



Northumberland  
County Council

Northumberland Local Plan  
Publication Draft Plan for Regulation 19

Green Belt Review  
Technical Paper

December 2018

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# **1. Summary**

## **1.1. Purpose of the Green Belt Review Technical Paper**

- 1.1.1. Policies STP 7 'Strategic approach to the Green Belt', STP 8 'Development in the Green Belt' and STP 9 'Safeguarded Land' of the Northumberland Local Plan - Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19) set out the proposed approach to the Green Belt in Northumberland and identify the revised boundaries of the Green Belt, as defined on the Policies Map. This paper provides a summary of the Green Belt Review process undertaken and outlines the rationale supporting the approach to the Green Belt in the Local Plan and the changes that are proposed to Green Belt boundaries.

## **1.2. Summary of the Green Belt Review Technical Paper**

### Section 2: Background

- 1.2.1. The background section of the document considers the national and local planning policy context in relation to the purposes and extent of the Northumberland Green Belt.
- 1.2.2. Green Belt is a planning designation that was first established in planning law in the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act in order to restrict urban growth. The main function of the Green Belt in Northumberland is to prevent the unrestricted sprawl of the Tyne and Wear conurbation by keeping land permanently open.
- 1.2.3. The North Tyneside Green Belt was first defined through an amendment to the County Development Plan in 1963<sup>1</sup>. Local Plans, County Structure Plans and North East Regional Plans have since made a number of alterations to the Green Belt in Northumberland, extending it in some areas and also removing some areas. Policy S5 of the Northumberland and National Park Joint Structure Plan First Alteration (2005) defined the general extent of an extension to the Green Belt around Morpeth. The detailed boundaries of the Green Belt extension around Morpeth, falling within the former Castle Morpeth District administrative area, remain undefined in adopted policy until the Northumberland Local Plan is adopted.
- 1.2.4. Key supporting documents to this technical paper include: Morpeth Outer Boundary Review (2013); Green Belt Review (2015); Employment Land Review (2011) and Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015) and the Employment Land Site Options Appraisal (2018).

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<sup>1</sup> Northumberland County Development Plan: Amendment No. 16 (1963) North Tyneside Green Belt

### Section 3: Approach to the Green Belt in the Local Plan

- 1.2.5. This section of the document sets out the approach to the Green Belt in the Local Plan, including the changes that have been made to the Green Belt.
- 1.2.6. Policy STP 7 of the Northumberland Local Plan - Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19) sets out the Strategic approach to the Green Belt in Northumberland. The strategic approach is informed by the NPPF, the North East Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS, 2008) and RPG 1 of the Regional Planning Guidance for the North East (2002).
- 1.2.7. Policy STP 8 of the Northumberland Local Plan - Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19) sets out how development will be managed in the Green Belt. As the NPPF sets specific requirements for development in the Green Belt, Policy STP 8 directs the determination of appropriate and inappropriate development towards national policy. In response to paragraph 141 of the NPPF, Policy STP 8 includes a criterion supporting beneficial uses of the Green Belt which encourage use for outdoor sport and recreation; enhance landscapes and biodiversity; or improve damaged and derelict land. Policy STP 8 also sets parameters for what constitutes limited infilling, in order to improve clarity for decision makers and applicants.
- 1.2.8. The adopted Green Belt in Northumberland includes an area of existing defined Green Belt, where boundaries have been established and adopted. There is also a part of the adopted Green Belt where a general extent has been identified and adopted but detailed boundaries have not yet been established. This part of the Green Belt is the remaining undefined area of the Green Belt extension around Morpeth. The Northumberland Local Plan - Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19) consolidates the adopted Green Belt boundaries and establishes the detailed boundaries of the Green Belt extension around Morpeth.
- 1.2.9. The existing established boundaries of the Green Belt have been changed in some areas for the following reasons:
  - Land has been released from the Green Belt in Hexham, Ponteland and Prudhoe for employment purposes. An area of land released near Ponteland has been safeguarded in part to meet longer term employment needs beyond the plan period.
  - Some settlements, previously washed over by the Green Belt, have been inset from the Green Belt to improve coherence in the policy approach to the Green Belt in Northumberland.
  - Minor amendments to the Green Belt boundary have been made to address anomalies, enabling boundaries to better align more accurately to physical edges.

- 1.2.10. The NPPF indicates that when defining or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, where necessary, safeguarded land should be identified to meet longer-term development needs beyond the plan period<sup>2</sup>. Policy STP 9 identifies safeguarded land for employment purposes beyond the plan period in Morpeth and near Ponteland, to the west of the airport inset boundary. The rationale supporting the identification of safeguarded land is set out in section 6 of this document.

Section 4: Establishing the boundaries of the Morpeth Green Belt extension

- 1.2.11. This section of the document explains how the inner and outer boundaries of the Morpeth Green Belt extension have been established.
- 1.2.12. Saved Policy S5 of the Northumberland and National Park Joint Structure Plan First Alteration (2005) established the general extent of the Green Belt extension around Morpeth. Parts of this detailed boundary have already been defined in existing development plans covering the former Blyth Valley and Wansbeck districts. However, the detailed boundaries of the Green Belt extension within the former Castle Morpeth area were not defined.
- 1.2.13. The outer boundary of the Green Belt extent has been defined in the Northumberland Local Plan - Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19) to reflect the area described in saved Policy S5, based upon an assessment of boundary options set out in the Morpeth Outer Boundary Review (2013).
- 1.2.14. Settlements which currently have adopted settlement boundaries in the Castle Morpeth Local Plan, Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan and the Longhorsley Neighbourhood Plan are excluded from the Green Belt and inset boundaries have been defined. An inset boundary has also been defined for Stannington Station which is recognised within the Stannington Neighbourhood Plan as a growing rural settlement providing some services. The approach to inset these settlements is consistent with the NPPF, the Plan in meeting identified requirements for sustainable development and the guidance set out in RPG 1.
- 1.2.15. Inset boundaries for the following settlements have been identified: Belsay, Hartburn, Hebron, Hepscott, Ogle, Longhirst, Longhorsley, Mitford, Morpeth, Pegswood, Netherwitton, Stannington, Stannington Station, Ulgham, Whalton. Any settlement not specifically referred to in this section is washed-over by the Green Belt.
- 1.2.16. Although developed sites in the Green Belt have not been identified, an employment site allocated in the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan includes expansion land which could not be developed within the constraints of the Green Belt. In order to allow the expansion land to be developed for employment

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<sup>2</sup> Paragraph 139, National Planning Policy Framework (2018) MHCLG

purposes, in line with the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan, this site has been inset from the Green Belt.

#### Section 5: Proposed changes to established Green Belt boundaries

- 1.2.17. The NPPF requires that once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances. This section of the document sets out the exceptional circumstances that the Council has identified in relation to changes that have been made to established Green Belt boundaries. It also determines the specific location and extent of the changes to the Green Belt.
- 1.2.18. Both the 2011 and 2015 employment studies highlighted that although there is a surplus of employment land in certain parts of the County, there is a shortage in specific market areas. Allocating employment land within the established market areas, or towns, will support sustainable patterns of development. Within the part of the Green Belt where there are established boundaries, the Main Towns of Hexham, Ponteland and Prudhoe are not considered to provide sufficient capacity to accommodate the level of growth required to meet economic development needs. It is considered that the need to enable sustainable patterns of development by providing suitable employment land which can deliver the identified economic development needs, in line with the spatial strategy, constitutes exceptional circumstances to release land from the Green Belt.
- 1.2.19. The following changes to the Green Belt have been made to provide suitable employment land to meet the identified economic development needs:
- Hexham: approximately 10 hectares of land released to the east of the Egger Plant, at Harwood Meadows;
  - Ponteland: approximately 5.5 hectares of land released at Prestwick Business Park and at Prestwick Pit (a further 4.8 hectares is safeguarded for employment use beyond the plan period); and
  - Prudhoe: approximately 2.5 hectares of land released west of the former Hammerite plant
- 1.2.20. As part of the Green Belt review, changes have been made to established Green Belt boundaries in order to improve coherence in policy approach across the wider Green Belt designation. As the detailed boundaries of the defined Green Belt were revised and defined through different former district Local Plans, the treatment of settlements varies across the designation. This affects the strategic coherence of the policy approach to the Green Belt as a whole and conflicts with the approach to the Green Belt in the NPPF. It is considered that exceptional circumstances therefore exist to release Green Belt to allow new insets to be created.

1.2.21. The following settlements, previously washed over, have been inset from the Green Belt to improve coherence in policy approach across the wider Green Belt:

- Broomhaugh
- Fourstones
- Mickley Square
- Newbrough
- Wall
- Whittonstall

1.2.22. Further changes to the Green Belt have been made to amend minor anomalies in established Green Belt boundaries, identified as a result of the Green Belt Review. In some cases the established boundaries did not align to any physical recognisable features and therefore did not reflect the requirements set out in the NPPF<sup>3</sup>. The revised Green Belt, as defined on the Northumberland Local Plan - Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19) Policies Map, reflects minor amendments made to the Green Belt to correct the identified anomalies.

#### Safeguarded Land

1.2.23. In the defined Green Belt, exceptional circumstances have been identified to release land from the Green Belt for employment purposes. In order to meet long term employment requirements and avoid the need for another review of the Green Belt at the end of the Plan period, it was considered necessary to consider if, and where, land should be safeguarded. As a result, the following site has been safeguarded for employment uses beyond the plan period in the Northumberland Local Plan - Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19):

- Area to the west of the Airport Inset boundary

1.2.24. Within the Green Belt extension around Morpeth, the inset boundaries have been defined to ensure permanence beyond the plan period. There are sufficient permissions for housing within Morpeth to deliver housing beyond the plan period. However, there is only enough employment land allocated to meet employment needs within the plan period. The following site has therefore been safeguarded for employment uses beyond the plan period in the Northumberland Local Plan - Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19):

- Area south of Coopies Lane industrial estate

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<sup>3</sup> Paragraph 139

## **2. Background**

### **2.1. National policy and the purpose of the Green Belt in Northumberland**

- 2.1.1. Green Belt is a planning designation that was first established in planning law in the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act in order to restrict urban growth. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open, and that a key attribute of land in the Green Belt is its openness<sup>4</sup>.
- 2.1.2. The NPPF sets out the five purposes of the Green Belt<sup>5</sup>, which are to:
- Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
  - Prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
  - Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
  - Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
  - Assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 2.1.3. The Green Belt in Northumberland forms part of a wider area of Green Belt designation surrounding the conurbation of Tyne and Wear. The main function of the Green Belt in Northumberland is to prevent the unrestricted sprawl of the Tyne and Wear conurbation by keeping land permanently open.

### **2.2. History of the Green Belt in Northumberland**

- 2.2.1. Following a government circular<sup>6</sup> in 1955, encouraging areas outside of London to establish Green Belt boundaries, the former County of Northumberland<sup>7</sup> sought to adopt a local Green Belt designation. The North Tyneside Green Belt was subsequently defined through an amendment to the County Development Plan in 1963<sup>8</sup>.
- 2.2.2. In 1974, a national reorganisation of local government structures resulted in the redefinition of Northumberland County administrative boundaries to exclude the urban areas of Newcastle and North Tyneside. As the 1963 North Tyneside Green Belt was therefore split between the newly defined Counties, Northumberland County Council resolved in its 1980 Structure Plan to redefine the Green Belt through the Castle Morpeth and Tynedale District Local Plans.
- 2.2.3. The Tynedale Valley Local Plan (1989) was the first district to redefine the original 1963 Green Belt designation and encompassed a number of

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<sup>4</sup> Paragraph 133, National Planning Policy Framework (2018)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, paragraph 134

<sup>6</sup> Circular 42/55: Green Belts (August 1955) Ministry of Housing and Local Government

<sup>7</sup> County of Northumberland was redefined in 1974, under the Local Government Act 1972

<sup>8</sup> Northumberland County Development Plan: Amendment No. 16 (1963) North Tyneside Green Belt

amendments including Green Belt release and insetting of previously washed-over settlements. Tynedale District Local Plan (2000) further revised the Green Belt boundaries to reflect changes proposed in the Northumberland Structure Plan (1996). The remaining area of the 1963 North Tyneside Green Belt was superseded by the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan in 2003 and included amendments to boundaries that reflected proposals in the 1996 Structure Plan.

- 2.2.4. Two extensions to the original Green Belt designation were proposed in the 1996 Structure Plan: an extension to include Hexham, defined in the Tynedale District Local Plan (2000); and an extension into South East Northumberland, defined in the Blyth Valley Local Plan (1999).
- 2.2.5. A further extension to the Green Belt to include Morpeth was identified in Regional Planning Guidance for the North East (2002), with Policy S5 of the Northumberland and National Park Joint Structure Plan First Alteration (2005) defining the general extent. A small part of the extension was defined in detail in the former Wansbeck District Local Plan (2007) and the Blyth Valley Core Strategy (2007).
- 2.2.6. When the Northumberland Structure Plan was replaced by the North East Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) in 2008, Policy S5 was not replaced in the interests of maintaining a satisfactory strategic planning framework for the preparation of Local Development Document(s), which would enable the remaining area of the Green Belt extension to be defined consistently in Local Plans. As a result of the revocation of the RSS in 2013, the saved Structure Plan Policy S5 was retained by the Government to enable the Northumberland Local Plan to define the detailed boundaries of the Green Belt extension.
- 2.2.7. The detailed boundaries of the Green Belt extension around Morpeth, falling within the former Castle Morpeth District administrative area, remain undefined in adopted policy until the Northumberland Local Plan is adopted.

### **2.3. Other relevant evidence base documents**

This technical paper summarises the Green Belt review process, the approach to the Green Belt in the Local Plan and the changes that are proposed to Green Belt boundaries. More detailed studies underpinning the conclusions in this document are identified below and should be read alongside this Green Belt Technical Paper. The documents can be accessed via the Local Plan Evidence Base.

#### Morpeth Outer Boundary Review (2013)

- 2.3.1. The withdrawn Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy proposed an outer boundary for the Green Belt extension around Morpeth. The methodology used

to determine the boundary was set out in the Morpeth Outer Boundary Review (2013). The review has informed the definition of an outer Green Belt boundary for the Green Belt extension around Morpeth, proposed in the Northumberland Local Plan - Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19).

#### Green Belt Review (2015)

- 2.3.2. During production of the withdrawn Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy, the Council carried out a comprehensive Green Belt Review. The Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Green Belt Review (2015)<sup>9</sup> sets out the Green Belt Review methodology and provides the land parcel assessment element of the review process. The land parcel assessment comprises an analysis of how, and to what extent, areas of Green Belt land surrounding settlements contribute towards Green Belt purposes identified in the NPPF. This has helped to inform the Plan process in terms of reviewing current Green Belt boundaries and determining an approach to defining new and revised boundaries.

- 2.3.3. Employment Land Review (2011) and Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015)

- 2.3.4. The Employment Land Review (2011)<sup>10</sup> and the Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015)<sup>11</sup> assess the supply and demand of employment land in Northumberland and propose changes to the employment land portfolio. The studies have informed the rationale behind the release of Green Belt land for employment purposes, outlined in this document.

#### Employment Land Site Options Appraisal (2018)

- 2.3.5. The Employment Land Site Options Appraisal (2018)<sup>12</sup> identifies candidate employment land allocations, including sites within the Green Belt, and assesses the suitability of the sites for employment uses. The findings of the Green Belt Review (2015) formed part of the Employment Land Site Options Appraisal. Although Green Belt was one of the considerations that informed the appraisal of sites, other factors, such as environmental constraints, deliverability and sustainability were also taken into account.

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<sup>9</sup> The document can be accessed via the Evidence base and studies page on the Council's website at <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Reports.aspx>

<sup>10</sup> The document can be accessed via the Evidence base and studies page on the Council's website at <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Reports.aspx>

<sup>11</sup> The document can be accessed via the Evidence base and studies page on the Council's website at <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Reports.aspx>

<sup>12</sup> The documents can be accessed via the Evidence base and studies page on the Council's website at <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Reports.aspx>.

### **3. Approach to the Green Belt in Northumberland**

#### **3.1. Strategic Approach**

- 3.1.1. Policy STP 7 of the Northumberland Local Plan - Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19) sets out the Strategic approach to the Green Belt in Northumberland. The strategic approach is informed by the NPPF, the North East Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS, 2008) and RPG 1 of the Regional Planning Guidance for the North East (2002).
- 3.1.2. The purposes of the Green Belt outlined in the NPPF, and reiterated in the 'Background' section of this document, remain unchanged from superseded national planning policy<sup>13</sup> that was in place at the time of the RSS and RPG1. The NPPF therefore aligns with the local purposes and strategic approach of the Northumberland Green Belt that were identified in the RSS and RPG1.
- 3.1.3. The RSS set out a strategic approach to the Green Belt for the North East of England<sup>14</sup>, including locally specific policy requirements for Northumberland. Although this document no longer forms part of the planning policy framework, the principles underpinning its strategic approach to the Green Belt are still relevant and are reflected in Policy STP 7 of the Northumberland Local Plan - Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19).
- 3.1.4. The Green Belt approach within the RSS sought to:
- Continue to check the unrestricted sprawl of Tyne and Wear; and
  - Continue to safeguard the countryside from encroachment
- 3.1.5. Specifically, in relation to Northumberland, the RSS stated that the Green Belt should:
- Prevent the merging of: Newcastle upon Tyne with Ponteland, Newcastle Airport, or Cramlington;
  - North Tyneside with Cramlington or Blyth;
  - Preserve the setting and special character of Hexham, Corbridge and Morpeth; and
  - Assist in urban regeneration in the city-regions by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 3.1.6. Saved Policy S5, which identifies the general extent of the Green Belt extension around Morpeth, was underpinned by RPG 1 of the Regional Planning Guidance for the North East (2002). Although RPG 1 no longer forms part of the policy

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<sup>13</sup> Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green Belts (2001), ODPM

<sup>14</sup> Policy 9, North East Regional Spatial Strategy (2008)

framework, the principles set out within it are still relevant as they underpin Policy S5.

- 3.1.7. RPG 1 stated that the Green Belt would be extended around Morpeth in order to:
- Protect the countryside around Morpeth from encroachment;
  - Prevent the sprawl and coalescence of the town and neighbouring smaller settlements;
  - Protect the character of the historic town; and
  - Focus development on priority areas for regeneration.
- 3.1.8. Priority areas for regeneration in Northumberland were identified within RPG 1 to be urban areas of south east Northumberland beyond the Green Belt, with a particular focus on coalfield towns such as Blyth, Ashington and Bedlington.

### **3.2. Development in the Green Belt**

- 3.2.1. In plan making and the determination of planning applications, the overarching principle is that the Green Belt should preserve openness and reflect the purposes of the designation. The NPPF outlines a list of what constitutes appropriate development in the Green Belt and includes a presumption against permitting inappropriate development within the Green Belt, except in very special circumstances. As the NPPF sets specific requirements for development in the Green Belt, Policy STP 8 within the Northumberland Local Plan - Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19) directs the determination of appropriate and inappropriate development towards national policy.
- 3.2.2. In response to paragraph 141 of the NPPF, Policy STP 8 includes a criterion supporting beneficial uses of the Green Belt which encourage use for outdoor sport and recreation; enhance landscapes and biodiversity; or improve damaged and derelict land.

#### Limited Infilling

- 3.2.3. The NPPF refers to certain concepts that inform whether development is appropriate in the Green Belt. 'Limited infilling' is a term used to identify a type of development that is appropriate in the Green Belt under certain circumstances. Limited infilling is not defined in the NPPF and case law suggests that what constitutes limited infilling is a matter of planning judgement<sup>15</sup>.
- 3.2.4. In order to improve clarity for decision makers and applicants, Policy STP 8 sets parameters for what constitutes limited infilling. The Council considers the commonly accepted definition of limited infilling as 'development of a small gap in an otherwise built up frontage' to be an appropriate interpretation. It is

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<sup>15</sup> Wood v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government [2015] EWHC Civ 195 and R (on the application of Tate) v Northumberland County Council [2017] EWHC 665 (Admin)

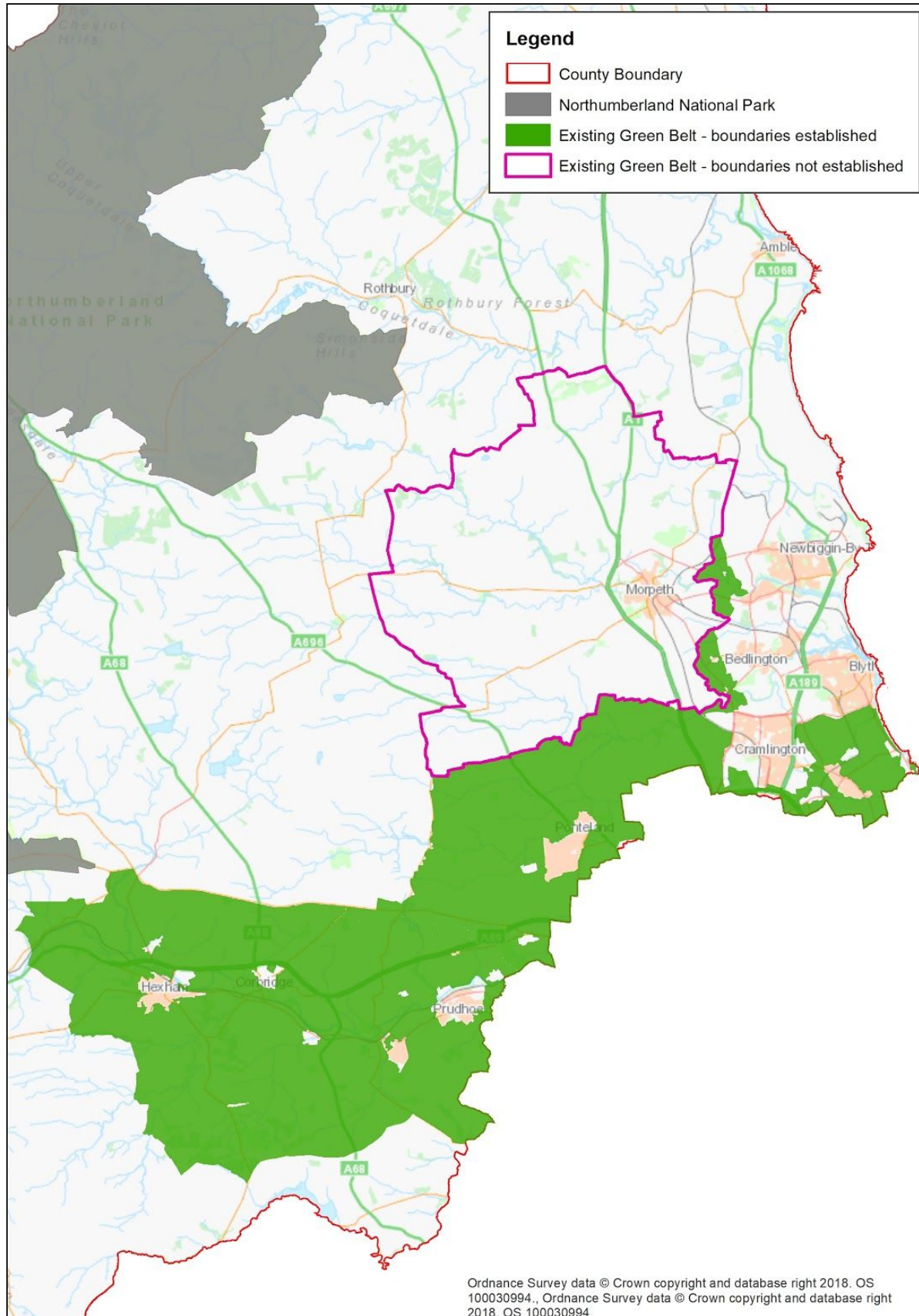
acknowledged that there may be other types of development that could be regarded as limited infilling and therefore Policy STP 8 permits other forms of limited infilling where there is adequate justification.

- 3.2.5. In order to provide further clarity Policy STP 8 lists the following types of development that would not be considered to be limited infill:
- Development between loose groups of buildings;
  - Gaps between the built edge of a village and other buildings which are not physically and visually linked to the settlement;
  - Development of a scale and form that would result in the loss of significant gaps between built form or diminish the open character of the village.
- 3.2.6. It is the view of the Council that the types of development listed are those which should not be considered 'limited' infilling as they would diminish the open character of villages within the Green Belt or would cumulatively consolidate open, loose-knit or isolated buildings into built-up areas.

### **3.3. Proposed changes to the Green Belt**

- 3.3.1. The adopted Green Belt in Northumberland includes an area of existing defined Green Belt, where boundaries have been established and adopted in the Local Plans and Core Strategies of the former Tynedale and Wansbeck districts, and the borough of Blyth Valley. There is also a part of the adopted Green Belt where a general extent has been identified and adopted but detailed boundaries have not yet been established. This part of the Green Belt is the remaining undefined area of the Green Belt extension around Morpeth which lies within the former Castle Morpeth district. The general extent of this undefined area of Green Belt is currently adopted in saved policy S5 of the Northumberland and National Park Joint Structure Plan First Alteration (2005).
- 3.3.2. Figure 3.1 shows the adopted Green Belt in Northumberland.

**Figure 3.1: The adopted Green Belt in Northumberland**



- 3.3.3. The Northumberland Local Plan - Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19) consolidates the adopted Green Belt boundaries of the former districts and establishes the boundaries of the Green Belt extension around Morpeth, the remaining undefined area of saved policy S5.
- 3.3.4. The existing established boundaries of the Green Belt have been changed in some areas to deliver economic development to meet needs in sustainable locations, improve coherence in the policy approach and amend minor anomalies. The following changes have been made to existing Green Belt boundaries:
- Green Belt land released for employment purposes

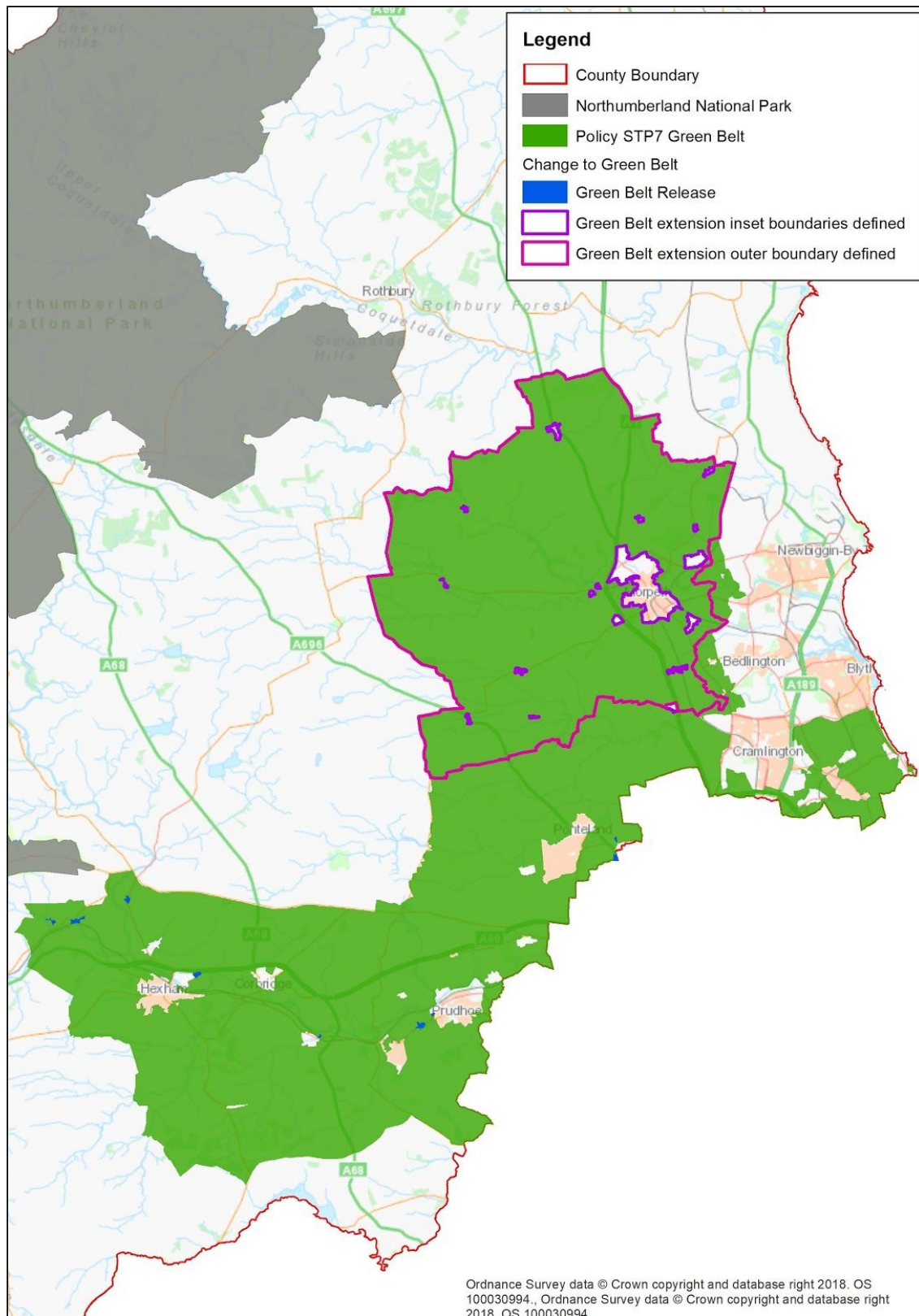
Land has been released from the Green Belt in Hexham, Ponteland and Prudhoe for employment purposes. Part of the Green Belt release at Hexham includes an element of a sand and gravel extraction site, which is associated with the employment site allocation. An area of land released near Ponteland has been safeguarded in part to meet longer term employment needs beyond the plan period.
  - Green Belt land released to create new settlement insets

The following settlements, previously washed over by the Green Belt, have been inset from the Green Belt to improve coherence in the policy approach to the Green Belt in Northumberland:

    - Broomhaugh
    - Fourstones
    - Mickley Square
    - Newbrough
    - Wall
    - Whittonstall
  - Minor boundary anomalies amended

Minor amendments to the Green Belt boundary have been made to address anomalies, enabling boundaries to better align more accurately to physical edges;
- 3.3.5. Figure 3.2 shows the revised Green Belt in Northumberland and summarises the changes that have been made. The revised Green Belt is defined in more detail on the Northumberland Local Plan - Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19) Policies Map.

**Figure 3.2: The revised Green Belt in Northumberland<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> The minor boundary anomaly amendments cannot be detected at this scale. Detailed Green Belt boundaries are defined on the Policies Map.

- 3.3.6. Sections 4 and 5 of this technical paper provide the rationale and process supporting each of the proposed changes to the Green Belt in Northumberland.

### **3.4. Safeguarded Land**

- 3.4.1. As an essential characteristic of Green Belts is their permanence, it is important that the process of revising the Green Belt boundaries has regard to potential development needs arising in the long-term. The NPPF indicates that when defining or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, where necessary, safeguarded land should be identified to meet longer-term development needs beyond the plan period<sup>16</sup>.
- 3.4.2. Policy STP 9 identifies safeguarded land for employment purposes beyond the plan period in Morpeth and near Ponteland, to the west of the airport inset boundary. Areas of safeguarded land are identified on the Northumberland Local Plan - Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19) Policies Map. The rationale supporting the identification of safeguarded land is set out in section 6 of this document.
- 3.4.3. The NPPF states that plans should make it clear that safeguarded land is not currently allocated for development and that planning permission for the permanent development of safeguarded land should only be granted following an update to a plan which proposes the development<sup>17</sup>. Policy STP 9 confirms that safeguarded land is not allocated within the plan period and that development will only be permitted following the adoption of a replacement Local Plan which proposes such development.

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<sup>16</sup> Paragraph 139, National Planning Policy Framework (2018)

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

## **4. Establishing boundaries of the Morpeth Green Belt extension**

### **4.1. Defining the outer boundary of the Green Belt extension**

- 4.1.1. Saved Policy S5 of the Northumberland and National Park Joint Structure Plan First Alteration (2005) established the general extent of the Green Belt extension around Morpeth. Parts of this detailed boundary have already been defined in existing development plans covering the former Blyth Valley and Wansbeck districts. However, the detailed boundaries of the Green Belt extension within the former Castle Morpeth area were not defined as the review of the Castle Morpeth Local Plan did not reach adoption before Northumberland became a unitary authority in 2009.
- 4.1.2. Although Policy S5 did not define the detailed outer boundary, the policy provided a description of where the boundary should be defined:
- West of Netherwitton, Hartburn and Belsay;
  - North of Longhorsley and west of Widdrington Station, excluding the Stobswood opencast site;
  - East of Pegswood;
  - West of Ashington, Guide Post, Bedlington and the A1068; and
  - East of Bothal, Hepscott, Nedderton and Hartford Bridge.
- 4.1.3. Appendix I provides a copy of saved policy S5 and the Key Diagram showing the general extent of the Green Belt extension.
- 4.1.4. The withdrawn Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy proposed an outer boundary for the Green Belt extension around Morpeth. The Morpeth Outer Boundary Review (2013), which established a methodology for defining the boundary, can be accessed via the Local Plan Evidence Base.
- 4.1.5. The Morpeth Outer Boundary Review tested different options for defining the Policy S5 boundary, including variations that aligned with Policy S5 and other options that deviated from Policy S5. Although the Boundary Review identified a 'tighter boundary' as the preferred option, there was significant objection to the proposed boundary as it deviated from the area described in Policy S5. The NPPF states that the general extent of Green Belts across the country is already established and that new Green Belts should only be established in exceptional circumstances<sup>18</sup>.
- 4.1.6. The Council concluded that it could not demonstrate exceptional circumstances to deviate from the general extent defined in Policy S5. Therefore, the wider 'Policy S5 Option' identified in the Morpeth Outer Boundary Review was

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<sup>18</sup> Paragraph 135, National Planning Policy Framework (2018)

proposed later in the Regulation 18 stage of the Core Strategy and remained unchanged in all subsequent versions of the document through to submission.

- 4.1.7. The Northumberland Local Plan - Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19) defines an outer boundary to the Green Belt extension that reflects the boundary previously identified in the withdrawn Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy and the wider 'Policy S5 Option' set out in the Morpeth Outer Boundary Review.

#### **4.2. Approach to settlements within the Green Belt extension**

- 4.2.1. Before the detailed boundaries of the Green Belt extension around Morpeth can be defined, the approach to the settlements that are within the saved Policy S5 general extent should be established. Settlements can either be excluded from the Green Belt and an 'inset' boundary is identified or they can be 'washed-over' by the Green Belt and they form part of the Green Belt designation<sup>19</sup>.
- 4.2.2. The NPPF does not explain how to approach settlements in the Green Belt, however paragraphs 138-140 of the NPPF provide direction in relation to defining Green Belt boundaries. Some points are relevant in terms of establishing an approach to settlements in the Green Belt, in particular:
- Promoting sustainable patterns of development;
  - Not including land which is unnecessary to keep permanently open;
  - Ensuring consistency with the plan for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development; and
  - Including (washing-over) villages within the Green Belt where the open character of a village makes an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt.
- 4.2.3. The NPPF requires Councils, when preparing or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, to take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development. In doing so consideration should be given to the consequences for sustainable development of directing development towards:
- Urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary;
  - Towns and villages inset within the Green Belt; and
  - Locations beyond the outer Green Belt.
- 4.2.4. The approach to the treatment of settlements within the Green Belt extension around Morpeth is informed by the following local considerations which relate to the points from the NPPF above and are discussed in more detail below:
- Approach towards settlements in former district Plans;

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<sup>19</sup> Terms 'inset' and 'washed-over' are defined in Appendix IV

- The spatial strategy set out in the Northumberland Local Plan;
- Green Belt review land parcel assessments; and
- RPG 1 guidance relating to the purpose of the Green Belt extension

#### Approach towards settlements in former district Local Plans

- 4.2.5. Within the former Castle Morpeth area, the adopted Castle Morpeth District Local Plan (2003), the made Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan (2016) and the made Longhorsley Neighbourhood Plan (2018) currently include settlement boundaries. Settlement boundaries within these plan areas are used to inform planning decisions, protect the countryside and direct development to the most sustainable locations. The settlements within the proposed outer boundary of the Green Belt extension, which have adopted boundaries in existing Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans are: Belsay, Hartburn, Hebron, Hepscott, Ogle, Longhirst, Longhorsley, Mitford, Morpeth, Pegswood, Netherwitton, Stannington, Ulgham and Whalton.
- 4.2.6. The made Stannington Neighbourhood Plan (2018) does not define settlement boundaries but does identify Stannington and Stannington Station as settlements which provide services within the Plan area.
- 4.2.7. Land beyond settlement boundaries within the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan, the Longhorsley Neighbourhood Plan and the Castle Morpeth District Plan is currently treated as open countryside.

#### The spatial strategy set out in the Northumberland Local Plan

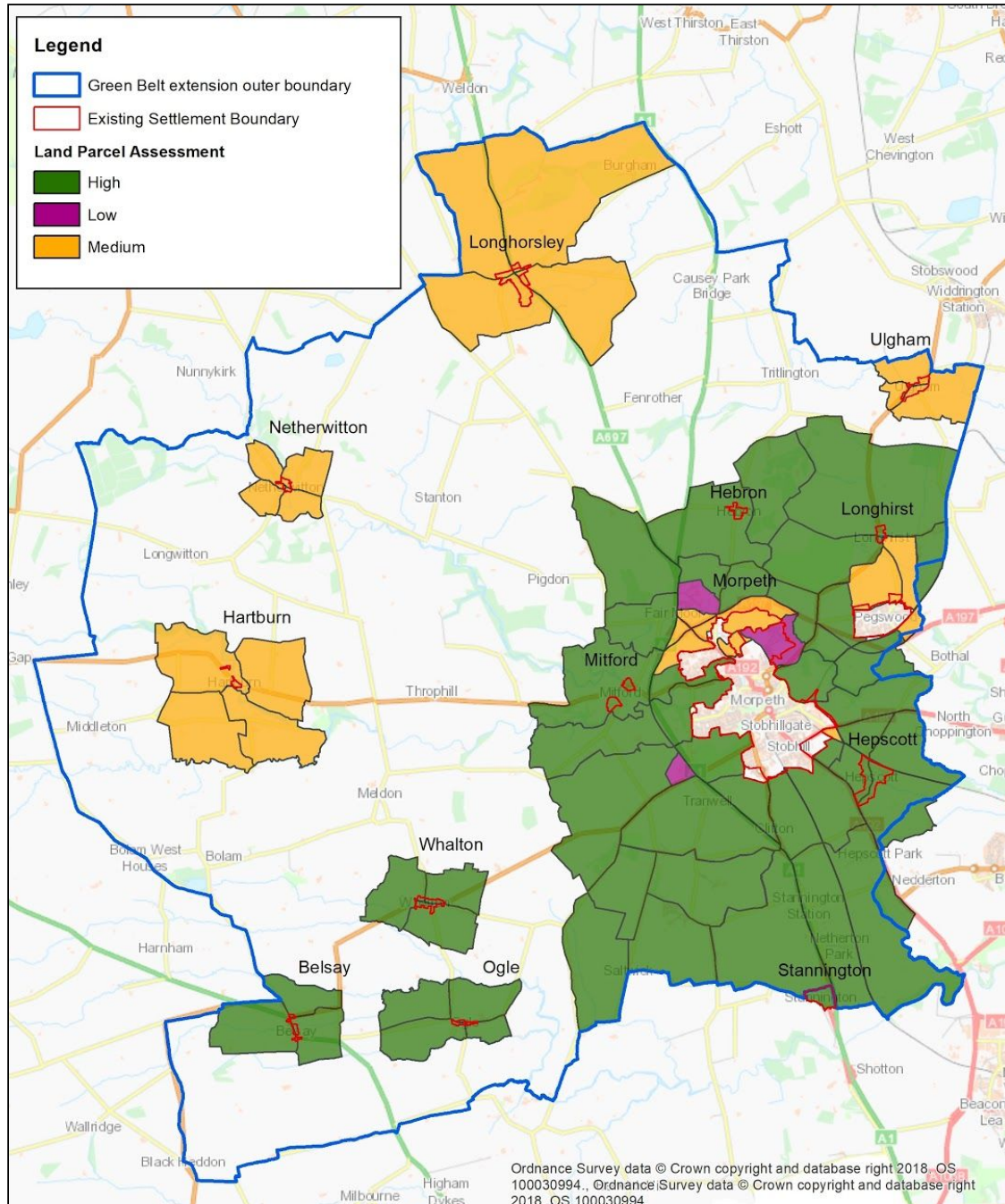
- 4.2.8. Policy STP 1 of the Northumberland Local Plan - Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19) directs development to the most sustainable locations. Development is focused towards settlements where it will help to support the use of local infrastructure and facilities and support economic growth, whilst protecting the countryside and the character of settlements. The spatial strategy directs the majority of development towards Main Towns and Service Centres but supports smaller scale development elsewhere in order to support local services and the rural economy, allowing some development within Service Villages and other rural settlements. Within the proposed outer boundary of the Green Belt extension, Morpeth is identified as a Main Town, while Pegswood, Longhorsley and Stannington are identified as Service Villages.
- 4.2.9. The Plan identifies settlement boundaries for Main Towns, Service Centres, Service Villages and areas of high development pressure. Settlements which currently have adopted boundaries in former district Local Plans have retained a boundary.
- 4.2.10. The Northumberland Local Plan does not identify settlement boundaries within the Green Belt because Green Belt inset boundaries and Neighbourhood Plan

settlement boundaries will manage development within the Green Belt. The spatial strategy allows for development within settlement boundaries and Green Belt inset boundaries but also allows development in settlements without an identified boundary in order to support the social and economic vitality of rural areas.

#### Green Belt review land parcel assessments

- 4.2.11. The land parcel assessments included within the Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Green Belt Review (2015) provide an assessment of how land surrounding settlements in the Green Belt contributes towards Green Belt purposes. Parcels within the proposed outer boundary were identified based upon the settlements which had established settlement boundaries within the former Castle Morpeth District Plan (2003) and the then emerging Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan. The assessment identified a mixture of high and medium contribution land parcels around settlements identified within the proposed outer boundary, with the exception of Morpeth where some areas of low contribution were identified.
- 4.2.12. Figure 4.1 provides an overview of the land parcel assessments within the proposed outer boundary of the Green Belt extension.

**Figure 4.1: Land parcel assessment within the outer boundary of the Green Belt extension**



- 4.2.13. The NPPF sets out that villages should be only be washed over by the Green Belt where it is necessary to restrict development due to the ‘important contribution which the open character of the village makes to the openness of the Green Belt’<sup>20</sup>. The land parcel assessments provide detail as to whether there are built up areas within the parcels and the potential for identifying strong boundaries. However, the assessment does not consider whether the smaller built up areas within the Green Belt parcels are contributing towards to the openness of the Green Belt. It is not considered that areas within identified

<sup>20</sup> Paragraph 138, National Planning Policy Framework (2018)

settlement boundaries are making an important contribution towards the openness of the Green Belt.

RPG 1 guidance relating to the purpose of the Green Belt extension

4.2.14. As defined within RPG 1 of the Regional Planning Guidance for the North East (2002), which previously underpinned Policy S5, the intended purpose of the Green Belt extension around Morpeth was to:

- Protect the countryside around Morpeth from encroachment;
- Prevent the sprawl and coalescence of the town and neighbouring smaller settlements;
- Protect the character of the historic town; and
- Focus development on priority areas for regeneration.

Conclusion regarding approach to settlements within the Green Belt extension

4.2.15. Settlements with established settlement boundaries are sustainable locations within Northumberland which support the delivery of the spatial strategy. In particular, allowing normal development management policies to manage development within these settlements will support the social and economic vitality of rural areas. The settlements are built up areas which do not make an important contribution towards the openness of the Green Belt and are unnecessary to keep permanently open. The approach to inset these settlements is consistent with the NPPF, the Plan in meeting identified requirements for sustainable development and the guidance set out in RPG 1.

4.2.16. Settlements which currently have adopted settlement boundaries in the Castle Morpeth Local Plan, Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan and the Longhorsley Neighbourhood Plan are excluded from the Green Belt and inset boundaries have been defined. An inset boundary has also been defined for Stanington Station which is recognised within the Stanington Neighbourhood Plan as a growing rural settlement providing some services.

4.2.17. Inset boundaries for the following settlements have been identified:

- Belsay
- Hartburn
- Hebron
- Hepscott
- Ogle
- Longhirst
- Longhorsley

- Mitford
- Morpeth
- Pegswood
- Netherwitton
- Stannington
- Stannington Station
- Ulgham
- Whalton

4.2.18. Any settlement not specifically referred to in this section is washed-over by the Green Belt.

#### Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt

4.2.19. A number of major developed sites within the Green Belt extension are identified in the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan. While these sites are located within the Green Belt, the Castle Morpeth Plan generally allows limited infill development where this would not have an adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The NPPF does not require the identification of major developed sites; it encourages partial or complete development or infilling of previously developed sites in the Green Belt, whether redundant or in continuing use. That is, provided the development would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development. Major developed sites in the Green Belt are therefore not identified in the Northumberland Local Plan.

4.2.20. Although developed sites in the Green Belt have not been identified, an employment site allocated in the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan includes expansion land which could not be developed within the constraints of the Green Belt. The site is identified as an area of low contribution towards Green Belt purposes within the Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Green Belt Review (2015). In order to allow the expansion land to be developed for employment purposes, in line with the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan, this site has been inset from the Green Belt.

### **4.3. Defining the inset boundaries within the Green Belt extension**

4.3.1. As Green Belts are a long term planning tool, their boundaries are required to have permanence beyond the plan period. The Green Belt inset boundaries therefore need to provide for sufficient capacity to meet long-term strategic land requirements and align to durable, easily recognisable physical boundaries that are defensible.

- 4.3.2. Areas within existing settlement boundaries help to identify the physical extent of the settlement and areas which are sustainable locations for development. For settlements where settlement boundaries are currently identified in the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan, Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan and the Longhorsley Neighbourhood Plan, these boundaries have been used as a starting point for defining Green Belt inset boundaries. Neighbourhood Plan settlement boundaries have taken precedence in areas where there is also a settlement boundary defined in the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan.
- 4.3.3. In addition to the area within the current settlement boundary, the inset boundaries include recent developments, extant planning permissions (and minded to approve applications), and development allocations, where they are made or proposed. This is to ensure that inset boundaries align with the spatial strategy and that land which is unnecessary to keep permanently open is excluded from the Green Belt. The inset boundaries also reflect adjustments which ensure that, in line with the NPPF, boundaries align with recognisable physical features that are likely to be permanent.
- 4.3.4. Appendices II and III set out in more detail how identified boundaries address NPPF requirements<sup>21</sup> and prioritise readily recognisable boundaries that are likely to be permanent.
- 4.3.5. Stannington Station does not have an identified settlement boundary and the inset boundary has been defined in accordance with the following:
1. Land included within the Stannington Station inset boundary:
    - the main built up area of the settlement;
    - extant planning permissions (there are no minded to approve applications);
    - curtilages of buildings which are contained and do not make an important contribution towards openness;
    - Other land uses which are well related to the settlement and partly enclosed by built development including open space; and
    - Land which is unnecessary to keep permanently open, for example where it contributes towards identifying a stronger physical boundary
  2. Excluded from the inset boundary are:
    - Open spaces, sports and recreational facilities which stand on the edge of the built form of the settlement;

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<sup>21</sup> Paragraph 139, National Planning Policy Framework (2018)

- Sections of large curtilages of buildings (including gardens) which relate more to the openness of the Green Belt;
  - Development which is physically or visually detached from the settlement; and
  - Agriculture and nurseries
3. Boundaries have been defined tightly around the area identified in point 1 and have followed physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent (approach set out in Appendix III).

#### Morpeth Inset Boundary

- 4.3.6. The approach used to defining settlement insets within the Green Belt Extension, as already established in the preceding paragraphs, was applied to the Morpeth inset boundary. However, the following additional considerations set out in more detail below also informed how the Morpeth inset boundary was identified:
- Morpeth's role as a Main Town in the spatial strategy;
  - Planned sustainable growth of Morpeth within the plan period;
  - Meeting long-term development needs beyond the plan period; and
  - Preserving the special historic character and setting of Morpeth
- 4.3.7. As an identified Main Town in the Northumberland Local Plan, Morpeth will be the main focus for employment, housing, retail and services required over the plan period. It is anticipated that the town will continue in this role beyond the plan period. In order to ensure that the Morpeth Inner Green Belt boundary endures in the long-term, the Morpeth inset provides scope for the planned sustainable growth of the town during the Plan period and also for long-term development needs beyond the Plan period.
- 4.3.8. The focus of growth beyond the settlement boundary to the north reflects permitted development, employment land allocations and provision of strong road infrastructure in this area. The north of Morpeth is also considered less sensitive in terms of the contribution towards Green Belt purposes, particularly in terms of the preservation of the special historic setting and character of Morpeth.
- 4.3.9. Land beyond the settlement boundary to the south is identified to be safeguarded for employment needs beyond the plan period. This site is adjacent an established employment site and benefits from strong physical boundaries.
- 4.3.10. Safeguarded land has not been identified for housing as there is sufficient housing land supply in the saved policy S5 area to deliver needs over and above that which is required within the plan period. Further, large permitted sites to the north of Morpeth are forecast to continue to build-out beyond the plan period.

White land beyond the Neighbourhood Plan settlement boundary to the north could also deliver future development needs. This land has not been safeguarded for a particular use in order to provide a level of flexibility in how this land might be used in the future depending upon any need that may arise.

- 4.3.11. The approach to safeguarded land is set out in more detail in section 6 of this document.
- 4.3.12. As defined within RPG 1 of the Regional Planning Guidance for the North East (2002), which previously underpinned Policy S5, one of the intended purposes of the Green Belt extension around Morpeth is to preserve the special setting and character of Morpeth. Land to the east and west of Morpeth are considered to be important to preserving the setting of Morpeth and therefore boundaries are drawn tightly in this area. Some limited expansion to the south, where it is contained by strong boundaries or already permitted is included within the boundary to the south. Areas beyond this help to preserve the setting of Morpeth and the separation with Hepscoth.

## **5. Proposed changes to established Green Belt boundaries**

### **5.1. Releasing Green Belt land for employment purposes**

- 5.1.1. The NPPF requires that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances. Where it is considered necessary to alter Green Belt boundaries, this should be undertaken through the preparation or review of a Local Plan. New boundaries need to have permanence enduring beyond the plan period.
- 5.1.2. The NPPF requires Councils, when preparing or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, to take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development. In doing so consideration should be given to the consequences for sustainable development of directing development towards:
- Urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary;
  - Towns and villages inset within the Green Belt; and
  - Locations beyond the outer Green Belt.
- 5.1.3. The Northumberland Local Plan evidence base<sup>22</sup> illustrates that there is capacity to deliver housing requirements, in accordance with the spatial strategy, outwith the Green Belt. There are therefore no exceptional circumstances established to identify land in the Green Belt to be released for future housing development.
- 5.1.4. It is considered however that exceptional circumstances exist to release land from the Green Belt for employment purposes. This section of the document sets out the rationale supporting the release of Green Belt for employment purposes in the following locations:
- Hexham: land to the east of the Egger Plant, at Harwood Meadows;
  - Prudhoe: land west of the former Hammerite plant; and
  - Ponteland: land at Prestwick Business Park and land at Prestwick Pit (Part of the area will be allocated and the remaining land will be safeguarded for employment use beyond the plan period)

#### Delivering the Spatial Strategy

- 5.1.5. The spatial strategy for Northumberland supports the delivery of additional, better paid and higher skilled jobs in the County in order to help deliver the five foundations of the Industrial Strategy (2017), the aspirations of the North East Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) (2017), and the North of Tyne (NoT) Devolution Deal and the Borderlands Initiative, and the Council's Economic Strategy. Within the NoT deal, Northumberland will be the focus of initiatives to help rural

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<sup>22</sup> Housing Site Allocations Selection and Appraisal Technical Paper and the Housing Distribution Technical Paper which can be accessed via the Evidence base and studies page on the Council's website at <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Reports.aspx>

communities, as the rural economy and tourism sectors in particular are strengths of Northumberland.

- 5.1.6. The growth strategy is aligned with the 'ambitious growth scenario' as set out in the Council's Housing and Economic Growth Options Report (Peter Brett Associates, 2018). Evidence indicates that the sectoral growth forecast by the Plan's growth strategy will see:
- The number of 'workplace jobs' in Northumberland increase by 16,500, or 750 per annum over the period 2014-36, or approximately 15,000 workforce jobs over the Local Plan period 2016 to 2036;
  - The number of Full-time equivalent jobs grow by 12,500, or 570 per annum;
  - The labour force increase by 6,500;
  - A stemming of the reduction in the size of the workforce aged 16-64;
  - A reduction in the unemployment rate.
- 5.1.7. The translation of future jobs growth into purely quantitative, county-wide employment land needs suggests that 40.3 hectares of land will be required to deliver the growth strategy<sup>23</sup>. This figure does not however take into account different jobs markets, locations, sizes of site and quality of provision. An employment requirement and spatial strategy has been identified to deliver an appropriate distribution and quality of employment land to ensure that all towns, as key market areas, will have a sufficient and appropriate supply.
- 5.1.8. The identification of the employment requirement and the spatial strategy, inclusive of an assessment of all other reasonable alternatives, is set out in the Sustainability Appraisal (2018).
- 5.1.9. An assessment of employment land has been undertaken to identify sufficient land to allow for the delivery of required future economic development. The Northumberland Local Plan Technical Background Paper: Assessment of Employment Sites (2018), provides an explanation of the assessment and can be accessed via the Northumberland Local Plan evidence base. The Assessment of Employment Sites technical paper draws upon the findings of the Northumberland Employment Land Review (2011) and the Northumberland Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015) in order to determine the amount of employment land required within market areas to deliver identified economic development needs.
- 5.1.10. The Employment Land Review and the Employment Land and Premises Demand Study considered how the employment market, and therefore the

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<sup>23</sup> See 'Housing and Economic Growth Options Findings' 2018, (the 'PBA report').

demand for employment land, would be likely to function in Northumberland with its dispersed and varied geography. The 2015 Demand Study stated that:

*“there is no one view of what constitutes a market area as the views of individual occupiers will differ, some having specific locational requirements, others being more flexible. The market area will vary significantly depending on the size of the business, its customer base, the type of activity it is, and the economic sector in which they operate.”*

It concluded that, based on a review of the location of the County’s office and industrial stock, towns should be treated as individual market areas for delivering land to meet employment needs.

- 5.1.11. Both the 2011 and 2015 employment studies highlighted that although there is a surplus of employment land in certain parts of the County, there is a shortage in specific market areas. Allocating employment land within the established market areas, or towns, will support sustainable patterns of development. Within the part of the Green Belt where there are established boundaries, the Main Towns of Hexham, Ponteland and Prudhoe are not considered to provide sufficient capacity to accommodate the level of growth required to meet economic development needs. It is considered that the need to enable sustainable patterns of development by providing suitable employment land which can deliver the identified economic development needs, in line with the spatial strategy, constitutes exceptional circumstances to release land from the Green Belt.
- 5.1.12. The Assessment of Employment Sites (2018) technical paper sets out the rationale for the identification of proposed employment land allocations, including sites within the Green Belt. The assessment takes into account the type and quantity of employment need identified within each market area from the 2011 and 2015 studies. It also identifies the preferred location for employment land allocations. The preferred site locations were informed by the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) consultation (2018) and the Employment Land Site Options Appraisal (2018) which considered the suitability (including consideration of contribution towards Green Belt purposes), availability, achievability and deliverability of each site.
- 5.1.13. The NPPF requires that ‘all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development’ be examined before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify making changes to established Green Belt boundaries<sup>24</sup>. The way in which the strategy makes the best use of brownfield land, optimises densities and considers meeting need elsewhere in other authority areas, are considered indicators for whether exceptional circumstances are justified.

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<sup>24</sup> Paragraph 137, National Planning Policy Framework (2018)

- 5.1.14. The remainder of this section of the document justifies the exceptional circumstances for releasing Green Belt land in relation to each employment market area, including discounting all other reasonable options for meeting need. The location of changes to the Green Belt boundary to accommodate employment land and land safeguarded for future employment uses beyond the plan period are also established.

#### Hexham

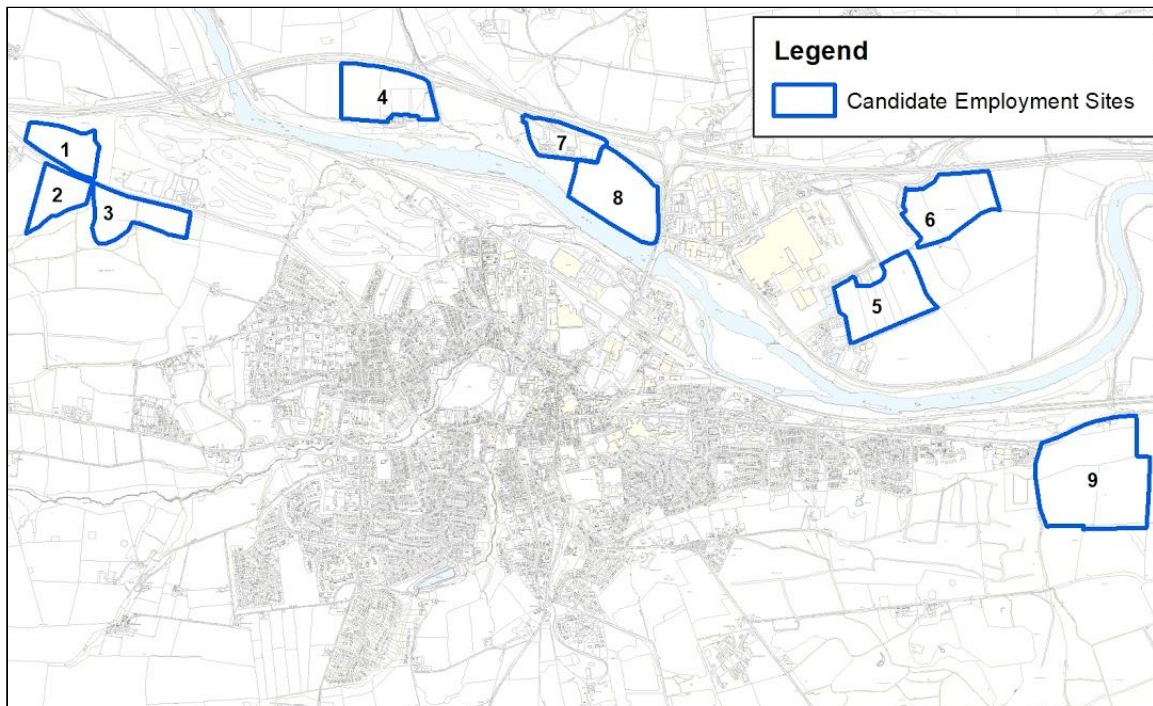
- 5.1.15. The Employment Land Review (2011) assessed the 11 existing employment areas around Hexham, including sites in the nearby village of Acomb. The assessment concluded that there is very little available land remaining for industrial and office uses and that there is an urgent need for new employment land to be provided. It was recommended that 10-15 hectares of additional employment land would be needed in Hexham and that due to the constraints of the town, the only suitable options that could be identified were within the Green Belt.
- 5.1.16. Subsequently, the 2015 Employment Land and Premises Demand Study confirmed that the market in Hexham had been suppressed by a lack of available employment land and agreed that an additional 10-15 hectares of office and industrial land would be necessary. It acknowledged that Green Belt release would be required to achieve this.
- 5.1.17. In terms of opportunities to optimise densities or redevelop sites to increase capacity, the Employment Land Review (2011) considered this possibility but highlighted feasibility and viability issues associated with intensifying sites. Within Hexham, the only opportunity for intensification of developed areas was identified to the south east of the Tyne Mills site. However, the assessment, taking this into account, still identified a need for 10-15 hectares of additional employment land. It is not considered that increasing densities or redeveloping sites to increase capacity of any other area is a reasonable option and is therefore discounted.
- 5.1.18. The Assessment of Employment Sites (2018) technical paper concludes that an additional 10 hectares of employment land are required to meet employment needs in Hexham. In order to deliver the spatial strategy, the need for additional employment land in Hexham must be delivered within the Hexham market area<sup>25</sup>. Therefore, options to deliver employment land elsewhere beyond the Green Belt or within other Green Belt inset areas are discounted. This includes meeting need in neighbouring local authority areas, as set out in the Council's Duty to Cooperate Statement of Common Ground.

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<sup>25</sup> The identification of the employment requirement and the spatial strategy, inclusive of an assessment of all other reasonable alternatives, is set out in the Sustainability Appraisal (2018).

- 5.1.19. The Employment Land Site Options Appraisal (2018) identified possible sites to deliver land to meet employment needs in Hexham, including those submitted through the Employment Land Review call for sites in 2010 and the Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) call for sites in 2018. The study could not identify any sites within the Hexham inset area. All candidate sites identified within the Hexham market area, as demonstrated in figure 5.1, are within the Green Belt.
- 5.1.20. Within the market area of Hexham, the lack of available or potential employment land outwith the Green Belt to meet the identified need for an additional 10 hectares of employment land is considered to constitute exceptional circumstances to release land from the Green Belt. The provision of suitable employment land which can meet the identified economic development needs in Hexham will support sustainable patterns of development in line with the spatial strategy.

**Figure 5.1: Assessment of candidate employment sites in Hexham (2018)**



- 5.1.21. The Employment Land Site Options Appraisal (2018) identified 9 potential employment sites within the Hexham employment area. Site 6 was identified to be the preferred employment site. The following conclusions were made in relation to less suitable sites:
- Sites 1-3: Greater impact on the Green Belt (area of high contribution towards Green Belt purposes) and the landscape;
  - Sites 4, 7 and 8: Constrained by poor access, and heritage / landscape assets (7 and 8 only);
  - Site 5: Constrained by adjacent uses and possible access constraints

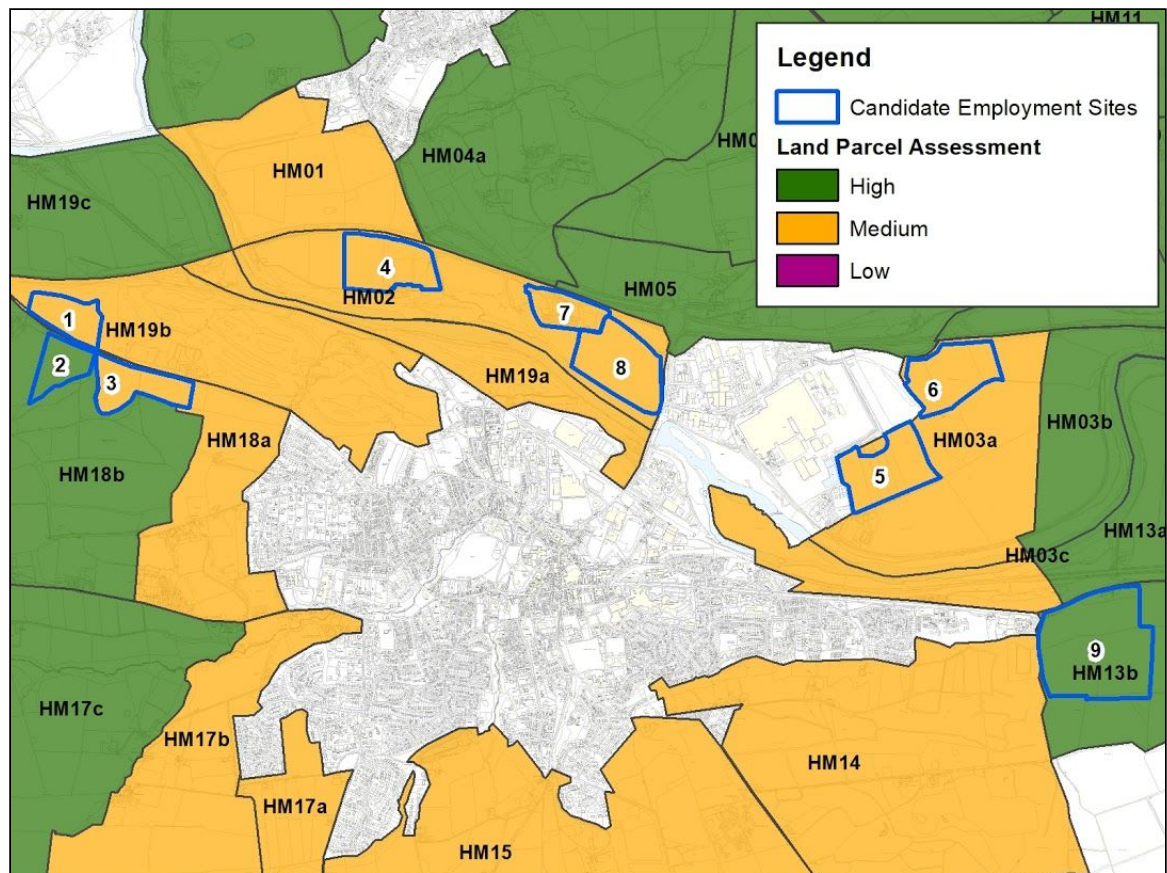
- Site 9: Greater impact on the Green Belt (area of high contribution towards Green Belt purposes) and the landscape, in addition to good quality agricultural land covering part of the site.

- 5.1.22. The NPPF states that when determining sites to release from the Green Belt, 'plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously developed and/or is well-served by public transport'<sup>26</sup>. All of the candidate sites are undeveloped, with the exception of site 7 which includes some grade II listed buildings. However, this site is not considered to be available for employment uses and the heritage constraints of the site would likely render the majority of the site undevelopable.
- 5.1.23. Sites closest to the east and north east of the town centre generally offer the best options in terms of access to public transport and choice of public transport, as the bus and train stations are located in this area. Sites 7 and 8 are the closest sites to the bus and train station, however are essentially cut-off to pedestrians by the dual carriageway to the east and north and by the river to the south. These sites and site 4 are also isolated from bus services for the same reason and are therefore the least accessible in terms of public transport.
- 5.1.24. Sites 5 and 6 would be the closest sites with access to the railway and bus station, with site 9 at only a slightly greater distance. However, access for pedestrians would require a 2km walk to both stations. While sites 6 and 9 benefit from direct access to bus services from roads bordering them, site 5 is slightly further away, approximately 0.5km from the nearest bus stop. Sites 1, 2 and 3 would be the furthest away from the bus and railway services, however the sites are situated along the B6531 and therefore benefit from direct access to bus services.
- 5.1.25. It is concluded that, on balance, sites 6 and 9 have the best access to public transport with sites 1, 2, 3 and 5 also offering good access to public transport.
- 5.1.26. In addition to prioritising areas that are well-served by public transport, impact on the Green Belt would also be considered a key factor in determining the most suitable location for Green Belt release. The land parcel assessments for Hexham set out in the Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Green Belt Review (2015), and reproduced in figure 5.2, show that sites 2 and 9 fall within areas of high contribution towards Green Belt purposes, while the remaining sites fall within areas of medium contribution.

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<sup>26</sup> Paragraph 138, National Planning Policy Framework (2018)

**Figure 5.2: Hexham assessment of land parcels against contribution towards Green Belt purposes (2015)**



- 5.1.27. Within the areas of medium contribution, sites 1, 3 and 4 would have the highest contribution towards green belt purposes as they are open areas with little urbanising influences, due to their detachment from the built form of Hexham. Although these sites benefit from containment of strong boundaries, their development would result in encroachment into the open countryside and would contribute towards sprawl.
- 5.1.28. Sites 7 and 8 are also open areas, physically separated from the settlement by the river and the A6079, but with visual connections to Hexham and close physical proximity to the existing built area. The wider land parcel is well contained, however development within this area would introduce an urbanising influence to a largely open area detached from the existing built form. Development of these sites would also breach existing strong boundaries of the current Hexham inset area.
- 5.1.29. Sites 5 and 6 are the only sites which would serve as a continuation of the existing built form. The existing boundaries are currently weak in this area and therefore development of these sites would not result in the loss of any existing strong boundaries of the current Hexham inset. The sites, although open in character, have urbanising influences from the existing industrial land adjacent.

Site 6 provides the best opportunities to identify strong Green Belt boundaries, however site 5 benefits from greater containment from the existing built form.

- 5.1.30. The assessment indicates that site 6 is the most suitable location for Green Belt release to accommodate employment development in Hexham. Of the 9 candidate employment sites, site 5 and 6 would be the most acceptable sites in terms of impact on the Green Belt. Of these sites, site 6 would have the best access to public transport and would therefore be a more sustainable location. Site 6 was also identified to be the most suitable site for employment purposes.
- 5.1.31. It is therefore proposed that site 6 be released from the Green Belt in order to deliver the identified need for an additional 10 hectares of employment land in Hexham.
- 5.1.32. Part of the Green Belt release proposed at Hexham will allow for sand and gravel extraction prior to becoming available for employment uses. The area of the employment site proposed for extraction forms part of a larger sand and gravel extraction site within the Green Belt. The land is not required for removal from the Green Belt for extraction purposes but it is intended that the land will be made available for employment uses within the plan period. It is anticipated that sand and gravel extraction and restoration of this site would help to stabilise the land prior to development for employment uses and alleviate flood risk. The Joint Aggregates Assessment for County Durham, Northumberland and Tyne and Wear (2018) and the Northumberland Site Appraisals for Aggregate and Mineral Sites<sup>27</sup> set out the need for aggregate minerals extraction allocations and the appraisal process undertaken for the selection of sites.

#### Ponteland

- 5.1.33. The Employment Land Review (2011) identified 3 existing employment areas within and surrounding Ponteland, including one site towards the airport and one site north of Ponteland. The assessment concluded that there is virtually no available employment space remaining. Very little capacity was identified for new industrial uses at the existing Meadowfield industrial estate and the other employment areas were considered either unsuitable or unavailable. In terms of office space, the main existing offering identified in the Ponteland market area was located at Prestwick Park and the assessment highlighted a demand for further office accommodation. It was recommended that 5 hectares of employment land be identified to accommodate both office and B-class uses. The only options that could be identified would involve some Green Belt release.
- 5.1.34. The 2015 Employment Land and Premises Demand Study confirmed that there is a shortage of available industrial and office space, finding the Meadowfield

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<sup>27</sup> Both documents can be accessed via the Evidence base and studies page on the Council's website at <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Reports.aspx>

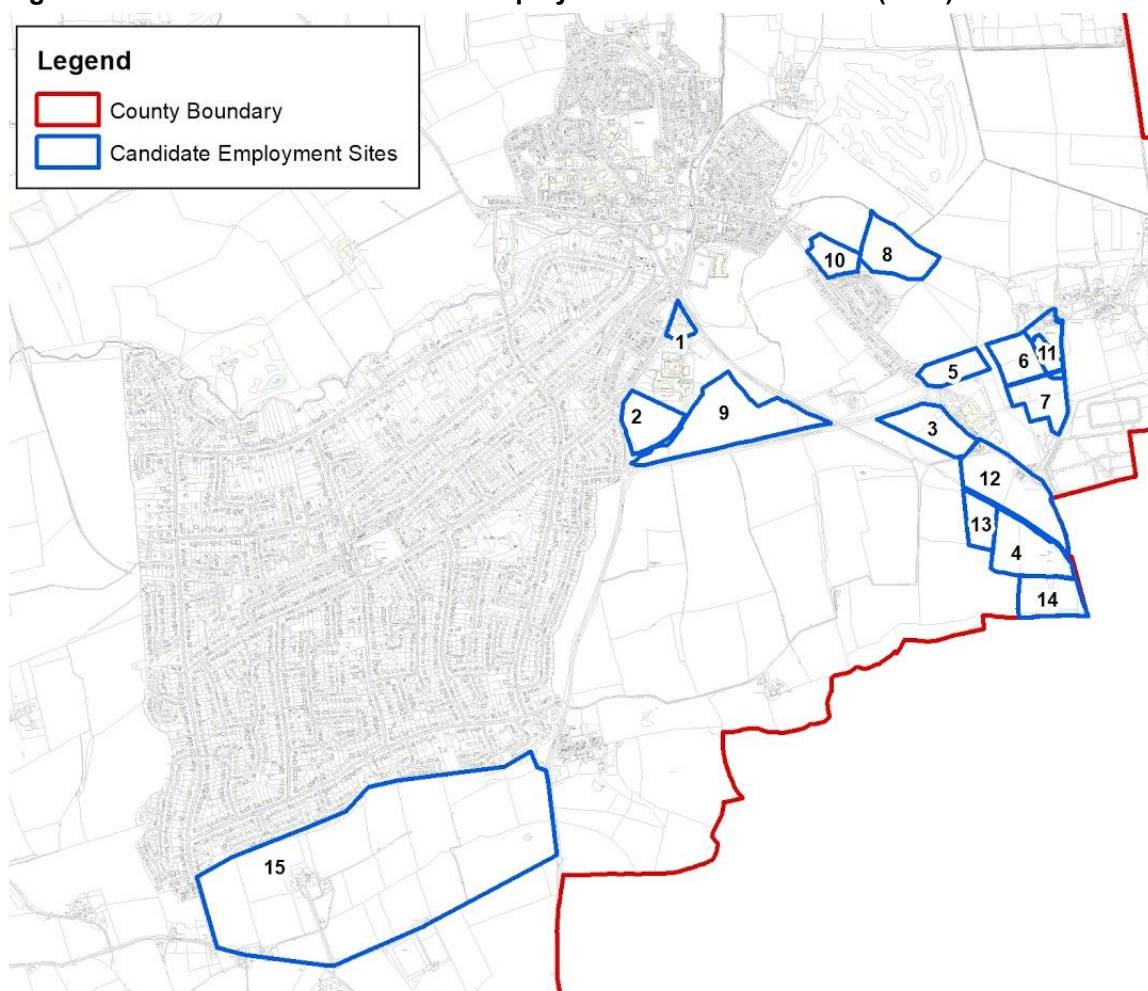
industrial estate to be at capacity. It recommended that around 5 hectares of employment land for B-class uses and office uses in the market area of Ponteland would be appropriate to deliver employment need.

- 5.1.35. In terms of opportunities to optimise densities or redevelop sites to increase capacity, the Employment Land Review (2011) considered this possibility but highlighted feasibility and viability issues associated with intensifying sites. Within Ponteland, no opportunities for intensification of developed areas were identified. It is not considered that increasing densities or redeveloping sites to increase capacity is a reasonable option and is therefore discounted.
- 5.1.36. The Assessment of Employment Sites (2018) technical paper concludes that an additional 5 hectares of employment land are required to meet employment needs in Ponteland. In order to deliver the spatial strategy, the need for additional employment land in Ponteland must be delivered within the Ponteland market area<sup>28</sup>. Therefore, options to deliver land to meet employment need elsewhere beyond the Green Belt or within other Green Belt inset areas are discounted. This includes meeting need in neighbouring authority areas, as set out in the Council's Duty to Cooperate Statement of Common Ground.
- 5.1.37. The Employment Land Site Options Appraisal (2018) identified possible sites to deliver employment needs in Ponteland, including those submitted through the Employment Land Review call for sites in 2010 and the Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) call for sites in 2018. The study could not identify any sites within the Ponteland inset area. All candidate sites identified within the Ponteland market area, as demonstrated in figure 5.3, are within the Green Belt.
- 5.1.38. Within the market area of Ponteland, the lack of available or potential employment land outwith the Green Belt to meet the identified need for an additional 5 hectares of employment land is considered to constitute exceptional circumstances to release land from the Green Belt. The provision of suitable employment land which can deliver the identified economic development needs in Ponteland will support sustainable patterns of development in line with the spatial strategy.

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<sup>28</sup> The identification of the employment requirement and the spatial strategy, inclusive of an assessment of all other reasonable alternatives, is set out in the Sustainability Appraisal (2018).

**Figure 5.3: Assessment of candidate employment sites in Ponteland (2018)**



5.1.39. The Employment Land Site Options Appraisal (2018) identified 15 potential employment sites within the Ponteland employment area. Sites 4 and 11 were identified to be the preferred employment sites to come forward within the plan period. The following conclusions were made in relation to other less suitable sites:

- Sites 1, 2 and 9: Not available for employment uses
- Sites 3, 5, 6, 7, 12 and 14: Potentially sensitive in terms of the Green Belt;
- Site 15: Potential market demand issues and greater impact on the Green Belt;
- Site 8: Not accessible;
- Site 10: Availability uncertain

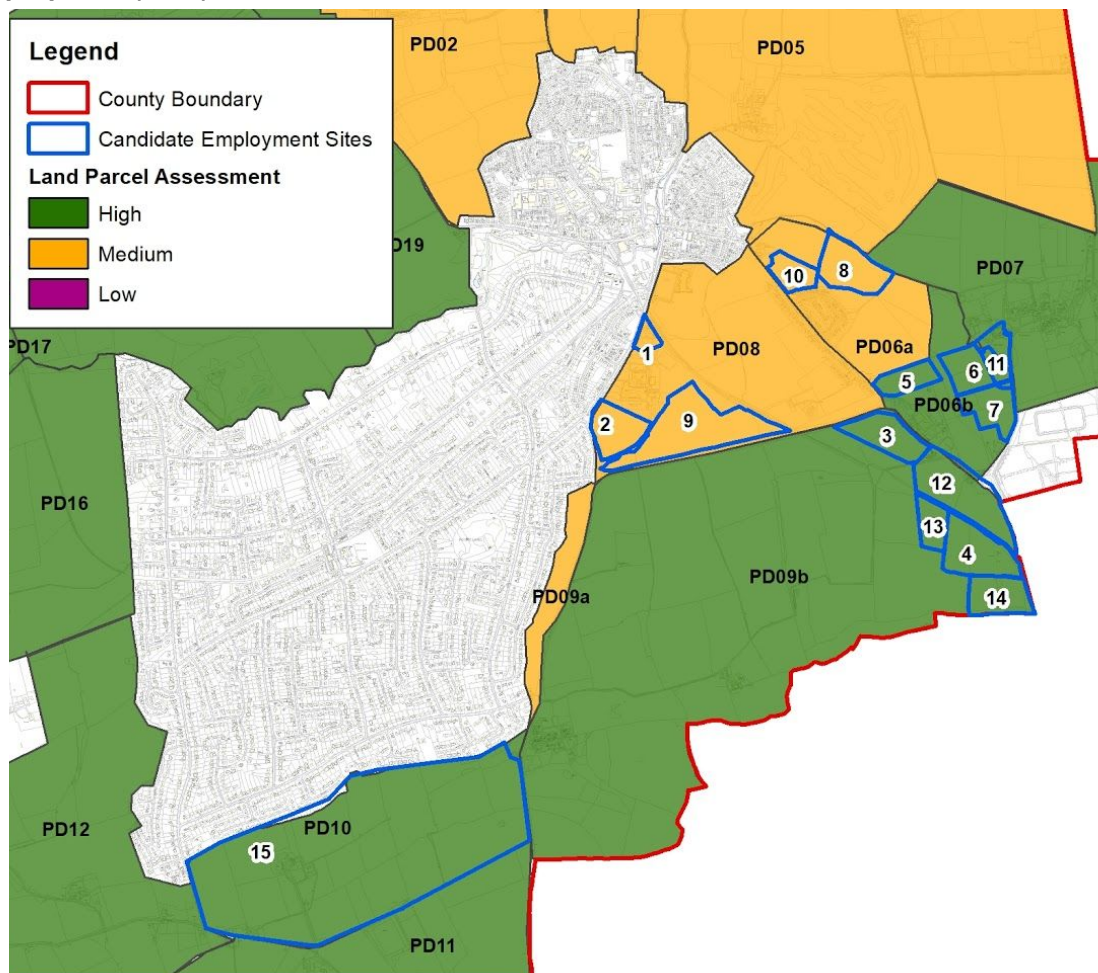
5.1.40. The NPPF states that when determining sites to release from the Green Belt, 'plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously developed and/or is well-served by public transport'<sup>29</sup>. The candidate sites are undeveloped, with the exception of sites 1 and 11 which contain some small

<sup>29</sup> Paragraph 138, National Planning Policy Framework (2018)

areas of existing buildings. However, site 1 is unavailable and the brownfield element of site 11 is currently in use as a business park.

- 5.1.41. In terms of public transport, it is mainly buses that serve the Ponteland area as there is no railway station in Ponteland. However, sites located near the airport inset, in particular sites 4, 12 and 14, are approximately 0.6 km walking distance from a metro station. These sites offer a better choice in terms of public transport as they are also accessible by bus, with a bus stop less than 0.4 km away. Sites 3, 5, 8, 10 and 12, which are situated along Cheviot View and Ponteland Road, have direct access to bus services and sites at Prestwick also benefit from easy access to bus services. Sites 1, 2 and 15 are located within 0.5km of a bus stop, however bus services are very limited to stops near site 15.
- 5.1.42. It is concluded that, on balance, sites 4, 12 and 14 have the best access to public transport as they are the only sites offering a choice of public transport options within close walking distance. All other candidate sites, with the exception of site 15, also offer good access to public transport.
- 5.1.43. In addition to prioritising areas that are well-served by public transport, impact on the Green Belt would also be considered a key factor in determining the most suitable location for Green Belt release. The land parcel assessments for Ponteland set out in the Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Green Belt Review (2015), and reproduced in figure 5.4, show that sites 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 fall within areas of high contribution towards Green Belt purposes, while sites 1, 2, 8, 9, and 10 are within areas of medium contribution.

**Figure 5.4: Ponteland assessment of land parcels against contribution towards Green Belt purposes (2015)**



- 5.1.44. Within the areas of medium contribution, sites 1 and 2 would have the least contribution towards Green Belt purposes as these sites would be contained to some extent by existing built form. There are urbanising influences from the adjacent built area and the sites benefit from opportunities to create strong boundaries. Sites 1 and 2 however are not considered available for employment purposes.
- 5.1.45. Site 10 would also benefit from strong containment of the existing built form but would connect the current Ponteland inset area with ribbon development along Cheviot view. Site 8 is largely detached from the existing built form of Ponteland and would contribute towards non-compact development in this area, though there would be opportunities to create strong boundaries to the north of the site. Site 8 is not accessible and the availability of site 10 is uncertain.
- 5.1.46. Site 9, if developed in isolation, would be detached from the Ponteland inset boundaries. The site comprises an entirely open, albeit contained area. Although the site is adjacent to the existing school, which has some urbanising influence on the site, it is separated from the school by strong boundaries to the west. This site is not considered to be available for employment uses.

- 5.1.47. It is concluded that although there are sites within the medium contribution land parcel areas that could be suitable for Green Belt release in terms of their potential impact on the Green Belt, there are no sites within these areas that are deliverable as employment sites. Sites within high contribution land parcel areas will therefore be considered to identify sites with the lowest potential impact on the Green Belt.
- 5.1.48. Within the high contribution land parcel areas, sites 3, 5, 12, 13 and 15 are considered to have the highest contribution towards green belt purposes. Site 15 would have the greatest impact in terms of encroachment into open countryside and would contribute towards sprawl. Sites 3, 5 and 12 are considered critical for maintaining the separation between Ponteland and the airport. Site 13 forms part of the open countryside, with no urbanising features and little opportunities for strong boundaries to be established.
- 5.1.49. Sites 6 and 7 are open areas that would form a continuation of development at Prestwick. The sites benefit from strong boundaries, however are not well-contained by the settlement and represent incursions into open countryside. Development of site 7 would significantly increase the risk of merger between Prestwick and the airport inset area, resulting in non-compact development that would contribute towards sprawl.
- 5.1.50. Site 11 offers a more contained area, which is better related to the existing built form, including some development within the site to the north. However, much of the site is open and there are limited opportunities to identify strong boundaries to the south of the site.
- 5.1.51. Site 4 has urbanising influences from the adjacent airport inset and the use of part of the site for waste management. The site is separated from the airport inset area by a dual carriageway to the east. Site 14 is an open area and, similar to site 4, has urbanising influences from the adjacent airport inset and the use of part of site 4 to the north for waste management. Release of either site in isolation would result in a non-compact and poorly contained extension to the airport inset area.
- 5.1.52. The assessment indicates that of the sites within the high contribution land parcel areas, sites 4 and 14 would together have the least impact on the Green Belt. These sites are also considered to offer the best access to public transport. In terms of employment suitability, these sites were assessed to be the most suitable areas for industrial uses. Sites 4 and 14 would not be able to accommodate the identified need for additional office space.
- 5.1.53. Of the potential office locations, site 11 would be the least sensitive in terms of Green Belt impact. The area also benefits from easy access to bus services. In

terms of suitability, the site is considered to be the most suitable location for office uses as it would serve as an extension to the existing business park.

- 5.1.54. It is proposed that sites 4 and 11 be released from the Green Belt in order to deliver the identified need for an additional 5 hectares of employment land in Ponteland over the plan period. In order to ensure that the boundaries of the area released have permanence beyond the plan period, allowing for compact and contained development in the long-term, site 14 is also proposed to be released from the Green Belt. This site is not needed to deliver the requirement for employment provision within the plan period but is anticipated to serve longer-term needs beyond the plan period.

#### Prudhoe

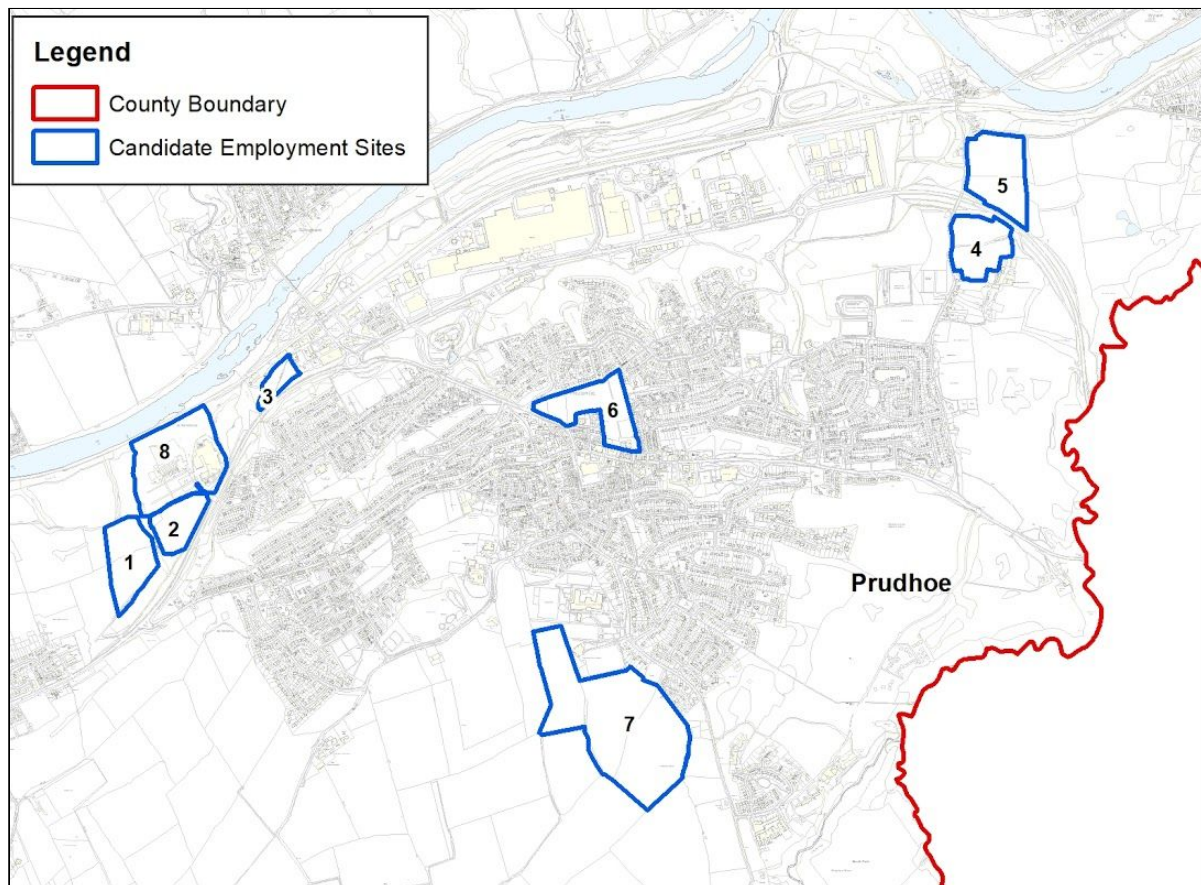
- 5.1.55. The Employment Land Review (2011) assessed 7 existing employment areas in and around Prudhoe, including sites in the nearby villages of Mickley Square and Stocksfield. The Low Prudhoe industrial estate and the Hammerite factory site at Eltringham comprise the existing employment land within Prudhoe itself. The assessment concluded that employment land in Prudhoe is reaching full capacity and that 10-15 hectares of additional employment land for industrial and office uses would be needed. Due to the constraints of the town, the only suitable options that could be identified were within the Green Belt.
- 5.1.56. The 2015 Employment Land and Premises Demand Study largely confirmed the findings of the Employment land Review but considered that an additional 10 hectares of office and industrial land would be sufficient to deliver needs. It acknowledged that possible site options would be within the Green Belt.
- 5.1.57. In terms of opportunities to optimise densities or redevelop sites to increase capacity, the Employment Land Review (2011) considered this possibility but highlighted feasibility and viability issues associated with intensifying sites. Within Prudhoe, no opportunities for intensification of developed areas were identified. It is not considered that increasing densities or redeveloping sites to increase capacity is a reasonable option and is therefore discounted.
- 5.1.58. The Assessment of Employment Sites (2018) technical paper concludes that an additional 10 hectares of employment land are required to meet employment needs in Prudhoe. In order to deliver the spatial strategy, the need for additional employment land in Prudhoe must be delivered within the Prudhoe market area<sup>30</sup>. Therefore, options to deliver land to meet employment need elsewhere beyond the Green Belt or within other Green Belt inset areas are discounted. This includes meeting need in neighbouring local authority areas, as set out in the Council's Duty to Cooperate Statement of Common Ground.

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<sup>30</sup> The identification of the employment requirement and the spatial strategy, inclusive of an assessment of all other reasonable alternatives, is set out in the Sustainability Appraisal (2018).

- 5.1.59. The Employment Land Site Options Appraisal (2018) identified possible sites to deliver employment needs in Prudhoe, including those submitted through the Employment Land Review call for sites in 2010 and the Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) call for sites in 2018. Of the identified potential employment sites, 3 of the 8 sites are located within the Prudhoe inset area. All candidate sites identified within the Prudhoe market area are demonstrated in figure 5.5.
- 5.1.60. Out of the 3 sites identified within the Prudhoe inset boundary, 2 are not available as they are permitted housing sites, and it is unknown whether the remaining site is available for employment purposes. The remaining site is also not of an adequate size (under 0.5 hectares) to deliver requirements and has some constraints that may affect the viability of the site.
- 5.1.61. Within the market area of Prudhoe, the lack of available or potential employment land outwith the Green Belt to meet the identified need for an additional 10 hectares of employment land is considered to constitute exceptional circumstances to release land from the Green Belt. The provision of suitable employment land which can deliver the identified economic development needs in Prudhoe will support sustainable patterns of development in line with the spatial strategy.

**Figure 5.5: Assessment of candidate employment sites in Prudhoe (2018)**

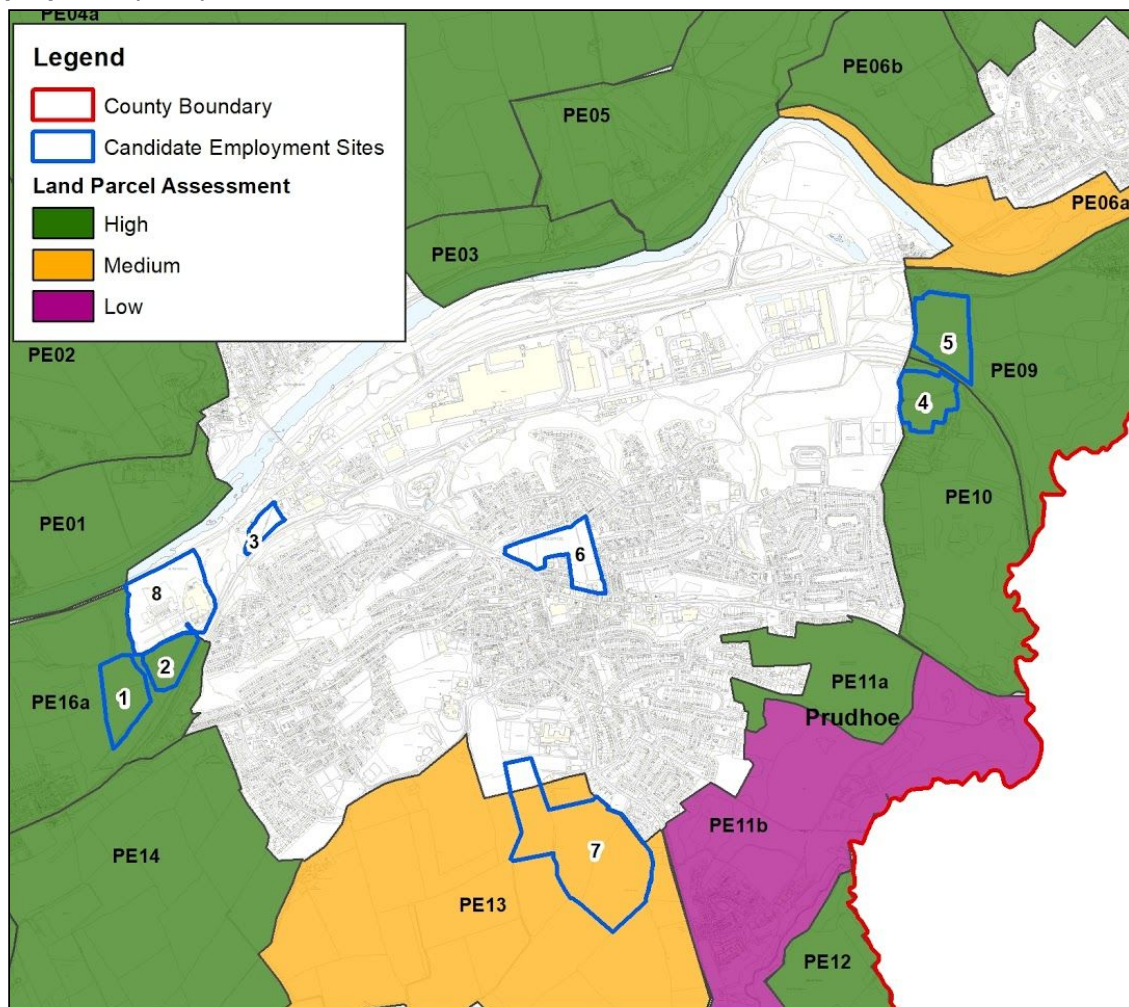


- 5.1.62. The Employment Land Site Options Appraisal (2018) identified 8 potential employment sites within the Prudhoe employment area. Sites 3, 6 and 8 are located within the Prudhoe inset boundary but have subsequently been discounted (see paragraph 5.1.60) and will not be subject to further assessment.
- 5.1.63. Site 2 was identified to be the preferred employment site. The following conclusions were made in relation to less suitable sites:
- Sites 1: Highways access issues, topography and landscape constraints as well as higher impact on the Green Belt;
  - Site 4 and 5: Uncertainty in relation to highways access, higher impact on Green Belt and constraints in relation to landscape, biodiversity and heritage;
  - Site 7: Highways constraints and landscape impact as well as poor marketability;
- 5.1.64. The NPPF states that when determining sites to release from the Green Belt, 'plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously developed and/or is well-served by public transport'<sup>31</sup>. All of the candidate sites are undeveloped. Sites 1 and 2 generally offer the best options in terms of access to public transport and choice of public transport, as they are closest to the train station and have easy access to bus services. Sites 4, 5 and 7 are within 0.5km of a bus stop but services are more limited in these areas.
- 5.1.65. It is concluded that, on balance, sites 1 and 2 have the best access to public transport with sites 4, 5 and 7 offering some, more limited, access to public transport.
- 5.1.66. In addition to prioritising areas that are well-served by public transport, impact on the Green Belt would also be considered a key factor in determining the most suitable location for Green Belt release. The land parcel assessments for Prudhoe set out in the Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Green Belt Review (2015), and reproduced in figure 5.6, show that sites 1, 2, 4 and 5 fall within areas of high contribution towards Green Belt purposes, while only site 7 is located within an area of medium contribution. However, the deliverability of site 7 is uncertain due to major highways constraints. Sites within high contribution land parcel areas will therefore be considered to identify sites with the lowest potential impact on the Green Belt.

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<sup>31</sup> Paragraph 138, National Planning Policy Framework (2018)

**Figure 5.6: Prudhoe assessment of land parcels against contribution towards Green Belt purposes (2015)**



- 5.1.67. Within the high contribution land parcel areas, sites 1 and 5 would have the highest contribution towards green belt purposes as they are open areas with little urbanising influences, due to their detachment from the built form of Prudhoe.
- 5.1.68. Site 4 is contained by strong boundaries and the developed area to the south of the site. Adjacent development has an urbanising influence on the site, despite its detachment from the main built-up area of Prudhoe.
- 5.1.69. Site 2 would have the least impact on the Green Belt as it is very well contained by strong boundaries and is adjacent existing built development, which has an urbanising influence on the site.
- 5.1.70. The assessment indicates that site 2 is the most suitable location for Green Belt release to accommodate employment development in Prudhoe. Of the 5 candidate employment sites, site 2 would be the most acceptable site in terms of impact on the Green Belt. Site 2 would also offer the best access to public transport and would therefore be a more sustainable location. Site 2 was identified to be the only deliverable site for employment purposes in Prudhoe.

- 5.1.71. It is therefore proposed that site 2 be released from the Green Belt in order to contribute towards the identified need for an additional 10 hectares of employment land in Prudhoe. Site 2 will not be able to deliver the entire employment requirement at Prudhoe, however as it is uncertain whether any of the other candidate sites would be deliverable, it is not possible to identify any further areas for Green Belt release.

## **5.2. Insetting currently washed-over settlements**

- 5.2.1. As the detailed boundaries of the defined Green Belt were revised and defined through different former district Local Plans, the treatment of settlements varies across the designation.
- 5.2.2. There are a number of settlements in the former Tynedale District area which were washed-over by the Green Belt but had boundaries within which limited infill development could take place. The NPPF advises that settlements should either be within the Green Belt and Green Belt policy applies; or should be specifically excluded from the Green Belt. Where settlements are washed-over by the Green Belt limited infill development is permitted by the NPPF.
- 5.2.3. The settlements with identified infill boundaries in the former Tynedale area are comparable in terms of scale and sustainability to settlements inset within other former district areas and the proposed inset settlements in the Green Belt extension. They also do not have an open character which contributes towards the openness of the Green Belt. This affects the strategic coherence of the policy approach to the Green Belt as a whole and conflicts with the approach to the Green Belt in the NPPF. It is considered that exceptional circumstances therefore exist to release Green Belt to allow new insets to be created.
- 5.2.4. The following settlements, previously washed over, have been inset from the Green Belt to improve coherence in policy approach across the wider Green Belt:
- Broomhaugh
  - Fourstones
  - Mickley Square
  - Newbrough
  - Wall
  - Whittonstall
- 5.2.5. Infill boundaries in the Tynedale Core Strategy have been used as a starting point for defining inset boundaries. The defined infill boundaries help to identify where the built form currently exists. In addition to the area within the current infill boundary, the inset boundaries include recent developments, extant planning

permissions (and minded to approve applications), and development allocations, where they are made or proposed. This is to ensure that inset boundaries align with the spatial strategy and that land which is unnecessary to keep permanently open is excluded from the Green Belt.

- 5.2.6. The inset boundaries also reflect adjustments which ensure that, in line with the NPPF, boundaries align with recognisable physical features that are likely to be permanent. Appendices II and III set out in more detail how identified boundaries address NPPF requirements<sup>32</sup> and prioritise readily recognisable boundaries that are likely to be permanent.

### **5.3. Amending minor boundary anomalies**

- 5.3.1. The Green Belt Review assessment has highlighted minor anomalies in the Green Belt boundaries that had been defined in the District Local Plans. In some cases the boundaries do not align to any physical recognisable features and therefore do not reflect the requirements set out in the NPPF<sup>33</sup>.
- 5.3.2. The revised Green Belt, as defined on the Northumberland Local Plan - Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19) Policies Map, reflects minor amendments made to the Green Belt to correct the identified anomalies.
- 5.3.3. Amendment of minor anomalies in the Green Belt boundary to align more accurately to physical edges have been defined in accordance with the following:
- Aligning to the nearest physically recognisable boundary or physical reference points, except where the change would result in anything more than a minor amendment or would affect the openness of the Green Belt, or the purposes of the designation; and
  - Where boundaries cut through buildings or curtilages of buildings, aligning to the curtilage/building where there is a physical boundary, except where the change would result in anything more than a minor amendment or would affect the openness of the Green Belt, or the purposes of the designation.

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<sup>32</sup> Paragraph 139, National Planning Policy Framework (2018)

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

## **6. Safeguarded Land**

### **6.1. Safeguarded land in the defined Green Belt**

- 6.1.1. In the defined Green Belt, exceptional circumstances have been identified to release land from the Green Belt for employment purposes. In order to meet long term employment requirements and avoid the need for another review of the Green Belt at the end of the Plan period, it was considered necessary to consider if, and where, land should be safeguarded.
- 6.1.2. The Employment Land Site Options Appraisal sets out the rationale for the identification of the most suitable employment land. The Northumberland Local Plan Technical Background Paper: Assessment of Employment Sites (2018) identifies employment land to be safeguarded for employment uses beyond the plan period at Ponteland. The site is located to the west of the airport inset area and will enable compact and contained development in the long-term. This site is not needed to deliver the requirement for employment provision within the plan period but is anticipated to serve longer-term needs beyond the plan period.
- 6.1.3. The Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan highlighted an aspiration to relocate the Meadowfield industrial estate out of the centre of Ponteland. The rationale supporting this was to enable the Meadowfield Industrial Estate to be allocated for mixed use development, including housing, to maximise the use of brownfield sites in Ponteland for housing. It was thought that this would also improve the vitality and viability of services and facilities in this central area. However, the constraints of the Green Belt prevented the delivery of this option.
- 6.1.4. There is not currently a need to allocate further housing sites in Ponteland, however the future use of the identified safeguarded employment land to the west of the airport could enable the delivery of future housing supply in Ponteland, in line with the aspirations of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Council will monitor housing and employment land need in Ponteland and consider the development of the identified safeguarded land as part of a plan review.
- 6.1.5. The following site has been safeguarded for employment uses beyond the plan period in the Northumberland Local Plan - Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19):
  - Area to the west of the Airport Inset boundary

### **6.2. Safeguarded land in the Green Belt extension**

- 6.2.1. As an essential characteristic of Green Belts is their permanence, it is important that the process of establishing Green Belt boundaries has regard to potential development needs arising in the long-term. Within the Green Belt extension around Morpeth, the inset boundaries have been defined to ensure permanence beyond the plan period.

- 6.2.2. It is considered that there are sufficient permissions for housing within Morpeth to deliver housing beyond the plan period. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) demonstrates that permitted sites to the north of Morpeth are anticipated to continue to be built-out beyond the plan period. It has therefore not been deemed necessary to identify safeguarded land for housing in the Green Belt extension around Morpeth.
- 6.2.3. In terms of employment land, there is only sufficient capacity identified to meet employment needs within the plan period. The Council has therefore identified a need to designate safeguarded employment land in Morpeth, in order to ensure that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be reviewed at the end of the plan period. The Northumberland Local Plan Technical Background Paper: Assessment of Employment Sites (2018) sets out the rationale supporting the identification of employment land, including the safeguarded land identified in Morpeth.
- 6.2.4. Land beyond the Neighbourhood Plan settlement boundary to the south of an existing industrial estate is identified to be the most appropriate location to safeguarded for employment needs beyond the plan period. This site is adjacent an established employment site and benefits from strong physical boundaries.
- 6.2.5. The following site has been safeguarded for employment uses beyond the plan period in the Northumberland Local Plan - Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19):
- Area south of Coopies Lane industrial estate

## Appendix I: Saved Policy S5 and Key Diagram

### Northumberland County and National Park Joint Structure Plan

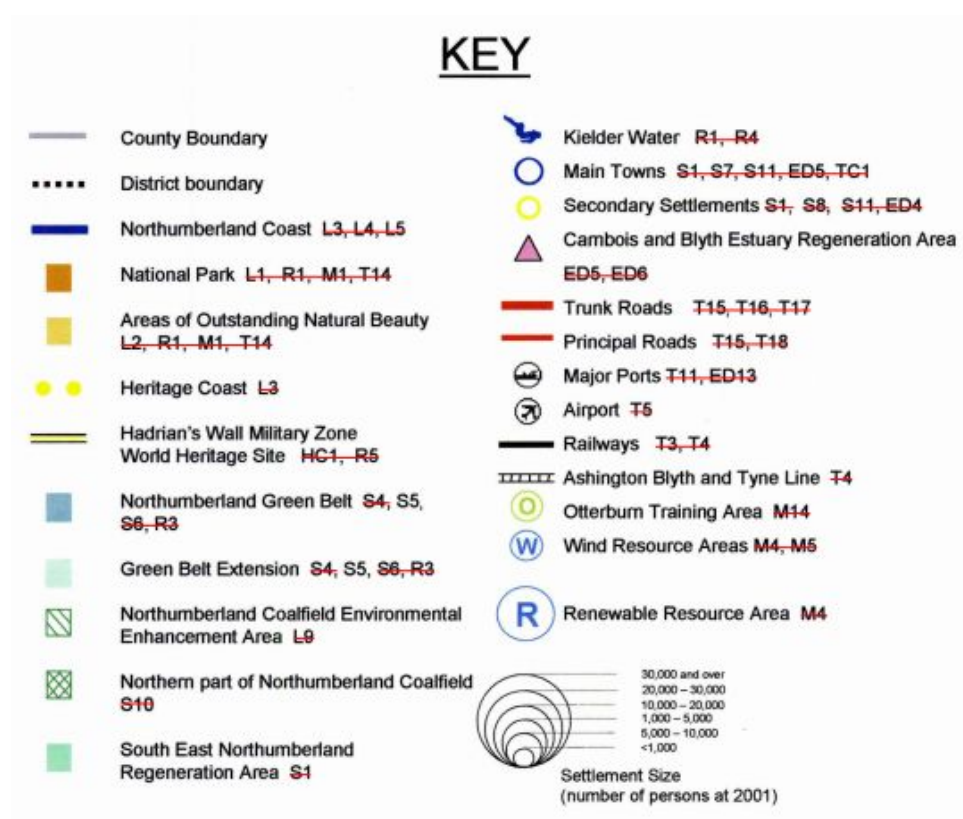
Within Northumberland, the [North East of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021](#) (published 15 July 2008) has replaced the all policies within the Northumberland and National Park Joint Structure Plan First Alteration (February 2005), with the exception of Policy S5 - Extension to the Green Belt. This policy is not being replaced in the interests of maintaining a satisfactory strategic planning framework for the preparation of Local Development Documents. Policy S5 – Extension to the Green Belt is detailed below:

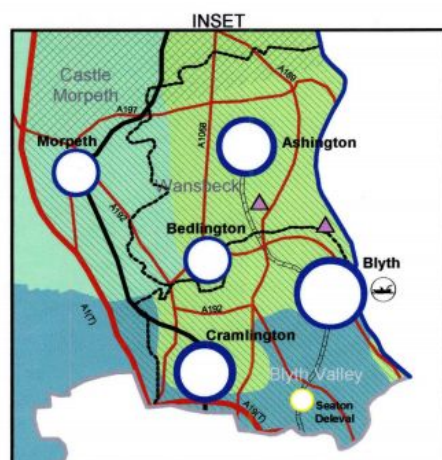
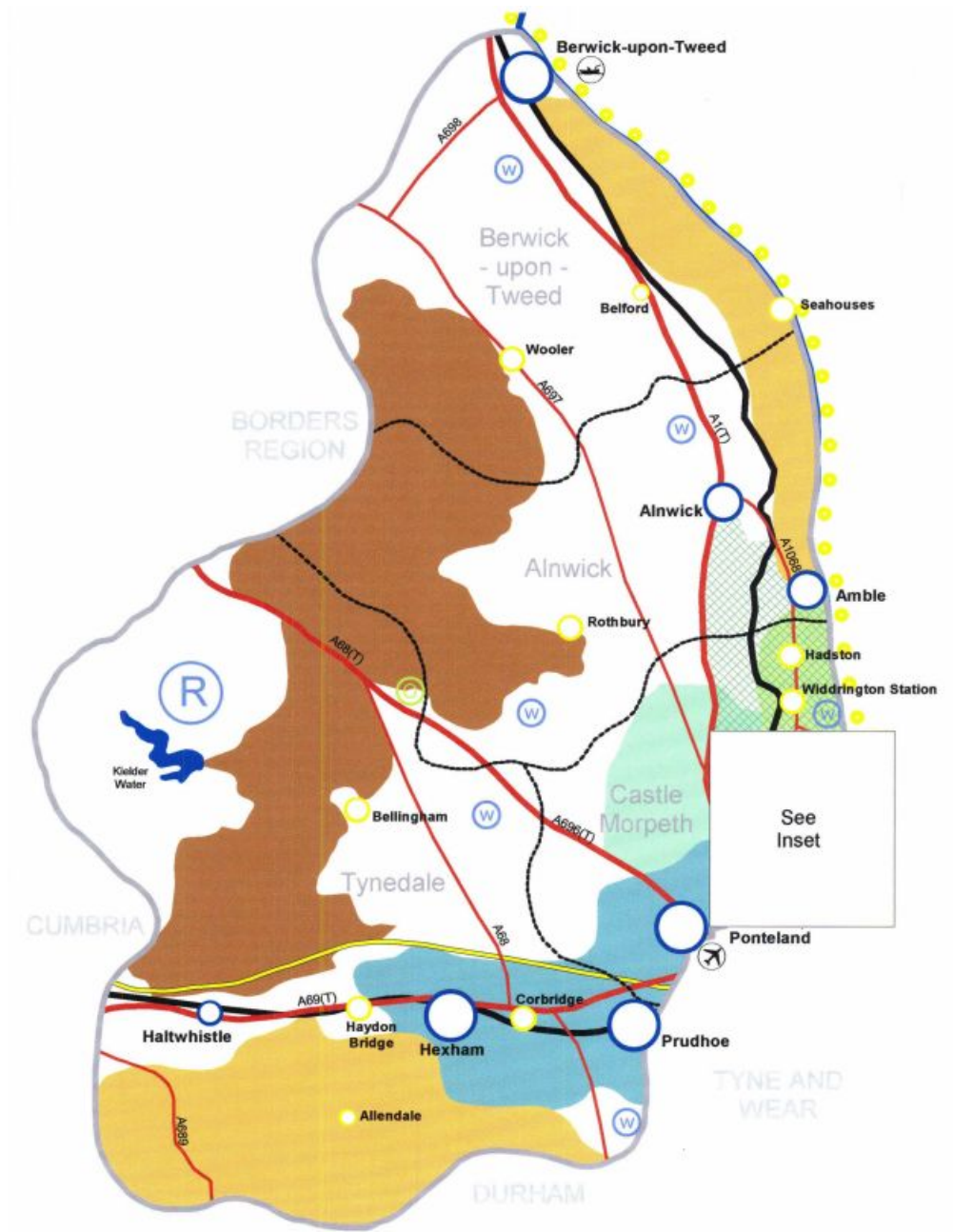
#### Policy S5 – Extension to the Green Belt

*An extension to the Green Belt will extend from the existing boundary northwards to lie:*

- *to the west of Netherwitton, Hartburn and Belsay;*
- *north of Longhorsley and west of Widdrington Station, excluding the Stobswood Opencast site;*
- *east of Pegswood;*
- *west of Ashington, Guide Post, Bedlington and the A1068; and*
- *east of Bothal, Hepscoth, Nedderton and Hartford Bridge.*

*Precise boundaries, including those around settlements, should be defined in Local Plans having particular regard to the maintenance of the role of Morpeth as defined in Policy S7 and to the sequential approach in Policy S11.*





## Appendix II: How identified boundaries address NPPF requirements

NPPF Requirement (para. 139)	Local Plan Approach
Ensure consistency with the Local Plan strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development	Sustainable settlements which help to deliver the spatial strategy are inset from the Green Belt. Allocations and permitted sites are included within inset boundaries as they contribute towards the identified requirements in the Local Plan.
Not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open	Sustainable settlements, which support the spatial strategy and which do not make an important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt are inset from the Green Belt. Allocations and permitted sites are included within inset boundaries as they are identified locations for development.
Where necessary, identify in their plans areas of 'safeguarded land' between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period	Land is identified to be safeguarded for employment needs beyond the plan period in Morpeth where Green Belt boundaries are being established and near Ponteland where Green Belt is being released for employment purposes. Safeguarded land for housing is not identified as established boundaries are not being altered for housing purposes and there is sufficient housing land supply in the saved policy S5 area to deliver needs beyond the plan period.
Make clear that the safeguarded land is not allocated for development at the present time. Planning permission for the permanent development of safeguarded land should only be granted following a Local Plan review which proposes the development	Policy STP 9 states that safeguarded land is not allocated within the plan period and development will only be permitted following the adoption of a replacement Local Plan which proposes such development.

<p>Satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the development plan period</p>	<p>Land is safeguarded for employment needs to ensure employment needs can be met beyond the plan period. Sites permitted for housing in the S5 area are anticipated to deliver beyond the plan period. White land within the Morpeth inset boundary but beyond the Neighbourhood Plan Morpeth settlement boundary could help to deliver future development needs.</p>
<p>Define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent</p>	<p>Inset boundaries were defined to align to defined durable physical features that are likely to be permanent and are logical and easily identifiable. See Appendix III. OS reference points and on-site features were compared to ensure boundaries align with the methodology.</p>

## Appendix III: Hierarchy of boundary types

Boundary Type	Application
Durable boundary aligning physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent: motorway; public and made road; railway line; river, stream, canal or other watercourse; prominent physical feature (e.g. ridgeline); protected or long established woodland/hedge; protected or long established wall; existing development with strongly established, regular or consistent plot boundaries.	Prioritised and applied except where it would result in the inclusion of land within the inset boundary that would relate more to the openness of the Green Belt and risk harming the purposes of the Green Belt. For example, where inclusion of land would risk encroachment into the open countryside.
Softer boundaries which may lack durability or permanence: fences, private/unmade roads; power lines, weakly bounded field boundaries, irregular plot boundaries, intermittent or young tree lines	Applied only where a more durable boundary is not available or where a more durable boundary would result in inclusion of land within the inset boundary that would relate more to the openness of the Green Belt and risk harming the purposes of the Green Belt.
Boundaries based on physical reference points but not following physical edge: boundary connecting 2 or more physical points that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent	Applied only where there are no durable or softer boundaries available or where those boundaries would result in inclusion of land within the inset boundary that would relate more to the openness of the Green Belt and risk harming the purposes of the Green Belt.

## **Appendix IV: Green Belt Settlement Definitions**

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

Sprawl - “the increased development of land in suburban and rural areas outside of their respective urban centres... often accompanied by a lack of development, redevelopment or reuse of land within the urban centers themselves”<sup>34</sup>

Washed-over: A term that refers to any village or hamlet or grouping of buildings which is itself part of the Green Belt designation – i.e. 'washed-over' by the Green Belt rather than inset within it – by virtue of their open character and/or important contribution to the openness of the Green Belt. Green Belt restrictions apply within these places with the exception that limited infilling may be permitted within the built-up area, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including the settlement in Green Belt in the first place.

Infill Boundary - A boundary drawn around part of the built-up area of a settlement that is washed over by the Green Belt, in order to reflect the fact that the area within the boundary contains opportunities for infill development which would not fit the description of 'limited infilling' but which would still be expected to preserve the openness of the Green Belt and not conflict with the purposes of including the settlement in Green Belt in the first place.

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<sup>34</sup> Cornell University Institute for Social Sciences, Department of Development Sociology, 2010, The Definition of Sprawl, available at [http://cardi.cornell.edu/cals/devsoc/outreach/cardi/programs/land-use/sprawl/definition\\_sprawl.cfm](http://cardi.cornell.edu/cals/devsoc/outreach/cardi/programs/land-use/sprawl/definition_sprawl.cfm)



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