175, 176, 177, 180, 183, 184, 185,* ***199****, 224, 225, 228, 326*
Sports Park Site *175,* ***176 to 177****, 222, 224, 225*
East Cramlington Pond *2*
East Drive, Blyth *281, 288*
Eastfield Estates, Cramlington *159, 203*

BLYTH VALLEY DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

WRITTEN STATEMENT, May 1999

INDEX

Eastfield Park, Cramlington ***254***, *256*
East Hartford *iii, 52,* ***57 to 59***, *93, 159, 203, 205, 228, 253*
East Park View, Blyth *218*
East-West Link Road, Cramlington
see under "Roads"
Economic Development / The Local Economy *i, 75 to 77, 179 to 200, 305, 306, 321 to 326* ***Appendices XXIII and XXIV*** *N.B. Various other references throughout document to this overall aim*
Education - Locations of
see under "Schools" for individual schools / school related topics
ii, 20, 40, 43, 70, 79, 106, 109, 113, ***125***, *131, 134,* ***144 to 147***, *148, 164, 179, 183, 204, 249, 252, 253, 256, 258, 264, 266, 267, 270, 271, 273, 276, 277, 279, 281, 308, 309, 310, 312, 313, 325*
Further / Higher *145,* ***146***
Elderly People
see under "Pensioners"
see also "Residential Care Homes"
Elsdon Ave, Seaton Delaval
158
Electricity Supply *39, 47, 270*
see also under "Energy"
Electricity Pylons *12, 18, 48, 258, 264, 265, 266, 267, 270*
Emergencies / Emergency Services *42, 115, 125,* ***164 to 165***, *218, 230*
Employment
see under "Work Activity"
Enclosure, means of *68*
English Nature *see under "Nature Conservancy Council"*
Energy
Conservation *i, ii, 1, 46,* ***48 to 49***, *51, 52, 75, 77, 79, 80, 87,* ***112***, ***114, 115***, *148, 179, 190, 191, 192, 201, 209,* ***259***, ***261***, *321,* ***Appendix XXVI***
Generation in general
ii, 1, 39, ***46 to 49***, *270*
Recovery (from Waste)
17, 40, 41
Renewable Generation
1, ***46 to 49***
Enforcement ***68***
Environment Agency *15, 16, 20, 270*
Environmental Appraisal of Local Plan ***iv***, *321,* ***Appendix I***
Environmental Enhancement, Local
ii, 1, 26, 30, ***34 to 38***, *56, 57, 70, 108, 109, 110, 119, 133, 154, 156, 157, 196, 197, 200, 229,* ***235***, *238, 295, 296, 300,* ***303***, *305, 307, 308,* ***316 to 317***, *318, 319, 323*
N.B. There are numerous policies and proposals throughout the document, one aim of which is the enhancement of the local environment.
Environmental Health *39*
Environmental Impact Assessments *1,2,* ***49 to 50***, *198, 222*
Equality of Opportunity *N.B. There are references to this overall aim throughout the Local Plan*
Equestrian Activities
see under "Horses"
Estate Agents *191*
Estate Distributor Roads
see under "Roads"
European Community / Regional Funding etc. *1, 44, 46, 74, 220, 305, 323, 324*
Executive Housing *see under "Housing - Low Density"*
Extension of Buildings *see under "Listed Buildings" or "Locally Listed Buildings"*
Dwellinghouses *see under "Houses, extension of"*

Factories *see under "Work Activity - Premises"*
Factory Shops *see under "Shopping"*
Families *97, 104, 106, 134, 135, 306*
Farmers / Farms
see also under "Agriculture"
Farm Conservation Plans *14*
Farm Diversification ***13 to 14***, *27, 64 to 67, 104, 156, 159, 170, 171*
Fauna *see under "Nature Conservation"*
Fenestration / Windows
31, 36, 46, 103, 105, 114, 115, 117, 240, 241, 251
Ferguson's Industrial Estate *185*
Ferry *see under "Blyth Ferry"*
Fifteenth Avenue, Blyth *108, 109, 158*
Financial Services *see under "Professional and Financial Services"*
Financing of Community Facilities ***125 to 126*** *See also under "Planning Agreements" and "Commuted Payments"*
Fish and Chip Shops
see under "Hot Food Takeaways"
Fisher Lane
see under "Roads - A1068"
Fisher Lane, Land East of, Cramlington
see under "North Moor site" or "Cramlington, South-West - Work Activity Area"
Fishing *see under "Angling"*
Flooding, Potential for *15, 16*
Floodlighting *40, 129, 131, 277*
Flora *see under "Nature Conservation"*
Food and Drink Establishments *14,* ***166 to 167*** *see also under "Hot Food Takeaways" and "Public Houses"*
Footbridges *see under "Pedestrians"*
Footpaths *for countryside footpaths, see under "Network Strategy" for footpaths within the built-up area see under "Pedestrians"*
Footpath / Cycleways *see under "Cycle"*
Forestry *62 to 68*
see also under "Trees and Shrubs"
Forestry Authority *10*
Forum Way, Cramlington
232, 233, 234, 235
Freehold Street, Blyth *238, 246*
Freight *see under "Railways" or "Heavy Goods Vehicles"*
Front Street, Bebside *19, 196*
Front Street, High Pit *37, 157, 158*
Fulmar Drive *288*
Furnace Bank Bridge *9, 175*

Garages / Car Ports *see also under "Derelict Garage Sites"*
46, 116, 117, 219, 261, 309
Gardens *26*
see also under "Residential Amenity"
Walled, Seaton Delaval Estate
Garden Centres *320*
Gas Supply *244, 270*
General Improvement Areas
see under "Housing - Refurbishment"
General Permitted Development Order
references throughout document; see glossary
Geology *see especially under "Nature Conservation" and "Ground Conditions"*
Glenluce Ct., Cramlington *154, 158*
Global Warming *see under "Greenhouse Effect"*
Gloucester Lodge *176*
Wartime Structures *19*
Go-karting *176*
Golf *64, 127, 169,* ***176 to 177***, *266*
see also under "Arcot" and "Blyth Golf Course"
Grassland *2, 4, 257, 258*
Greenhouse Effect *201*
Green Belt *ii, 6, 42, 51, 58, 59,* ***60 to 64***, *65, 66, 67,* ***120 to 121***, *122, 123, 141, 156, 176, 186, 187, 199, 200, 227, 264, 265, 292, 293, 298*
Restrictions on Development within *see under "Settlement Limits - Restrictions on Development beyond"*
Ground Conditions ***14 to 23***, *24*
Gut, The, Blyth Town Centre *237*
Gypsies, Accommodation Needs *95,* ***106***, ***109***

Habitats
see under "Nature Conservation"
Hartford Estates, Cramlington
221, 253
Hartley *see under "Seaton Sluice" or "New Hartley"*
Hartley Street West, Seaton Delaval
303
Hastings Park Estate, Seaton Delaval
18
Hathery Lane (Lonnen) *175*
Havelock Street Blyth *239*
Hazardous Substances
42, Appendix XI

BLYTH VALLEY DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

WRITTEN STATEMENT, May 1999

INDEX

Health / Health and Safety Considerations / Health Facilities
see also under "Hospitals"
2, 3, 9, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 71, 75, 77, 79, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 109, 113, 115, 125, 132, ***160 to 161****, 164, 190, 199, 200, 206, 211, 212, 214, 223, 224, 225, 231, 232, 238, 242, 252, 253, 264, 265*

Heathland *2*

Heavy Goods Vehicles *189, 199, 200, 201, 207, 208, 212, 216,* ***218****, 237, 246, 247, 307*

Hedgerows *4, 5, 12, 14, 111, 224, 225, 256, 258, 266, 274, 282, 283*

Hedley Avenue, Blyth *310, 311*
Land to r.o. ... / Plessey Ave. *92, 309*

Heritage Coast *169*

Heritage Conservation Area *26, 30, 189, 244, 245, 305, 307*

High Light, the *26*

High Pit / Klondyke *37, 154, 157, 158, 228*

High Pit Road *37, 157, 158, 216, 217*

Highway / Highway Authority
N.B. Numerous references throughout document; see also "Roads"

Hockey *127, 254, Appendix XIX*

Hodgsons Road, Blyth *92, 159, 216, 217*

Holywell *ii, 2, 7, 8, 18, 52,* ***57 to 59****, 60, 61, 100, 159, 175, 228, 296*

Holywell and Coast AHLV *7*

Holywell Dene *7, 8, 170,* ***174 to 175***

SNCI *2*

Holywell Pond *2*

Holywell Village Conservation Area *8,* ***26***

Homelessness *79*

Horses / Horse Riding / Bridleways *7, 18, 19, 77, 174, 175, 176, 177, 201, 203, 205, 222, 225, 269, 317, Appendix XXIX*

Horticulture *see under "Agriculture"*

Horton Burn *253, 256*

Horton Drive, Cramlington *133, 253, 254, 255*

Horton Park ***254 to 255***

Hospitals
Community *40, 160, 161, 232*
see also "Blyth Community Hospital"
Rake Lane (North Tyneside) *160*
Wansbeck (Ashington) *160*

Hotels
see under "Visitor Accommodation"

Hot Food Take-Aways / Restaurants *36, 154, 156, 157, 159,* ***166 to 167****, 264, 286, 302, 316, 317*

Household Size, Average *80*

Housing
see also references under area specific headings
Main and Miscellaneous References *ii,* ***79 to 123****, 130, 135, 209*
Adaptations / Specialised Extensions *ii,* ***104 and 107****,* ***117 to 118***
Affordable *ii, 72, 73, 87, 88, 89, 93,* ***95 to 101****, 103, 104, 209, 211, 228, 243,* ***252****, 253, 262,* ***263****, 272, 278, 279, 282, 283, 292, 293, 295, 298, 299, 301 323, 324, 325,* ***Appendices XV and XVI***
Associations *99, 101, 242*
Authority ***81****, 93, 95, 97, 98, 99, 101, 103, 104, 119,* ***Appendices XIV and XV***
Commuter *95, 106*
Countryside, Housing in the
see also under "Agricultural Dwellings"
61 to 68, 81, 104, 105, 117, 118, ***120 to 123***
Demolition / Restoration / Abandonment / Rebuilding *80, 81, 114,* ***118 to 119****,* ***123***
Design and Layout of New Housing Areas ***111 to 115***
Detached *see under "Housing - Semi-detached / Detached" below*
Elderly, Housing for *see under "Residential Care Homes", "Housing - Special Needs"*
Energy Efficient *see under "Energy Conservation"*
Environment of ***110 to 119***
Executive *see under "Housing - Low Density (Executive)" below*
Extensions to Dwellinghouses *32, 33, 62, 64, 65, 104, 107,* ***114****,* ***116 to 118****, 120, 121, 122*
Five Year Supply of Housing Land ***82****,* ***83****, 87, 93, 262, 291, 293*
High Density *100, 101, 209, 211, 298*
Improvements *see under "Housing - Refurbishment"*
Infill Sites *83,* ***84 to 86****, 91, 93, 94,* ***97****, 98, 99, 109, 116, 224, 228, 306*
In relation to other uses
see under "Mixed Uses"
Land Availability / Supply *52, 54, 55, 81,* ***82 to 94****, 97, 106, 108, 262, 291, 293,* ***Appendix II***
Land Allocations *82, 83, 84,* ***86 to 94****, 97,* ***108 to 109***
Layout
see under "Layout of Development"
Living over the Shop Housing Policy
see under "Blyth Town Centre"

Housing continued....
Low Density (Executive) *53, 95,* ***104 to 107****, 144, 261,* ***262****, 263, 264, 281*
Need / Demand / Market ***79 to 82****, 94,* ***95 to 107****, 110, 295*
Needs Assessment *95, 97, Appendix XVI*
see also under "Housing - Affordable"
Occupancy *see especially under "Agricultural Dwellings", "Mixed Uses", "Housing - Special Needs" and "Housing - Affordable"*
Older Terrace Housing *26, 31, 33, 91, 117, 118, 194, 195*
Owner Occupation *53*
Prices *95, 97, 101, Appendix XVI*
Refurbishment / Renovation / Renewal of Housing Stock *34, 80, 81,* ***98****,* ***119***
Requirement ***82 to 94***
N.B. This term is employed throughout the housing chapter - main reference only given
Role of town of Blyth ***54 to 57****,* ***90 to 92***
Role of town of Cramlington ***53 to 55****,* ***86 to 89****, 97*
Role of Seaton Delaval ***56 to 59****,* ***93 to 94****, 96, 97*
Role of Villages ***57 to 59****,* ***93 to 94****, 96, 97*
Self-Build *99, 100, 105,* ***114****, 250, 251, 272, 274, 299*
Semi-detached / Detached *53, 91, 106, 107, 250*
Sheltered *see under "Special Needs"*
Special Design Sites *88, 89, 91, 92, 94, 100,* ***114 to 115****,* ***250 to 251****, 252, 261,* ***262 to 263****, 272, 275, 281,* ***282 to 283****, 299*
Special Needs *80, 85, 92, 95,* ***103 to 107****,* ***117****,* ***118****,* ***252****, 262, 263* *see also under "Housing - Affordable", "Residential Care Homes"*
Stock / Stock Condition ***80 to 81****, 95, 98, 99, 104, 116, 133, 191, 261, 296*
Waiting List *81, 103, 244*
Windfall Sites *82, 83,* ***84 to 85****, 86, 91, 93,* ***97****, 98, 99,* ***108****, 109*

Housing Office *56, 291*

Hunter Avenue, Land to r.o. *92, 309*

Hydrology *see under "Water Table etc."*

Implementation of Plan's Policies (general) *i, iii, iv,* ***321 to 326***

Incomes *see especially Appendix XVI*

Indoor Sport *ii, 113, 125, 126,* ***141 to 143****, 265, 267, 277, 279*

BLYTH VALLEY DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

WRITTEN STATEMENT, May 1999

INDEX

Industrial Estates
see under "Work Activty - Land for General and Local Employment and Business Park Use" or under names of individual Industrial Estates
Industry / Industrial
see under "Work Activity"
Industrial Improvement Areas *34*
Infill Development *16, 31*
see also "Housing - Infill Sites"
Infrastructure Provision
ii, 62, ***64****, 65, 69, 73, 75, 76, 77, 86, 92, 201, 203, 259, 261, 270, 278, 279, 291, 293, 322, 323, 324*
Inner Relief Road, Blyth
see under "Roads"
Interpretation Boards and other similar Aids *38, 71, 174*
Isabella *162, 163, 203*
Isabella Road *202*

Jobs *see under "Work Activity"*

Keel Row *see under "Blyth Town Centre"*
King Street, Blyth *242*
Kitty Brewster Bridge *8, 174*
Kitty Brewster Industrial Estate
see under "Blyth Industrial Estates"
Klondyke *see under "High Pit"*
Lancastrian Way, Cramlington
221, 266
Landfilling / Landfill sites
see under "Waste Disposal"
Landscape / Landscaping
ii, 1, 4, ***6 to 12****, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20, 24, 26, 28, 31, 33, 34, 35, 37, 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 53, 59, 62, 63, 64, 68, 73, 75, 76, 77, 86, 105, 106, 110, 112, 113, 115, 121, 122, 123, 133, 138, 171, 173, 175, 176, 177, 179, 186, 187, 190, 192, 194 to 200, 218, 219, 220, 224, 225, 227, 230, 235, 236, 241, 247, 251, 254,* ***256****,* ***258****, 259, 261, 262,* ***265 to 267****, 269, 270, 271, 272,* ***274 to 275****, 278, 279, 282, 283, 286, 287,* ***288****, 292, 293, 299, 313, 316, 317, 323, 324, 326,* ***Appendices III & IV***
Areas of High Landscape Value, (AHLV's) *see also under specific AHLV's ii, 2,* ***7 to 8****, 10, 19, 20, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 187, 227, 258, 262,* ***Appendix III***
Landscape Strategy
8, 10, 12, 14, 48, 110, ***Appendix IV***
Landscape Structures ***11, 12****, 86, 87, 111, 113, 196, 198, 199, 220, 251,* ***256****,* ***258****, 261,* ***267****, 270, 271, 272,* ***274 to 275****, 278, 279, 292, 293, 324*
Land Supply *52 see especially under "Housing - Land Availability"*
Lanercost
Local Nature Reserve *2, 4*
Playing Space *135*
Laundry Services *168*
Laverock Hall Road *see under "South-West Newsham" or "Roads - A1061"*
Layout of Development *ii, 31, 33, 35, 39, 75, 104, 110,* ***111 to 115****, 116, 126, 132, 133, 135, 145, 164, 165, 191, 195, 196, 200, 206, 211, 231, 250, 251, 258, 259, 261, 263, 274, 277, 282*
Leisure and Visitor Facilities / Activities *see also under "Tourism", "Playing Space" etc. ii, 9, 20, 34, 62, 63, 79, 106, 108, 109, 126, 127, 130, 162, 168,* ***169 to 177****, 179, 190, 197, 219, 220, 231, 237, 244, 245, 305, 306, 315 to 320, 325*
Leisure Centres
see under "Indoor Sport"
Level Crossings *156, 266, 269*
Libraries *70, 160, 161, 264*
Cowpen *162*
Cramlington *230, 233, 270*
Light Industry *see under "Work Activity - Land for General ... etc."*
Lighting ***206****, 288*
see also under "Street Furniture" and "Floodlighting"
Links *see under "Blyth Links"*
Links Road, Blyth *190, 216, 217, 218, 312, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320*
Listed Buildings and Structures, their Demolition, Alteration etc.
see also "Locally Listed Buildings" ***24 to 26****, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 63, 64, 66, 104, 107, 307, 315, 316, 317, 325,* ***Appendix VII***
Listed Building Consent ***24 to 25****, 45*
Litter *166, 167, 239, 252*
Living over the Shop *see under "Blyth Town Centre"*
Local Agenda 21 (LA21) ***i***
Local Areas for Action *see under "Blyth Quayside", "Crofton Mill", "Blyth Links"*
Local Distributor Roads
see under "Roads"
Local Economy
see under "Economic Development"
Local Housing Plan *81*
Locally Listed Buildings (The "Local List") ***25 to 26, Appendix VIII***
Local Nature Reserves *see under "Nature Conservation, Designated Sites" and "Lanercost - Local Nature Reserve"*
Lynemouth *188*

Maintenance / Management
Term much used throughout document; see especially under "Planning Agreements"
Manners Gardens, Seaton Delaval *298*
Manor Walks *see under "Cramlington Town Centre"*
Maddison Street, Blyth *245, 246*
Mansel Terrace, Bebside *180, 185,* ***197****, 326*
Markets, general *154, 241*
Market Square, Blyth *see under "Blyth Town Centre - Market / Market Square"*
Market Street, Blyth
214, 240, 241, 247
Marlow St., Blyth *158, 202*
Master Plans *see under various area headings*
Masts / Towers etc. *see also under "Telecomunications"*
Material Considerations in Planning Decisions ***74 to 77***
Materials
see under "Building Materials"
Mausoleum, Seaton Delaval Estate *26*
Mayfield *203*
Meadows *255*
see also under "Grasslands"
Medical *see under "Health"*
Meeting Halls
see under "Community Centres etc."
Meggies Burn *171,* ***176 to 177***
Metro *see under "Tyne and Wear"*
Microclimate *316*
Migration *see under "Population"*
Mineral Extraction *ii, 2, 14,* ***16 to 17****, 18, 39, 54, 74, 179, 183, 186, 207, 254, 295,* ***Appendix V***
Mineral Planning Authority
16, 17, 18
Minerals Local Plan *17*
Minibuses *see under "Buses" or "Taxis"*
Minicabs *see under "Taxis"*
Mining *see under "Mineral Extraction"*
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food *13, 74*
Mixed Use Areas / Mixed Development
ii, 58, 79, 81, 90, 92, 97, ***108 to 109****, 146, 154, 168, 173, 179,* ***192 to 195****, 242, 243, 298,* ***299 to 301****, 305,* ***306****,* ***310 to 311****, 312, 316*
Mobile Classrooms *see under "Buildings - Temporary"*
Model Aircraft Flying *176*
Monitoring ***321***
Moor Farm Area *see under "South Cramlington Work Activity Area"*
Moor Farm Roundabout
see under "Roads - A19"
Moths *2*
Motor Cars *see under "Roads" or "Car Show Rooms"*
Movement ***201 to 226***
This is the main reference only. The movement of people and goods is covered throughout the Plan
Museum(s) *160, 162, 163, 208*

National Grid *49*
National Park *7, 169*
National Playing Fields Association, (N.P.F.A.) *127 to 131, 132, 133,* ***Appendices XVIII and XIX***
National Radiological Protection Board *265*
Nature Conservancy Council, (English Nature) *1, 2, 3*

BLYTH VALLEY DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

WRITTEN STATEMENT, May 1999

INDEX

Nature Conservation *i, ii,* ***1 to 6****, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 24, 39, 41, 48, 63, 66, 67, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 75, 77, 110, 111, 113, 130, 138, 139, 169, 171, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 188, 201, 203, 222, 225, 227,* ***254 to 256****, 258, 278, 279, 312, 313, 316, 317, Appendix XXII*

Designated Sites
see also under individual SPA / SSSI's / SNCI's etc.
ii, ***1 to 4****, 5, 6, 44, 48, 188, 189, 227, 257, 258, 265, 270, 305, 306*

Neighbourhood Facilities
see under "Community Facilities"

Nelson Drive, Cramlington *221, 266*

Nelson Industrial Estate *see under "Cramlington - North-West Work Activity Areas"*

Nelson Village *183, 184*

Network Strategy / Public Rights of Way *ii, 7, 18, 59, 76, 77, 169,* ***174 to 175****, 176, 177, 198, 201, 202,* ***205****, 253, 266, 273, 274, Appendix XXIX*

Newcastle *57, 106, 149, 160, 208, 224, 233*

Airport *see under "Airport"*

Newcastle Road, Blyth
99, 282, 283, 284, 292
see also under "South Newsham Road / Back ..., Land at"

New Delaval Workshops
see under "Delaval Street"

New Hartley *iii, 52,* ***57 to 59****, 60, 61, 100, 159, 171, 183, 207, 208,* ***224****, 225, 228, 298*

New Hartley Pond *2*

Newlyn Drive *231*

Newsham *156, 158, 175, 188, 202, 203, 207, 208, 284, 291*
see also under "Newsham Farm" or "South-West Newsham"

Newsham Farm, Druridge Drive Shops
109, 158

Newsham Road *205*

Newton Aycliffe *53*

New Town *see under "Cramlington"*

Noise *4, 18, 39,* ***40****, 41,* ***42****,* ***43****, 131, 166, 171, 181, 195, 222, 274, 305, 309,* ***Appendix XXVIII***
see also under "Aircraft Noise"

Nordale Way, Blyth *158*

North Blyth *226*

Northburn Estates, Cramlington *88, 89, 99, 221, 250, 251, 252, 253*

Northburn Playing Fields
5, 130, 133, 138, 139, ***254****,* ***255***

North-East Cramlington *see under "Cramlington, North-East"*

North Moor site, South-West Cramlington, (land East of Fisher Lane) *89, 261, 262, 263, 265, 266, 267*

North Shields Passenger Ferry Terminal *169*

North Tyneside *1, 2, 8, 57, 60, 61, 160, 175, 199, 208, 224, 258*

Northumberland County Council
various references throughout document

Northumberland County Structure Plan
There are numerous refernces to this Strategic Planning document throughout the Local Plan

Northumberland Shore SSSI and SPA *1, 2,* ***188 to 189****, 305, 306*

Northumberland Waste Management Plan / Northumberland Waste Local Plan *see under "Waste"*

Northumberland Wildlife Trust *3*

Northumbrian Road, Cramlington *217, 221, 250, 252, 254, 256, 266*

Nursery Schools *see under "Schools"*

Obelisk, Seaton Delaval Estate *26*

Offices *ii, iv, 26, 43, 44, 79, 108, 168, 179, 180, 181, 186,* ***191 to 193****, 194,* ***196****, 208, 230,* ***232****, 238, 239, 242, 250, 264, 273, 302, 306, 310, 311*

Ogle Drive, Blyth *221, 223, 278, 279*

Old Hartley *see under "Seaton Sluice"*

OneNE *see under "Regional Development Agency"*

Opencasting *see under "Mineral Extraction"*

Open Space (General) *5,* ***6****, 7,* ***34 to 35****, 53, 73, 79, 110, 111, 113, 115, 116, 117, 125, 126, 127 to 137,* ***138 to 140****, 141, 142, 177, 187, 231, 235, 241, 249,* ***254 to 255****, 257, 258, 263,* ***266****, 267, 270, 271, 274, 276, 277, 279, 282, 283, 286, 288, 289, 292, 293, 302, 303, 310, 311, 312, 313, 323, 324, 325,* ***Appendix XXII***
Visual Aspects of ***34 to 35****, 139, 140, 141, 146, 147*

Orientation of Development
see under "Layout of Development" and "Energy Conservation"

Outline Planning Application *68*
numerous specific references throughout document

Out of Town Shopping
see under "Shopping"

Overdevelopment *116 to 117*

Overlooking *see under "Residential Amenity"*

Overshadowing *see under "Layout of Development" and "Energy Conservation"*

Owner Occupation *see under "Housing - Owner Occupation"*

Park and Ride *208, 212, 219*

Parking Provision / Requirements / Standards *8, 11, 27, 31, 67, 68, 75, 77, 86, 103, 105, 111, 113, 129, 131, 145, 154, 163, 166, 167, 170, 173, 177, 193, 194, 195, 200, 208, 212, 214, 217,* ***219 to 220****, 229, 230, 232, 233, 234, 235, 237, 238, 242, 243, 244, 245,* ***246 to 247****, 254, 255, 264, 286, 287, 296, 298, 300, 301, 302, 303, 308, 316, 317, 318, 319, 323* ***Appendix XVII***

Park Road, Blyth *158, 216, 217, 310, 311, 312*

Parks *see under "Playing Space - Outdoor", "Public Open Space", "Gardens", or the individually named parks*

Parsons Street, Blyth *239*

Partnership Aproach
i, 169, 249, Appendix XXIII

Pavements
see under "Pedestrian Facilities"

Pedestrian Crossings *see also under "Pedestrian Facilities"*
111, 150, 203, ***206****, 231, 232, 233, 234, 253, 270*

Pedestrians etc. Access / Facilities
see also under "Housing - Adaptations" and "Network Strategy / Public Rights of Way"
(for references to footpath / cycleway links see under "Cycle")
iii, 7, 18, 36, 37, 75, 76, 77, 103, 105, 111, 112, 113, 115, 131, 136, 139, 143, 144, 149, 150, 152, 153, 155, 160, ***201 to 206****, 209, 211, 212, 214, 216, 219, 220, 222, 225, 230, 231,* ***232 to 233****, 234, 238, 239, 241, 244, 245, 246, 247, 249, 250, 251, 252,* ***253****, 254, 261, 263, 264, 266,* ***269 to 270****, 273, 274, 276, 278, 279, 281, 282, 283, 284, 286, 287, 288, 296, 298, 302, 307, 308, 316,* ***320****, 323, 324*

In relation to Shops / Services (Pedestrian Priority Areas etc.) *37, 154, 214, 234, 238, 245, 246, 247, 307*

Pensioners / People of Pensionable Age
see also "Residential Care Homes"
80, 97, ***103 to 105****, 209, 283*

Percent for Art *35,* ***38***

Permitted Development Rights or their Removal *2, 3, 13,* ***22 to 23****, 24, 27, 28, 29, 44, 45, 64, 114, 116, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123*

Peterlee *53*

Petrol Stations
see under "Roadside Facilities"

BLYTH VALLEY DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

WRITTEN STATEMENT, May 1999

INDEX

Phasing of Development
*N.B. This Term is employed throughout the document; only the main references are given here 69, **87**, **90**, 94, 250, 254, **261 to 263**, 264, 266, 270, 279, 291, 293, 297, 298, 299, 310, 311*

Pipelines ***226***

Planning Agreements / Obligations
This term is used throughout the document, (see also glossary), and only the main references are given here ***68 to 73****, 130, 135,* ***216****,* ***217****, 257, 261, 263,* ***270****, 271, 279, 292,* ***321 to 326***

Planning Applications ***68*** *N.B. This Term is employed throughout the document but explained fully on the page indicated here*

Planning Conditions
68*,* ***Appendix XII*** *N.B. This Term is employed throughout the document but explained fully on the pages indicated here.*

Planning Guidance *see under "Supplementary Planning Guidance", and "Central Government - Planning Guidance"*

Planning Permission ***68 to 77***
N.B. This Term is employed throughout the document but explained fully on the pages indicated here

Planning Policy Guidance Notes
see under "Central Government - Planning Guidance"

Playing Fields *see under "Playing Space (outdoor)" or "Private Sports Grounds" or "Schools"*

Playing Space (outdoor)
ii, 18, 19, ***34 to 35****, 62, 63, 64, 65, 70, 71, 72, 79, 113, 125, 126,* ***127 to 137****, 138, 139, 140, 146, 147, 148, 162, 253,* ***254 to 255****, 264,* ***266 to 267****, 270, 271,* ***276****,* ***277****, 278, 279, 285, 286,* ***288 to 289****, 292, 293,* ***299 to 301****,* ***Appendices XVIII, XIX & XX***
see also under "Children's Playing Needs"
All Weather Surfaces
128, 129, 131, 277, 323

Plessey Avenue
see under "Hedley Avenue / ..., Land to r.o" and "Hunter Avenue"

Plessey Road *145, 146, 158, 196, 216, 217, 285, 305, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312*

Plessey Road / Park Rd. Shopping area *158*

Plessey Wagonway *175*

Plessey Woods *2, 175*

Poets Estate *203*

Police Authority *115, 230*

Policy Considerations in relation to Planning Decisions ***74 to 77***

Pollution and its Control *ii, 1, 12, 15, 18, 20,* ***39 to 43****, 44, 46, 67, 113, 179, 183, 184, 186, 197, 201, 305,* ***Appendix X***

Ponds *see under "Nature Conservation" or individual designated ponds*

Population Stats. / Census Indicators *51 to 57,* ***80****, 82, 90, 103, 125, 127 to 130, 132, 138, 139, 144, 145, 147, 149, 174, 201, 230, 237, 252, 257, 258, 264, 270, 271, 292, Appendix XVI, Appendix XXIII*

Porchester Drive, Cramlington *205*

Port of Blyth *ii, 55, 180, 183, 185, 186,* ***188 to 190****, 195,* ***196****, 197, 203, 205, 207,* ***218****, 226, 238,* ***305 to 308****, 315,* ***318 to 319****, 324*
Dun Cow Quay *see also under "Blyth Quayside" 189, 190, 196,* ***308***
Low Quay *218*
Operational Land *188, 189, 190, 306*
Rail / Coal Handling Facility *188, 195*
Roll-On - Roll-off Facilities *188*
South Gate *189, 218*
South Harbour *218*
South Timber Yard *190, 315, 319*
Wimbourne Quay *218*

Post Offices *105, 156, 168*

Pram Access *see under "Pedestrians etc. Access / Facilities"*

Pre-application Discussions ***68***

Premises *see under appropriate type of premises*

Pre-School Facilities *see under "Schools - Nursery Schools"*

Primary Roads *see under "Roads"*

Princess Louise Road *221, 223, 278, 279*

Privacy *see under "Residential Amenity"*

Private Sports Grounds *see especially* ***127 to 131***

Professional and Financial Services ***191 to 193****, 242*

Public Houses *160,* ***166 to 167****, 252, 264, 316, 317*

Public Open Space
see under "Open Space (General)"
see also under "Playing Space"

Public Rights of Way *see under "Network Strategy"*

Public Toilets *168*

Public Transport *see also under "Buses" and "Railways" 51, 71, 94, 100, 105, 106, 107, 109, 131, 136, 143, 144, 145, 146 148, 149, 152, 155, 159, 160, 162, 163, 167, 187, 191, 192, 193, 201, 203,* ***207 to 211****, 216, 218, 219, 233, 234,* ***246 to 247****, 252,* ***269****, 273, 274, 284, 296, 298, 323*

Pushchair Access *see under "Pedestrians etc. Access / Facilities"*

Pylons *see under "Electricity Pylons"*

Quay Road, Blyth *189, 218, 305, 307*

Quayside *see under "Blyth Quayside"*

Rail / Coal Handling Facility
see under "Port of Blyth"

Railways
General / Miscellaneous References
4, 12, 35, 76, 77, 79, 201, 203, 205, ***207 to 208****, 211, 212, 226,* ***233****, 238, 269, 309*
Ashington to Newcastle Line
91, 99, 171, 203, 205, ***207 to 208****, 271, 275, 278, 279, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 292, 297, 298, 300, 301, 324*
Branch - Newsham Junction to Port *185, 188, 195, 207*
East Coast Main Line (London to Edinburgh Line) *60, 183,* ***207 to 208****, 210, 221, 231,* ***233****, 257, 258, 261, 265, 266, 268, 269, 270*

RAMSAR Sites *see under "Nature Conservation - Designated Areas"*

Reclamation *see under "Derelict Land"*

Recreation *see under "Leisure / Visitor Activities", "Countryside Recreational Activities", "Playing Space" or other individual topics*

Recycling Facilities ***17****, 71*

Refuse Collection *17, 109, 171*

Regent Street, Blyth *214, 216, 217, 218, 237, 238, 241, 246*

Regional Development Agency (OneNE) *324, Appendix XXIII*

Regional Guidance *see under "Central Government - Planning Guidance"*

Religious Buildings *20, 160,* ***161 to 163****, 264, 286, 287*

Renewable Energy *see under "Energy"*

Renovation of Housing Stock
see under "Housing - Refurbishment"

Renwick Rd., Blyth *158*

Research and Development *181, 186, 192, 264, 273*

Reserved Matters (in relation to a Planning Application") *68*

Residential Amenity
ii, 34, 39, 40, 41, 43, 45, 47, 48, 49, 75, 77, 84, 85, 86, 103, 105, 109, ***112****,* ***114 to 119****, 135, 159, 160, 163, 166 to 167, 189, 193, 194, 195, 197, 199, 200, 223, 225, 242, 243, 259, 278, 279, 286, 287, 288, 292, 293, 301, 302, 303, 306, 307, 312, 319*

Residential Care Homes *32, 33,* ***103 to 105****, 209, 211, 263*

Residential Development / Area
see under "Housing"

Rest Homes *see under "Residential Care Homes"*

Rest of District *(Term used in relation to Housing Land outside Blyth and Cramlington)*
see under "Housing"

BLYTH VALLEY DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

WRITTEN STATEMENT, May 1999

INDEX

Restaurant *see under "Hot Food"*
Retailing *see under "Shopping"*
Ribbon Development *60*
Ridley Avenue *216, 217*
Ridley Park *138, 196*
Ridley Street, Blyth *306*
Rink Street, Blyth *244*
River Blyth, (including AHLV's, SNCI's, Riverside Walk and Catchment Management Plan) *2, 7, 8, 9, 15,* ***174 to 175****, 188, 190, 194, 197, 198, 208, 226, 253, 305*
Estuary Management Plan *174, 194*
Roads / Motor Vehicles on etc. General / Miscellaneous References *12, 35, 39, 41, 59, 60, 66, 71, 76, 77, 79, 103, 105, 106, 109, 110,* ***111 to 115****, 133, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 152, 155, 164, 166, 167, 171, 175, 179, 182, 186, 187, 188, 197, 200, 201, 202, 203, 205, 206, 207, 209, 211,* ***212 to 225****, 226, 229, 231, 232, 233, 235, 238, 245, 246, 247, 249, 253, 256, 261, 266,* ***268****,* ***269****, 270, 272,* ***273 to 274****,* ***275****, 278, 279, 283,* ***284****, 291, 296, 297, 298, 305, 308, 309, 315, 318*
A1 *215*
A19 (T) (inc. Moor Farm Roundabout) *152, 155, 170, 182, 187, 198, 215,* ***222****, 224, 258, 266, 268*
A189 South-East Northumberland Spine Road *10, 148, 176, 177, 182, 192, 199, 215, 217, 221, 222, 223, 266, 268, 271, 274, 275*
A190 *9, 200, 215, 224, 296, 298, 299, 326*
A192 *187, 197, 198, 199, 203, 205, 215, 221, 225, 253, 256, 266, 268, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301*
A193 *175, 215, 217, 221, 224, 228, 316, 317 see also "Cowpen Road", "Rotary Way" etc.*
A1061 Laverock Hall Rd. / S. Newsham Rd etc. *92, 99, 156, 176, 177, 202, 209, 212, 215, 216, 221, 281, 282, 284, 285, 291, 292, 293*
A1068 Fisher Lane etc. *60, 186, 187, 198, 215,* ***224****, 225, 258, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270*
A1171 *see also under "Dudley Lane", "Crow Hall Lane" 202, 221, 253, 268*
B1322 Backworth Lane ***224****, 225*

Roads / Motor Vehicles etc. continued....
B1326 East Cramlington Road *176, 177, 199,* ***224****, 225*
B1505 *221*
Cramlington Inner and Outer Boxes *see under "Cramlington - Movement"*
East-West Link Road, Cramlington *156, 177, 176, 177, 203, 205, 209, 216, 217,* ***221 to 223****, 228,* ***231****, 232, 233,* ***234***
Inner Relief Road, Blyth *216, 217, 238, 244, 245, 246*
Safety *included under "Health / Health and Safety"*
Seaton Burn Roundabout *152*
Traffic generation /problems on *iii, 39, 41, 42, 67, 76, 84, 105, 111, 115, 154, 166, 167, 171, 175, 176, 181, 188, 189, 199, 200, 203, 207, 209,* ***212 to 225****, 228, 232, 234, 237, 238, 242, 243, 244,* ***245 to 247****, 253, 262, 266, 269, 273, 278, 286, 291, 296, 302, 303, 307, 308, 309*
Roadside Facilities *156, 158,* ***292 to 293***
Rocky Island *26*
Roller Shutters *see under "Crime Prevention - Security Shutters"*
Rosamund Street *310*
Rosemary Terrace, Blyth *37, 309,* ***312***
Rotary Way, Blyth *312, 313, 320*
Rothbury *56*
Rugby *127, 176, Appendix XIX*

Safety *see under "Health" or "Crime Prevention"*
Sailbording *see under "Watersports"*
Saint Mary's Island *8*
Salt Marshes *2, 4*
Sand Dunes *2, 4, 173, 174, 190, 315*
Sand Extraction *see under "Mineral Extraction"*
Sandringham Drive, South Beach, Blyth *see also under "South Beach" 92, 223, 282, 283, 284*
Sandringham Park, Blyth *285*
Satellite Dishes etc. *32, 33,* ***45 to 47***
Scheduled Ancient Monuments *see under "Ancient Monuments, Scheduled"*
Schools
General *see under "Education"*
Buildings ***146****,* ***147***
First Schools - General *70,* ***144****, 145, 162, 252, 253, 254, 257, 264, 267, 270, 309, 310,* ***312****, 313*
First School - Beaconhill *257*
First School - Burnside *162*
First School - Cowpen Road *277*
First School - Northburn *161, 163*

Schools continued....
First School - Plessey Road *145, 146, 309*
First School - Seaton Delaval *145, 146*
First School - Shanklea *161, 162, 163*
First Schools - South Beach *145, 146, 161, 281, 284, 286, 287*
High Schools - General *70,* ***144****, 145,* ***146****, 162*
High Schools - Cramlington, (including Site formerly reserved for) *142, 143, 144, 145, 249, 250, 252, 254, 265, 267, 270*
High Schools - Seaton Delaval *56, 142, 143, 144, 145*
High Schools - Ridley *143, 144, 145*
High Schools - Tynedale *129, 142, 143, 144, 145, 273, 274, 276, 277, 323*
Middle Schools - General *70,* ***144****,* ***145****, 162, 253, 264, 267, 281*
Middle School - Brockwell *252, 253*
Middle School - Parkside *252*
Middle School, Seaton Delaval *145, 146*
Middle School - Wensleydale *145, 202, 204, 312, 313*
Middle Schools - West Blyth *274, 277*
Nursery Schools *70, 145,* ***146***
Playing Fields *34, 127, 146, 147, 250, 267, 276, 277, 323*
Screening / Screen Planting *see under "Landscaping" or "Trees and Shrubs"*
Sea *see under "Coastline" and "Water Transport"*
Seahouses *56*
Sea Level Changes *14,* ***15 to 16****, 316, 317*
Seaforth Street, Blyth *see also under "Blyth Town Centre - Northern Opportunity Site"*
Seals *5*
Seating ***206****, 230, 241* *see also under "Street Furniture"*
Seaton Burn *61, 224*
Seaton Burn Roundabout *see under "Roads"*
Seaton Burn, The *7, 15* *see also under "Holywell Dene"*
Estuary SNCI *2*

BLYTH VALLEY DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

WRITTEN STATEMENT, May 1999

INDEX

Seaton Delaval
- ***General / Miscellaneous References*** *ii, iii, 18, 36, 37, 52,* ***56****, 57,* ***58****, 60, 61, 100, 152, 154, 175, 176, 180, 183, 184, 185, 191, 192, 193, 198, 199,* ***200****, 207, 208, 215, 216, 217, 219, 224, 227,* ***295 to 303****,* ***324****, 326*
- ***Community Facilities, including playing space / sport / educational / local shopping facilities*** *57, 127, 129, 131, 134, 135, 138, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145,* ***146****, 152, 154,155, 157, 158, 159, 167,* ***295 to 303***
- ***District Centre*** *see under "Shopping" or "Seaton Delaval - Community Facilities"*
- ***Frontage Policy*** *157, 192, 193,* ***302 to 303***
- ***Housing*** ***93 to 94****, 98, 99, 100, 108, 109, 295, 296, 297,* ***298 to 302***
- ***Parking in*** *219, 296, 298, 300, 301,* ***302 to 303***
- ***Shopping*** *see under "Shopping" or "Seaton Delaval - Community Facilities"*
- ***Wheatridge - Existing Housing Area*** *134, 135*
- ***Wheatridge Farm area*** *295, 296*
- ***Wheatridge Park Area, (proposed Master Plan area)*** *19, 93, 94, 98, 99,* ***108****, 109, 134, 135, 159,* ***296 to 301****, 324*

Seaton Delaval Estate *7, 8, 9, 10, 24, 26, 295, 296, 298*
- ***AHLV*** *7,* ***8***
- ***Conservation Area*** *26, 27, 30, 173, 298*

Seaton Delaval Hall *8, 24, 26, 170,* ***173***

Seaton Terrace, Seaton Delaval *57*

Seaton Sluice
- ***General Miscellaneous References*** *iii, 2, 7, 8, 9, 52,* ***57 to 58****, 60, 61, 100, 142, 159,* ***173****, 174, 175, 215, 219, 226, 228*
- ***Bridge*** *9*
- ***Fountain Head Bank*** *220*
- ***Harbour*** *26, 173, 220, 226*
- ***Sand Dunes*** *see under "Sand Dunes"*

Seaton Valley Urban District *257*

Seaton Valley Villages *There are many references to the Seaton Valley Villages in the document; see also under the individual village names, "Playing Space - Outdoor" and "Settlement Policy"*

Second Homes *80*

Secondary Roads *see under "Roads"*

Security *see under "Crime Prevention"*

Security Fencing *264, 265*

Security Shutters *see under "Crime Prevention - Security Shutters"*

Seghill
- ***General / Miscellaneous References*** *iii, 7, 9, 10, 18, 52, 56,* ***57 to 58****, 60, 61, 100, 127, 140, 159, 175,* ***182****, 183, 184, 185,* ***200****, 207, 208, 214, 215, 224, 228, 326*
- ***Industrial Area*** *180,* ***182****, 183, 184, 185,* ***200***
- ***Pit Lane*** *182, 200, 214*
- ***Seghill Hall*** *9, 10*

Seghill Waste Disposal Site *18*

Self-Build Housing *see under "Housing"*

Self-Catering Accommodation *see under "Visitor Accommodation"*

Semi-detached *see under "Housing"*

Separation Distances *see "Residential Amenity" or "Layout of Development"*

Service Centres, (Main, Local etc.) *see also under "Settlement Policy" and "Shopping"*
- ***Role of Blyth*** ***54 to 57****,* ***149 to 151****, 154, 157*
- ***Role of Cramlington*** ***53 to 55****,* ***149 to 151****, 154, 157*
- ***Role of Seaton Delaval*** ***56 to 58****,* ***154****,* ***157****,* ***295****, 298, 302 to 303*

Services in Shopping Centres ***148 to 159****,* ***Appendix XXV*** *see also under individual centres or individual subjects (e.g. "Banks")*

Servicing (of Shops) *see under "Delivery", "Heavy Goods Vehicles" or "Back Lanes...."*

Settlement Limits *this term is used throughout the document; main references only given here* ***59****,* ***Appendix IX***
- ***Restrictions on Development beyond*** ***61 to 65****,* ***120 to 123****, 170, 187, 296, 302*

Settlement Pattern in the Open Countryside *63, 66, 67*

Settlement Policy
- ***General / Miscellaneous References*** ***51 to 59****, 201, 209*
- ***New Settlements*** ***51***
- ***Role of Blyth*** ***54 to 57***
- ***Role of Cramlington*** ***53 to 55***
- ***Role of Seaton Delaval*** ***56****,* ***58****, 295*
- ***Role of Villages*** ***57 to 58***

Sewage, treatment / disposal *15, 109* *see also under "Water and Drainage"*

Shankhouse *175, 223* *see also under "Cramlington - North-East"*

Shanklea, Cramlington *see under "Schools"*

Shared Surfaces *111, 132*

Shop Fronts, Design aspects of *30, 32, 33, 35,* ***36 to 38****, 156, 238, 239, 240, 302*

Shop, Living over the *see under "Blyth Town Centre"*

Shopping *see also under "Service Centres" and individual location references*
- ***General / Miscellaneous References*** *ii, 12, 13, 14, 19, 36, 37, 54, 55, 56, 58, 79, 92, 99, 105,* ***108****,* ***109****, 113,* ***125****, 132,* ***148 to 159****, 161, 162, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 172, 175, 179, 191, 192, 193, 196, 197, 202, 203, 210, 212, 218, 228, 229,* ***230****, 232, 233, 237, 238,* ***239 to 241****, 242, 244, 245, 246, 247, 249, 264, 265, 267, 270, 271, 281,* ***286****,* ***287****, 296,* ***297 to 303****, 305,* ***Appendix XXV***
- ***Block Policy*** *see particularly under "Blyth Town Centre"*
- ***Bulky Goods*** *148, 149,* ***152****,* ***153****,* ***155****, 232, 244, 245*
- ***Comparison*** ***149****, 153*
- ***Convenience*** ***148 to 149****, 150, 151, 153, 154, 156, 158*
- ***Corner / Small Shops*** ***148 to 149****, 154,* ***158 to 159****, 305, 306, 307*
- ***Craft*** *305*
- ***District Centres, Existing / Proposed*** *see under individual areas or under "Local Centres" below*
- ***Edge of Town Centres*** ***150****,* ***152****,* ***153***
- ***Factory Shops*** ***153****,* ***155****, 305*
- ***Farm Shops*** *156*
- ***Impact Assessments*** ***150 to 153****,* ***155****, 156*
- ***Local Centres - New and Existing*** *see also under individual areas ii, 37, 56 to 58, 76, 104, 105,* ***108 to 109****, 113, 148, 152,* ***154 to 159****, 166, 167, 204, 228, 252, 270, 286, 287, 295, 296, 297,* ***302 to 303****, 305, 306, 307*
- ***Out of Town Centres*** *56, 148, 149,* ***152****, 153,* ***155****, 239*
- ***Retail Database*** *150*
- ***Retail Warehouses*** *54, 149,* ***152****,* ***153****,* ***155****, 162, 196, 197, 230*
- ***Supermarkets / Superstores, General*** ***148****, 151, 152, 154, 158, 171, 230, 238, 239, 264, 297*
- ***Supermarket, Brockwell Centre*** *see under "Brockwell Centre"*
- ***Supermarket, Regent St., Blyth*** *239, 246*
- ***Supermarket, Seaton Delaval*** *see under "Seaton Delaval - District Centre"*
- ***Supermarket, Wanley Street, Blyth*** *239, 246*
- ***Superstore / Hypermarket, Cramlington*** *see under "Cramlington Town Centre"*

BLYTH VALLEY DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN

WRITTEN STATEMENT, May 1999

INDEX

Shopping continued....
Superstore, West Blyth *158, 271, 273, 274, 278*
Town Centres *see under "Blyth .." and "Cramlington .." "Town Centres"*
in Villages ***156, 158, 159***
Warehouse Clubs ***153, 155***
Shutters *see under "Crime Prevention - Security Shutters"*
Signposting *175, 214*
Single Parent Households *80*
Single Person / Adult Households *80, 95*
Single Regeneration Budget *323, 324, Appendix XXIII*
Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (S.N.C.I.'s) *see under "Nature Conservation - Designated Areas"*
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (S.S.S.I.'s) *see under "Nature Conservation - Designated Areas"*
Sleekburn *221*
Soccer *127, 297, 299, Appendix XIX*
Social Services Authority / Offices *103, 104*
Solar Power *see under "Energy - Renewable Generation"*
Solingen Estate, Blyth *159, 289*
South Beach
General / Miscellaneous References *ii, iii, 11, 175, 220, 223, 227, 271,* ***281 to 289****, 291, 292, 310, 311, 313, 320,* ***324***
Community Facilities, including open spaces etc. *128, 129, 130, 134, 135, 138, 139, 145,* ***146****, 156, 159, 161, 163, 281,* ***286 to 289****, 292*
District Centre *156, 203, 281, 285,* ***286 to 287***
Housing *86, 90 to 92, 97, 99, 114, 281,* ***282 to 283****, 284,* ***285****, 288, 291*
Master Plans, Grid Diagram etc. ***281****, 282, 284, 285, 288, 324*
Pedestrian - Cycle Facilities *175, 202, 203, 204, 205, 281, 282, 283,* ***284****, 285, 287, 288, 289, 310, 311, 320*
Western Development Area *92, 93, 99, 159,* ***282****,* ***283****, 284, 286, 289*
South Cramlington Work Activity Area *11, 180,* ***182****, 183, 184, 185,* ***186****, 187,* ***198 to 199****, 326*
Southend Avenue, Blyth *158*
Southern Stream, Cramlington *258, 262, 265, 266, 267, 270*
South Newsham Reservoir SNCI *2, 285*
South Newsham Road / South Newsham Road Diversion *see under "Roads - A1061"*
South Newsham Road, Land at ... / Back Newcastle Rd *92, 99,* ***282 to 283***
South Newsham Road Playing Fields *see under "South Beach" or "Playing Space"*
South Timber Yard, Links Road, Blyth *see under "Port of Blyth"*
South-West Cramlington *see under "Cramlington, South-West"*
South-West Newsham *ii, iii, 11, 90 to 92, 99, 146, 159, 161, 209, 227,* ***291 to 293****,* ***324***
Master Plan *292*
Spacing between Houses *see especially "Residential Amenity"*
Special Design Sites *see under "Housing"*
Special Protection Area *see under "Nature Conservation - Designated Areas" and "Northumberland Shore"*
Species Protection / Protected Species ***4 to 5****, 24, 67, 198*
Spine Road *see under "Roads - A189 South-East Northumberland Spine Road"*
Sport
Indoor *see under "Indoor Sport"*
Outdoor *see under "Playing Space"*
Sports Park Site *see under "East Cramlington"*
Stadia *62, 64, 65*
Standard Planning Conditions *68,* ***Appendix XII***
Stanley Street, Blyth *238, 242*
Station Road, Cramlington *203, 205, 209, 216, 217, 221, 222, 223, 231, 232, 234, 235,* ***236****, 262, 263, 266, 268*
Station Street, Blyth *242, 246*
Stephenson Railway Museum *208*
Stone Walls *4, 5*
Storage *see under "Work Activity - Storage"*
Street Furniture *168, 206, 239*
Streetscape *see under "Visual Character of Built Environment"*
Structure Plan *see under "Northumberland County Structure Plan"*
Structure Planting *see under "Landscape Structure"*
Sub-Regional Growth Point *see under "Cramlington"*
Sunderland *208, 315*
Supermarkets / Superstores *see under "Shopping"*
Supplementary List of Buildings and Structures of Local Importance *see under "Locally Listed Buildings"*
Supplementary Planning Guidance *36, 68,* ***74 to 75****, 103,* ***Appendix XIII***
Surgeries *see under "Health" or "Veterinary"*
Sussex Street, Blyth *306*
Sustainable Development *i, 15, 39, 43, 52, 75, 77, 212, 219, 222, 321, Appendix I implicit throughout doucument; see also glossary*
Swaledale Avenue, Cowpen *109, 158*

Takeaways *see under "Hot Food Outlets"*
Tangmere Close *205*
Taxis / Minicabs *193, 246, 247*
Teeside *222*
Telecommunications ***44 to 47****, 168*
Temporary Buildings *see under "Buildings - Temporary"*
Tennis *127*
Terrace Housing *see under "Housing"*
Thoroton Street, Blyth *245*
Tipping *see under "Waste Disposal"*
Toilets *see under "Public Toilets"*
Tourism *20, 63, 64, 65, 158, 162,* ***169 to 177****,, 208, 219, 220, 315, 316*
Town Centre Management *see under "Blyth Town Centre"*
Townscape *see under "Visual Character of Built Environment"*
Traffic *see under "Roads"*
Traffic Calming / Traffic Management *111, 113, 200, 202, 203, 204,* ***205****, 211, 212,* ***214****,* ***216 to 217****, 222, 233, 238,* ***245 to 247****, 269, 273, 274, 296, 302, 303, 308, 326*
Travelling Homes *see under "Gypsies - Accommodation Needs" or "Visitor Accommodation"*
Trees and Shrubs *see also under "Hedgerows" ii, 2, 4, 5,* ***8 to 12****, 18, 26, 27,* ***28****, 29, 60, 75, 110, 113, 130, 138, 176, 194, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 222, 223, 224, 235, 246, 249, 256, 257, 258, 264, 265, 267, 270, 272, 274, 275, 282, 283, 288, 292, 293, 316, 323, 324*
Tree Preservation Orders (T.P.O's) ***9 to 10****, 28, 29*
Tynedale District *305*
Tynedale Drive *144, 162, 202, 273, 278, 279*
Tynemouth to Seaton Sluice SSSI *2*
Tyneside Conurbation *53, 57, 60, 144, 148, 152, 170, 174, 186, 207, 208, 222, 238, 257, 315*
Tyne and Wear Metro *207, 208*
Tyne Tunnel *222*

Unilateral Undertakings *69*
Union Street, Blyth *242, 245*
Urban Fringe *120*
Use Classes *see in particular under "Work Activity"*

Vacant Buildings *see under "Buildings - Derelict / Vacant"*
Valley Park, Cramlington *186*
Vanburgh, Sir John, Architect *26*
Veterinary Practices *242*
Video Hire *154*

Village Road, Cramlington *217, 221, 222*
Visitor Accommodation *ii, 169,* ***170 to 171***
Camping ***171****, 176*
Caravans *106, 109, 169, 170* ***171, 315****, 318,* ***319****, 325*
Hotels / Guest Houses / Conference Centres *169,* ***170 to 171****, 242, 273,* ***315 to 318***
Visitor Activities, Attractions *see under "Leisure and Visitor Activities" or "Tourism" or "Countryside Recreation"*
Visual Character of Built Environment *4, 9, 18, 19, 24, 28, 29, 30,* ***31 to 35****, 36, 37, 46 to 47, 48, 67, 75, 76, 77, 84, 85, 100, 103, 104, 107, 110, 111, 115, 119, 120, 134, 135, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 146, 147, 153, 156, 168, 182, 183, 196, 197, 206, 235, 239, 240, 276, 282, 292, 302, 305, 306, 307, 309, 310, 312, 315, 316, 318 Appendix XXII*
Vitality and Viability of Centres *150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 158, 230, 238, 240, 241, 302*

Walton Ave., Blyth *158*
Wansbeck District *188, 305*
Warehouses *see under "Work Activity - Storage"*
Warehouse Clubs *see under "Shopping - Warehouse Clubs"*
Wartime Structures *see under "Blyth Links" and "Gloucester Lodge"*
Washington *53*
Waste / Waste Management / Regulation / Disposal *ii, 14, 16,* ***17 to 18****, 39, 41, 46, 47, 74, 179,* ***Appendix V***
Water Authority / Supply *68, 109, 171, 270*
Waterloo Road *214, 216, 217, 237, 241, 242*
Watersports / Water Features *316 see also under "Angling"*
Water Table etc. *ii,* ***14 to 16****, 19, 41, 113, 258 see also under "Drainage"*
Water Transport *79, 201,* ***226****, 308 see also under "Port of Blyth"*
Wellesley Children's Home *315, 318, 320 see also under "Blyth Links" and "Schools - Playing Fields"*
Wellington Street / Wellington Street East, Blyth *190, 216, 217, 218, 221, 223, 307, 308*
Wensleydale Terrace *159, 180, 185, 190, 196, 216, 217, 221, 312*
West Blyth, (northern part known as "Chase Farm")
General / Miscellaneous References *ii, iii, 5, 170, 171, 192, 193, 202, 208, 220, 221, 223, 227,* ***271 to 279****, 291, 292, 322,* ***323***
Community Facilities (including playing spaces) *128, 129, 130, 131, 134, 135, 143, 148, 158, 271,* ***276 to 277****, 278, 279, 292*
Housing *86, 90 to 92, 93, 99, 142,* ***271 to 272****, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 291*
Landscape Structure *11,* ***271****, 272,* ***274 to 275****, 278, 279*
Master Plans *202, 271, 272, 273, 278*
Pedestrian - Cycle Facilities *202, 204, 273, 274, 276, 278, 279*
Southern Development Area *5, 90 to 92, 99, 134, 207,* ***221****, 271, 272, 273, 274, 276,* ***278 to 279****, 323, 324*
Western Avenue, Seaton Delaval *145, 146*
Westfield Park, Cramlington *266*
Westfield site, South-West Cramlington, (Land South of Beaconhill Glade) *261*
West Hartford Farm, Proposed Work Activity Site ***186 to 187****,* ***196 to 198***
Westmorland Way, Cramlington *233*
Westwood Grange, Cramlington *89, 231, 232, 250, 251, 253, 256*
Westwood Park, Cramlington ***254****, 256*
Wetlands *see under "Landscape" or "Nature Conservation" or "Water Features"*
Wheatridge Park and Farm areas, Seaton Delaval *see under "Seaton Delaval"*
Wheelchair Access *see under Pedestrians etc. Access / Facilities*
Whitehall Farm, Cramlington *261, 263, 265, 267*
Whitehall site, South-West Cramlington, (Land Surrouunding Whitehall Farm) *88, 89,* ***261 to 263****, 264, 265, 266, 267*
Whitelea Estates, Cramlington *234*
Whitley Bay *296*
Wildlife *see under "Nature Conservation"*
Wildlife Corridors ***4 to 5****, 177, 278, 279*
Wind Energy / Wind Turbines *see under "Energy - Renewable Generation"*
Windfall Sites *see under "Housing - Windfall Sites"*
Windmill area *see under "Cramlington - North-West Work Activity Areas"*
Windows *See under "Fenestration / Windows"*
Window Displays *see under Shop Fronts, Design aspects of*
Windsurfing *see under "Watersports"*
Woodbine Terrace, Blyth *312*
Woodhorn Colliery Museum *208*
Woodland *see under "Trees and Shrubs"*
Work Activity
General / Miscellaneous References *i, ii, 8, 11, 12, 17, 18, 34, 39, 40, 44, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 65, 79, 84, 90, 108, 109, 110, 113, 132, 152,* ***153****,* ***155****, 160, 164, 165, 168, 169, 170,* ***179 to 200****, 201, 204, 206, 208, 210, 211, 216, 218, 220, 221, 223, 224, 228, 234,* ***264 to 265****, 266, 269, 270, 305, 306, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 323,* ***326****,* ***Appendices X, XI, XXIII and XXIV***
Role of Blyth ***54 to 57***
Role of Cramlington ***53 to 55****, 264 to 265*
Land for General and Local Employment and Business Park Use ***180 to 185****, 191, 195, 306,* ***Appendix XXIV***
Land for Users Requiring Individual Sites in Non-Estate Locations *160, 180,* ***186 to 187***
Land Supply general ***180 to 190***
Premises (esp. for Manufacturing / Storage) *ii, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 186,* ***190 to 191****, 192, 193, 194, 195, 242, 309, 310*
Special Industrial Uses (former) *183*
Storage *31, 179, 180,* ***181****,* ***182****, 183, 184, 185, 188, 191, 196*
Worship, Places of *see under "Religious Buildings"*

Yarmouth Drive *251*