



Northumberland  
County Council

# Northumberland Local Plan

Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19)  
showing proposed minor modifications

May 2019

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## Foreword

We are well on the way to completing a new Local Plan for Northumberland that will help to shape our County for the coming years until 2036 and as Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing and Resilience, I am pleased to have overseen its preparation.

Last year we asked you to give us your opinions on the draft Local Plan. We are extremely grateful to everyone who has participated. The feedback has been listened to, analysed, considered and factored into the amendments to the Plan. However, we have not been able to change everything that people want us to change, as evidence and government policy has kept us to a particular path.

It is essential that the Local Plan supports sustainable growth in the economy, sufficient affordable homes and choice in the housing market, while conserving our superb environment.

This Publication Plan sets out the vision and objectives, detailed policies and allocations of land, which will direct new workplaces, homes, services and facilities to where they are needed and wanted. Important infrastructure will be put in place in a timely manner and speculative applications for houses on unsuitable greenfield sites are expected to become a thing of the past. The Plan will allow communities to grow and thrive in order to meet our economic ambitions, without the danger of uncharacteristic development spoiling Northumberland's unique environment.

The Local Plan will replace a lot of dated plans prepared by the former District Councils and County Council. This will bring clarity for businesses, communities and individuals on which environmental assets we need to protect and where we need to build in the coming years.

This Publication Plan is the plan we intend to submit to the Government for examination and is the plan that the Council would like to adopt subject to that examination. The six week publication period gives you the opportunity to make any representations on the soundness of the Plan. This is not a consultation looking for changes to the document to be considered, but rather an assessment of whether the Plan has followed guidance and evidence and is therefore 'sound'.

The Introduction to this document explains how you can comment on whether the Local Plan is 'sound'. Our officers will be pleased to help you understand this important stage.

The Council really values your participation.



**Councillor John Riddle**  
**Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Resilience**

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## 1. Introduction

### What is the Development Plan?

- 1.1** The Development Plan is a set of policies, proposals and allocations setting out how and where land is to be developed with new homes, places of employment, services and facilities. Development Plans consist of Local Plans prepared by Local Planning Authorities and neighbourhood plans prepared by local communities. Together they form the statutory framework for future development of land and buildings.
- 1.2** In Northumberland, the Development Plan is currently made up of numerous dated plans - adopted Core Strategies that were prepared by the old pre-2009 Northumberland Districts and even more aged Local Plans, which contain 'saved policies' that have never been replaced, as well as the saved policy from the Northumberland Structure Plan. More recently, in some parts of the County, the Development Plan has been renewed and refreshed through neighbourhood plans.

### What is the Northumberland Local Plan?

- 1.3** The Northumberland Local Plan will be a single new Local Plan, covering the whole of Northumberland. It will replace all of the previous District and County Council Local Plan and Core Strategy documents.
- 1.4** All local planning authorities are required to have an up to date Local Plan. The Northumberland Local Plan will, when adopted:
- Set the strategic planning policies of the Council, taking account of key factors like population trends, economic growth, climate change, resources and environmental character;
  - Set the general scale and distribution of new development which is required to meet Northumberland's needs to 2036;
  - Provide the planning principles, including detailed 'development management' policies to guide decisions on planning applications;
  - Show in detail where new homes, workplaces and facilities will be located through allocations of land; and
  - Show key environmental designations and include site specific proposals for the conservation and enhancement of historic and natural assets.
- 1.5** Planning law states that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Therefore, the policies within the Northumberland Local Plan, together with those in neighbourhood plans, will be the starting point for the assessment of all planning applications.
- 1.6** The Local Plan must reflect the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (or 'NPPF') and associated Government legislation. It also sits underneath frameworks and strategies produced regionally and sub-regionally, including the

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Strategic Economic Plan for the North East prepared by the North East Local Economic Partnership (or 'NELEP'). Finally, the Council itself has its own strategies on the economy and community matters, to which the Plan has full regard.

### What is the area covered by the Northumberland Local Plan?

- 1.7** The Northumberland Local Plan covers the whole of Northumberland with the exception of the area of the Northumberland National Park, which is a separate local planning authority. Figure 1.1 illustrates the extent of the area covered by the Northumberland Local Plan.

**Figure 1.1 Northumberland Local Plan Area**



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## What exactly will the Northumberland Local Plan replace?

**1.8** The Northumberland Local Plan, when adopted, will supersede:

- The saved Policy S5 of the Northumberland County and National Park Joint Structure Plan Alteration (February 2005);
- The Core Strategies of the former Local Authorities of Alnwick (2007), Blyth Valley (2007), and Tynedale (2007) and the Blyth Valley Development Control Policies DPD (2007); and
- The saved Local Plan policies (under the Secretary of State's Direction) of the Northumberland Minerals Local Plan (2000), Northumberland Waste Local Plan (2001), Alnwick District Wide Local Plan (1997), Berwick upon Tweed Local Plan (1999), Blyth Valley District Local Plan (1999), Castle Morpeth District Local Plan (2003), Tynedale District Local Plan (2000), and Wansbeck District Local Plan (2007).

## What is the relationship with neighbourhood plans?

- 1.9** A number of communities across the County have prepared or are in the process of preparing neighbourhood plans. Once 'Made' (adopted) following independent examination, and agreed by the community following a referendum, these plans form part of the statutory Development Plan.
- 1.10** The scope of neighbourhood plans is determined by Town and Parish Councils in consultation with their communities. Neighbourhood plans may cover a wide range of topic areas and include land allocations; or they may be limited to selective topics or sites.
- 1.11** The County Council has a duty to support Town and Parish Councils engaged in neighbourhood planning. There are a number of Neighbourhood Plans in various stages of production across Northumberland. The position on progress will change across the life of the Local Plan and details of the update to date position can be found on the County Council's website.
- 1.12** The Local Plan has a key role to play in supporting neighbourhood planning. In seeking to meet the Basic Conditions all neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan for their area. To facilitate this, in accordance with national policy and guidance, the Northumberland Local Plan will set out clearly the strategic policies for the County. Neighbourhood plans should reflect these policies and should plan positively to support them. Specifically, neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan and must not look to undermine its strategic policies.

### What has been done so far to prepare this Local Plan?

- 1.13** The Council has consulted throughout the preparation of the Plan. The Spring 2018 consultation, which took place between 28 March and 2 May 2018, asked people to show the Council where, in their opinion, development should go and to flag up key issues, which they considered the Plan should address. The results of this consultation fed into the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan.
- 1.14** Consultation on the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan took place between 4 July 2018 and 15 August 2018, where people were invited to make comments on the proposed draft policies, which set out the strategy for future building and environmental matters, as well as identifying in detail which sites the Council had identified as places for future economic or residential development and where Green Belt and settlement boundaries would be drawn. The Draft Plan also covered the full range of planning topics, under the general headings of economic development, housing, connectivity and movement, the environment, the water environment, contaminated and unstable land, pollution and soil quality, managing natural resources and infrastructure, implementation and delivery. The results of this consultation have fed into this revised draft Local Plan - the Publication Draft Local Plan (Regulation 19).
- 1.15** The Council has also collected a substantial volume of evidence and worked with partner organisations such as statutory providers, the utilities, Town and Parish Councils and business community, to ensure that the content of the Plan is sound.

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

- 1.16** This document, the Publication Draft Local Plan (Regulation 19), represents the 'Publication' stage of the Local Plan process. It is an updated version of the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan, taking account of comments received including advice on policy wording from statutory bodies, as well as updated national planning policy and guidance. It has also been necessary to update some aspects of the evidence base and changes have been made to policies where required.
- 1.17** This is the final stage before the Local Plan is submitted to the Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government for Independent Examination. It is a formal, statutory stage in the production of Local Plan, as set out in Regulations.<sup>(1)</sup> For this stage representations must be based around the 'Tests of Soundness' that require the Local Plan to be 'Positively Prepared', 'Justified', 'Effective' and consistent with national policy:
- To be 'Positively Prepared', the Local Plan must be:
    - Prepared based on a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectivity assessed;
    - Is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so; and
    - Consistent with achieving sustainable development.

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



- To be 'Justified', the Local Plan must be:
  - Founded on a proportionate evidence base; and
  - An appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives.
- To be 'Effective', the Local Plan must be:
  - Deliverable over the plan period; and
  - Based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters.

**1.18** Following this stage, there will be a period of collation of the representations received and consideration of the issues raised. The Council will need to identify the key issues and consider whether any modifications are required to the Plan, to accompany the submission to the Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government for Independent Examination. An independent Planning Inspector will be appointed to undertake the Examination and to consider the soundness of the Local Plan having regard to all of the representations received. The Inspector may suggest modifications to the Local Plan that may be required, following which the Council will seek to adopt the Local Plan and it will become part of the Development Plan.

### How has the document been prepared?

**1.19** The Publication Local Plan has been informed by integral assessments; namely the Sustainability Appraisal and the Habitats Regulations Assessment, as well legal compliance documents. A substantial number of evidence based studies have also been used to inform the preparation of the Local Plan. The assessments, legal compliance documents, evidence base studies as well as various technical papers are available to view on the Council's website at: [www.northumberland.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/localplan).

### Duty to Cooperate

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

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

**The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies.**



- 1.21** The Council has worked closely with a number of bodies during the preparation of the Local Plan in accordance with the requirements under the Duty to Cooperate and has a body of evidence to support this. The collation of evidence on joint working culminating in the production of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Statement of Common Ground is ongoing, and the statement will be produced as a two stage document. The Stage 1 Duty to Cooperate Statement of Common Ground has been prepared to support the Publication Local Plan. This is available to view on the Council's website at: [www.northumberland.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/localplan). Prior to the submission of the Local Plan for examination, the full Stage 2 Duty to Cooperate Statement of Common Ground will be prepared. However, key strategies of note are those produced through the North East Combined Authority, the emerging North of Tyne Combined Authority, the North East Local Enterprise Partnership and the emerging Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal.

### Implementation

- 1.22** To ensure the vision and objectives set out in the Northumberland Local Plan are realised, various mechanisms exist to guide and manage implementation of the policies and proposals in the Plan. The main purpose of Local Plans is to address the spatial implications of economic, social and environmental change. National policy requires that Local Plans should set out the opportunities for development and create clear policies on what will or will not be permitted and where. Only policies that provide a clear indication of how a decision maker should react to a development proposal should be included in the Local Plan. The plan has been prepared in conformity with this requirement.
- 1.23** It follows that the most apparent means by which the Local Plan will be implemented is through the Development Management process. The Local Plan, once adopted, will be the starting point for the assessment of all planning applications. It will sit alongside any made neighbourhood plans which have equivalent status in the decision making process.
- 1.24** The Planning Acts require that, to the extent that development plan policies are material to an application for planning permission, decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This is a well established principle which recognises the primacy of the development plan in our plan-led system.
- 1.25** The Northumberland Local Plan provides a comprehensive set of planning policies to guide decisions on planning applications. Where appropriate, the Council may consider preparing more detailed guidance on certain topics through the creation of Supplementary Planning Documents. However, for the most part, it is expected that the policies in the Local Plan will provide sufficient clarity and precision, when read alone and when the Local Plan is read as a whole, such that they provide a practical framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made with a high degree of predictability and efficiency, in conjunction with any made neighbourhood plans, as required through national policy.

- 1.26** Whilst the express purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, the creation, management, maintenance, support and care required to foster sustainable communities requires much more than the delivery of sustainable development. It requires input from a wide range of organisations, agencies, businesses and individuals.
- 1.27** Accordingly, in addition to its role in shaping decision making, the Local Plan has been prepared in part to complement many existing and emerging strategies, policies and projects at a national and local level, outwith the town planning framework, and as a means of influencing the review of those strategies. These include the Northumberland Local Transport Plan, the Northumberland Economic Strategy, and the North East Strategic Economic Plan.
- 1.28** Effective and efficient implementation of policies in the Local Plan which are intended to support sustainable communities will depend upon continued management and coordination of activities and roles across a range of organisations, agencies and businesses. Northumberland County Council has a key role to play in this regard. As well as delivering and supporting the development of a comprehensive planning policy framework, the Council will work with stakeholders to proactively support the delivery of sustainable development. This will include working with: local communities; developers; landowners; service, utilities and infrastructure providers; and Advance Northumberland.
- 1.29** Supporting sustainable communities may involve securing the prudent use, and if necessary disposal, of Council owned land and assets to facilitate the rationalisation of service provision, for example: through the shared use of buildings for leisure and customer services. It may also involve direct delivery by the Council of appropriate development and supporting infrastructure. In exceptional circumstances the Council may use its powers of compulsory purchase to acquire land and premises where the purpose would align with the strategy and policies set out in the Local Plan and it is in the public interest to do so.
- 1.30** In the case of delivering development on large scale sites, the Council will seek to work with developers to prevent piecemeal development and ensure sites are developed comprehensively with coordinated delivery of infrastructure at the time it is needed to serve the development.
- 1.31** To support and secure implementation of the Local Plan the County Council will commit to undertake those actions identified below as implementation commitments:

### **Implementation commitments:**

The County Council will work proactively to bring about the delivery of the Northumberland Local Plan by seeking to:

1. Align its own plans, strategies, programmes and investment priorities to deliver the vision and objectives set out in the Local Plan;
2. Collaborate to influence the plans, strategies, programmes and investment priorities of other public bodies, infrastructure providers and other organisations to seek alignment with the Local Plan;
3. Support comprehensive and coordinated development of sites, including through masterplanning;
4. Support communities, through their Town and Parish Councils, who wish to develop neighbourhood plans or use other neighbourhood planning tools provided these are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Northumberland Local Plan, contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development, and help shape the growth and development of neighbourhoods in a positive way;
5. Make use of its legislative powers, including where necessary through land acquisition and compulsory purchase, where there is an identified need, to bring about development to meet the vision, objectives, strategy and policies of the Local Plan;
6. Influence and use public and private funding opportunities to maximum effect to deliver the Local Plan;
7. Monitor the implementation and achievements secured through the Local Plan throughout its existence at least annually; and
8. Through the monitoring process, and by maintaining an up-to-date evidence base, the County Council will implement appropriate measures to address any policies or proposals that fail to deliver anticipated outcomes or that become obsolete.

## How to get involved

- 1.32** Representations on the Publication Draft Local Plan (Regulation 19) are invited over a six week period between 30 January 2019 and 13 March 2019.
- 1.33** The Publication Draft Local Plan and the Policies Map showing the proposed land allocations and area-based designations can be viewed on our website at: <http://northumberland-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/localplan/reg19>. Hard copies of the Local Plan and Policies Map can also be viewed at libraries and at County Hall.
- 1.34** During the representation period, a number of drop-in sessions have been arranged across Northumberland to allow people to find out more about the Local Plan and how to make representations. Details of the dates, times and venues for these sessions are available to view on our website at [www.northumberland.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/localplan).
- 1.35** Representations on the Publication Draft Local Plan can be submitted online or by returning a response form by email or by post. The Council is encouraging people to submit their responses online but you may wish to submit responses by completing a response form, which is available from libraries and County Hall or can be downloaded from our website at [www.northumberland.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/localplan). Details of how to respond to the Local Plan using these methods is provided below:
- Online: Representations can be submitted via the consultation website at <http://northumberland-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/localplan/reg19>;
  - Email: [planningstrategy@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:planningstrategy@northumberland.gov.uk)
  - Post: Planning Policy, Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF.
- 1.36** All representations must be received by **5pm on Wednesday 13 March 2019**.

**As the Publication Stage is a statutory stage, we will not be able to accept representations beyond the six week response period - i.e. no further representations after 5pm on Wednesday 13 March 2019.**

### Next Steps - Timetable

**1.37** The timetable for the preparation of the Northumberland Local Plan is set out in the Local Development Scheme 2018-2021 (April 2018)<sup>(2)</sup>. The remaining key stages, informed by the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 are set out below.

**Table 1.1 Local Plan Timetable**

Key Stages	Date
<b>Regulation 19 - Publication of Local Plan</b> Consultation on Pre-Submission Draft (limited to 'Tests of Soundness')	January 2019
<b>Regulation 22 - Submission to Secretary of State</b>	May 2019
<b>Regulation 24 - Independent Examination Hearings</b>	September 2019
<b>Regulation 26 - Adoption of Local Plan</b>	March 2020

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2 The Local Development Scheme is available to view at: [www.northumberland.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/localplan)

## 2. Spatial Portrait

- 2.1** Northumberland is England's northernmost County, stretching from the Scottish Border in the north and west to Tyneside and County Durham in the south. The County is flanked by Cumbria, the Cheviots and North Pennines to the west and by the North Sea to the east. As such it is part of the North East Region of England.
- 2.2** The County, the largest unitary authority by geographic coverage with the greatest area of Green Belt of any Local Planning Authority, is also the most sparsely populated in England with only 63 people per square kilometre. Home to around 316,000 people, Northumberland remains mostly rural, with its largest settlements having no more than 40,000 residents. It is nonetheless diverse and different parts of the County have distinct characteristics, functions and needs contrasting from urban to rural, coastal to upland and well connected to remote.
- 2.3** The south east of the County is the most densely populated, with the three largest towns, Blyth, Cramlington and Ashington. These act as main employment centres, drawing from a wider area than just south-east Northumberland. They also provide a significant range of services in their respective centres and offer assets such as Northumberland College and large scale leisure facilities that have a wider reach. Beyond the south east, the County's main settlements are located along the Tyne Valley corridor, and on a north-south axis across the lowland coastal strip; both areas incorporate main roads and rail lines. Morpeth, Hexham, Prudhoe, Berwick-upon-Tweed and Alnwick are the main market towns, all of which have significant rural hinterlands. The predominantly rural areas of the County are interspersed with smaller towns, some with their own hinterlands, as well as numerous villages, hamlets and isolated farmsteads.
- 2.4** Areas in the south of the County have the strongest relationship with the Tyne and Wear conurbation. Tyneside attracts people from Northumberland, who reach into the area for work, education, cultural activity and shopping. To a lesser extent areas in the north and west of the County have relationships with the Scottish Borders, Edinburgh and the Lothians and Carlisle.
- 2.5** Northumberland's rural villages are still closely linked to agriculture, which is the lifeblood of much of the County. Many have been sustained by tourism, although the needs of this industry have created development pressures. Part of their attractiveness is the organic way in which they have grown within their landscape settings. The forestry sector is very important to the economy of the North of England and Northumberland, which has a very large timber industry from harvesting to production. Kielder Forest, for example, is the largest man made forest in Europe and the largest working forest in England.

### Natural, historic and built environment

- 2.6** Northumberland's environment is distinctive in terms of its natural beauty and historic significance. The sweeping landscapes and seascapes, important wildlife habitats, iconic landmarks and characteristic towns and villages are hugely valued, not just by local inhabitants, but also by the many visitors from across the region and beyond.

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**2.7** Superimposed on Northumberland's internationally recognised natural assets is a rich cultural heritage - a legacy of archaeological sites and structures and historic buildings, settlements and landscapes. The relatively undeveloped nature of the County has allowed often exceptional levels of preservation for some parts of the historic environment.

**2.8** There are numerous designated areas and sites, many of which are recognised internationally and nationally, for their nature conservation, geological, landscape or heritage value. Most notable are:

- Northumberland National Park (a separate local planning authority area);
- Northumberland Coast and North Pennines Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB);
- Historic landscapes, reflective of past forms of habitation and cultivation;
- Areas of international biodiversity and geo-diversity importance, mostly concentrated along the coast and in more remote upland areas;
- 9 National nature reserves, and more than 100 Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- Over 200 Local Wildlife and Geological Sites, ~~of which there are over 200 in Northumberland;~~ and 23 Local Nature Reserves;
- 3 Marine Conservation Zones;
- Kielder Water and Forest Park;
- Frontiers of the Roman Empire: Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site (WHS);
- Northumberland International Dark Sky Park;
- Northumberlandia human landform sculpture;
- Several Registered Historic Parks and Gardens surrounding some of the County's castles and stately homes;
- Numerous Registered Battlefields;
- 69 conservation areas marking out historic villages, town centres and other unique built environments;
- Well over 5000 nationally Listed Buildings and Structures - approaching half of all those in the North-East - including many of great significance, including Norman castles, country houses, fortified farmhouses, and buildings associated with the County's diverse economic, social, religious and cultural legacy; and
- Around a thousand Scheduled Monuments, (approximately half of which are within the boundary of the National Park).

**2.9** There are also highly important assets that are less easy to attribute to an exact location, such as some of the protected species. The County's many environmental assets do not all receive statutory protection. It is important to consider the County's biodiversity, historic environment and ecosystems as a whole in terms of the threats that they face and the opportunities they present. Many natural and built assets are vulnerable to development and human activity and some heritage assets remain 'at risk'; all of these need careful protection, enhancement and/or management, including through planning decisions. Northumberland's natural, historic and built environment presents many opportunities to raise people's awareness and understanding of, and attachment to, their environment. This ranges from outdoor learning for children and young people through communities being empowered to



protect the environments that are important to them to tourists and day visitors appreciating Northumberland's unique assets. The natural environment also plays a role in making a positive contribution to the health of the population.

## Economy and employment

- 2.10** Northumberland makes a major contribution to regional and national prosperity. It is home to major globally competitive and connected companies, niche producers and providers of excellent products and services. Northumberland is at the heart of the northern economy, sitting between the competitive city economies of Newcastle and Edinburgh, with good links to national and international markets via Newcastle Airport, the strategic road and rail network and the Port of Blyth and the region's other sea ports. There is increasingly good digital connectivity, which includes rural parts of the County.
- 2.11** The Northumberland economy has grown steadily in recent years. However, Gross Value Added (GVA), which is an economic measure of the value of goods and services in an area, is lower than both the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) area and national rate of growth. This can be explained by low productivity which points to the need to improve the quality of jobs and skills in Northumberland, and attract new business in higher value sectors.
- 2.12** The structure of the County's economy has undergone substantial change over the past 30 years. There has been a downsizing of the agricultural workforce and the complete departure of deep coal mining. The economy now has a broader base which incorporates manufacturing and certain service sectors. There is particular reliance on the public sector although as elsewhere, this sector has been reducing. Significantly there has been a decline in manufacturing employment, including some of the newer sectors that replaced mining and heavy industry, reflecting national trends. Unlike past periods of change, there has not been a parallel growth in high value service sector employment although there is potential for strong growth.
- 2.13** Northumberland has relatively healthy levels of economic activity and employment with both being greater than the regional rate, (although slightly below the national rate) in 2017. The Northumberland unemployment rate in 2017 was also lower than the regional average, at 5.0% and this has continued to fall.
- 2.14** However, these levels vary significantly across the County. The Plan therefore needs to support a quantitative increase in the number of jobs in the County, in order to provide suitable job opportunities for people to move into employment, alongside support for skills initiatives to enable the County's current labour force to meet the requirements of businesses. The spatial distribution of areas of high unemployment and economic inactivity shows that the issues are most acute in the south east, pointing to the need to provide opportunities accessible to this population. However, those living in more peripheral rural parts of the County can struggle to access employment and training opportunities due to the cost and infrequency of public transport.
- 2.15** There are a number of key positive features of the Northumberland economy:

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- Small businesses dominate the economy with 89% of enterprises employing fewer than ten people in 2017;
- Many small businesses are leading edge in their sectors and are a vital part of the economy;
- A number of the larger companies are high tech and operate globally;
- New business start-ups are generally resilient, with failure rates below the regional and national average; and
- Although the number of new business ventures established is proportionately lower than elsewhere in the UK, in certain settlements, such as Hexham, Morpeth, and Ponteland, it has been relatively healthy.

**2.16** In contrast, the number of large firms is comparatively low, with only 0.2% of the total number of businesses employing over 250 people in 2017, compared to an average of 0.4% across North East England. The wider benefits large firms bring such as supply chain growth and skills development are desirable and it is important therefore that Northumberland is as flexible as possible to accommodate major inward investment and the growth of indigenous businesses.

**2.17** Northumberland's economy, is intrinsically linked to the economies of neighbouring areas, Tyneside in particular. The 2011 Census showed a net outflow of commuters from Northumberland of over 23,000 people – mostly between Northumberland and Tyneside.

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

**2.19** The growth of high quality service jobs can be strongly influenced by lifestyle factors, given the ability to attract highly skilled workers. Improving telecommunications will allow for remote operation of such businesses. Northumberland's beautiful and historic market towns and its attractive rural landscapes provide key opportunities to attract mobile, highly skilled migrants likely to bring or establish such businesses, and to be a focus for business start-ups in creative and knowledge based service industries. Continued improvement in the quality of telecommunications is vital to achieving this. The County offers the scope to attract the higher value service jobs, serving wider markets and growth in the service sector is forecast to be strong whilst there are key opportunities for certain creative and tourist related industries.

**2.20** However, the geography of Northumberland means that the locations where sites and infrastructure are available, are not always where businesses want to locate, and in particular where the site characteristics complement growth sectors; but the County offers significant opportunity to improve on this position.

## Education and skills

- 2.21** The Northumberland labour market in terms of educational attainment, skills, earnings, and forms of employment is geographically and socio-economically split. In 2017 the average weekly earnings of Northumberland residents in full time employment was 8.6% higher than the average weekly earnings of people working in full-time Northumberland based jobs. Looking at average hourly earnings (excluding overtime) the differential is nearer 11%. This illustrates the fact that the County's higher earning and more skilled residents commute out of the County for work.
- 2.22** Northumberland's residents achieve higher qualifications than the north east average, but this is still low when compared to the national figure. This, combined with the lack of appropriate training, could limit the County's ability to grow and diversify in relation to the national economy<sup>(3)</sup>. However, the proportion of residents with no qualifications is lower than both the regional and national average.
- 2.23** In terms of school level attainment there has been a steady increase in the percentage of young people in Northumberland attaining 5 or more GCSEs (at A\* to C or an equivalent) – reaching 77% of those aged 16 to 64 years old by 2017, compared to 73% in North East England. Attainment of 2 or more A levels (or equivalent) by young people aged 19 in Northumberland has also increased steadily since 2005. By 2017 54% of those aged 16 to 64 years old had this level of qualification, compared to a North East England figure of 52%<sup>(4)</sup>.
- 2.24** Turning to Higher Education, looking at the adult population as a whole, (aged 16 to 64) 35% have one or more high level qualifications<sup>(5)</sup> in 2017– higher than the regional average, but lower than the national average. However, there are geographical variations within the County: there is evidence that the proportion of young people in the south east entering higher education, equates to only half the proportion doing so from the rest of the County. The North East of England's universities were by far the most popular destinations for undergraduate and postgraduate students, aiding the likelihood of retaining local graduates. As Northumberland does not have a university many people in the 15 to 24 age group leave the County, predominantly for further and higher education and do not return at the same rate. However, Northumberland College, which is the largest training provider in the County, has made and continues to make significant investments in upgrading facilities, and has a strong reputation.

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

4 [www.northumberland.gov.uk/Campaigns/Knowledge/State-of-Northumberland.aspx](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Campaigns/Knowledge/State-of-Northumberland.aspx)

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

### Population of Northumberland

- 2.25** The population of Northumberland is ageing and the significance of this demographic change makes it a major policy issue for the prosperity and resilience of Northumberland Communities: Between 2016 and 2036 there is projected to be a significant increase in those over 65 (by almost half), with those over 80 years of age doubling in number. Conversely, the core working age population of 20 to 64 year olds is projected to decrease by over 12%.
- 2.26** Due to these demographic patterns and the Office for National Statistics forecasts it is predicted that without positive policy intervention the County's population will increase by only 1.8%. By contrast, the UK population is projected to increase by 5.5% in just the first ten years of this period.
- 2.27** If this does occur, projections show that it would result in a significant reduction in working age population and a subsequent reduction in the number of working people in Northumberland. As a result, there could be a consequent reduction in the ability of Northumberland to provide a labour force to existing or potential employers who want to locate in the County. Whilst older people, particularly those retiring to Northumberland, have the potential to bring spending power with them to support the local economy, an ageing population profile will place a steadily increasing strain on already stretched healthcare services. This coupled with a reduction in the working age population has significant potential to impact on the future sustainability and resilience of Northumberland's communities. The projected make up of the population, without policy intervention, forms probably the most important aspect of the context of this Local Plan.

### Housing

- 2.28** Currently there are approximately 152,000 dwellings across Northumberland. Many of these are in the larger settlements in the south east, together with market towns across the County. However, there are also a significant number of dwellings in smaller villages and hamlets. While the majority of dwellings meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard, including all Council owned stock, maintaining and enhancing the quality of the existing stock remains a challenge, with much of it in private ownership. Given the rural nature of the County, some communities are not connected to the gas network, and rely on oil **or electricity** to heat their homes. Many rural homes are also more difficult to insulate, as a result of their age and type, adding to the cost of maintaining a home in these areas.
- 2.29** In addition to improving the existing stock, a key challenge is to ensure that there are sufficient homes, of the right type, of a high quality, in the right locations to meet the needs of Northumberland's current and future population. The provision of new homes not only will meet a need but also free up and allow better use of existing properties as people find accommodation better suited to their needs.

- 2.30** Given the size, and diverse nature of Northumberland different housing issues are apparent across the County. While housing delivery has been strong in recent years, there are parts of the County where few dwellings have been built. While homes that have been built have met the needs of some people, the availability and affordability of housing, to buy or to rent is a significant problem in parts of the County, and given the demographic profile of Northumberland, ensuring there are homes to meet the needs of older people now, and in the future remains a challenge.

## Health

- 2.31** Northumberland presents a mixed picture in terms of the health of its citizens and consequent health and social care needs. Both men and women in the County have a higher healthy life expectancy than in the North East LEP area, (only slightly lower than the England average). However, the ageing population and its dispersed nature, mean that calls on adult social care are greater than for more urban parts of North East England. There are hotspots of deprivation in older households in the south-east of the County and, here, life expectancy is lower than in the rest of Northumberland.
- 2.32** Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust has invested significantly to enhance healthcare provision across Northumberland and in North Tyneside. This investment includes a new Specialist Emergency Care Hospital (SECH) at Cramlington to serve Northumberland and North Tyneside that opened in 2015; improving and refurbishing Hexham and Wansbeck General Hospitals, and replacing Haltwhistle Memorial Hospital with a new purpose-built facility to form an integrated health and social care scheme. In Berwick-upon-Tweed, the NHS Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is currently working with partners at Northumbria Health Care Trust and Northumberland County Council to consider alternative healthcare arrangements.
- 2.33** Despite these improvements in facilities around the County and the presence of a range of more local healthcare facilities in other towns and villages, access to healthcare remains a challenging issue, especially in deprived and more remote rural communities.

## Transport and infrastructure

- 2.34** Northumberland is served by both strategic roads and railways. The main transport links are shown in Figure 2.1. It is crossed north to south by the A1 strategic road and East Coast Mainline railway, and east to west by the A69 strategic road and Newcastle to Carlisle rail line. The Tyne Valley rail line also connects with the transport interchange at Carlisle Station and from there, north - south. The A69 and the Tyne Valley rail line also connect the area with the Tyneside conurbation and its links north-south. Newcastle International Airport is located on the southern edge of the County. Carlisle Airport lies to the west of the County and is scheduled to commence commercial passenger services from Spring 2019, which will serve to widen the air passenger offer available within the Borderlands area.

- 2.35** As the most sparsely populated County in England, Northumberland faces challenges of connecting remote rural communities, and sometimes, unavoidable reliance upon car based travel. Northumberland is interdependent with neighbouring areas, including the city regional economies of both Tyne and Wear and Edinburgh. These factors present specific issues for ensuring the mobility of knowledge, people, goods and services.
- 2.36** Commuting is a major consideration in the County. The daily outflow of commuters from Northumberland to Newcastle has increased steadily. There is a two-way flow, but out-commuting, mostly to Newcastle, North Tyneside and Gateshead, exceeds in commuting by a ratio of 2:1. This places pressure on transport infrastructure including roads and public transport. The latest information demonstrates that the net outflow is falling: it has decreased by 19% between 2001 to 2011, as more workers commute into Northumberland, and effective connections across boundaries will remain crucial to the County's success.

### Minerals, waste and energy

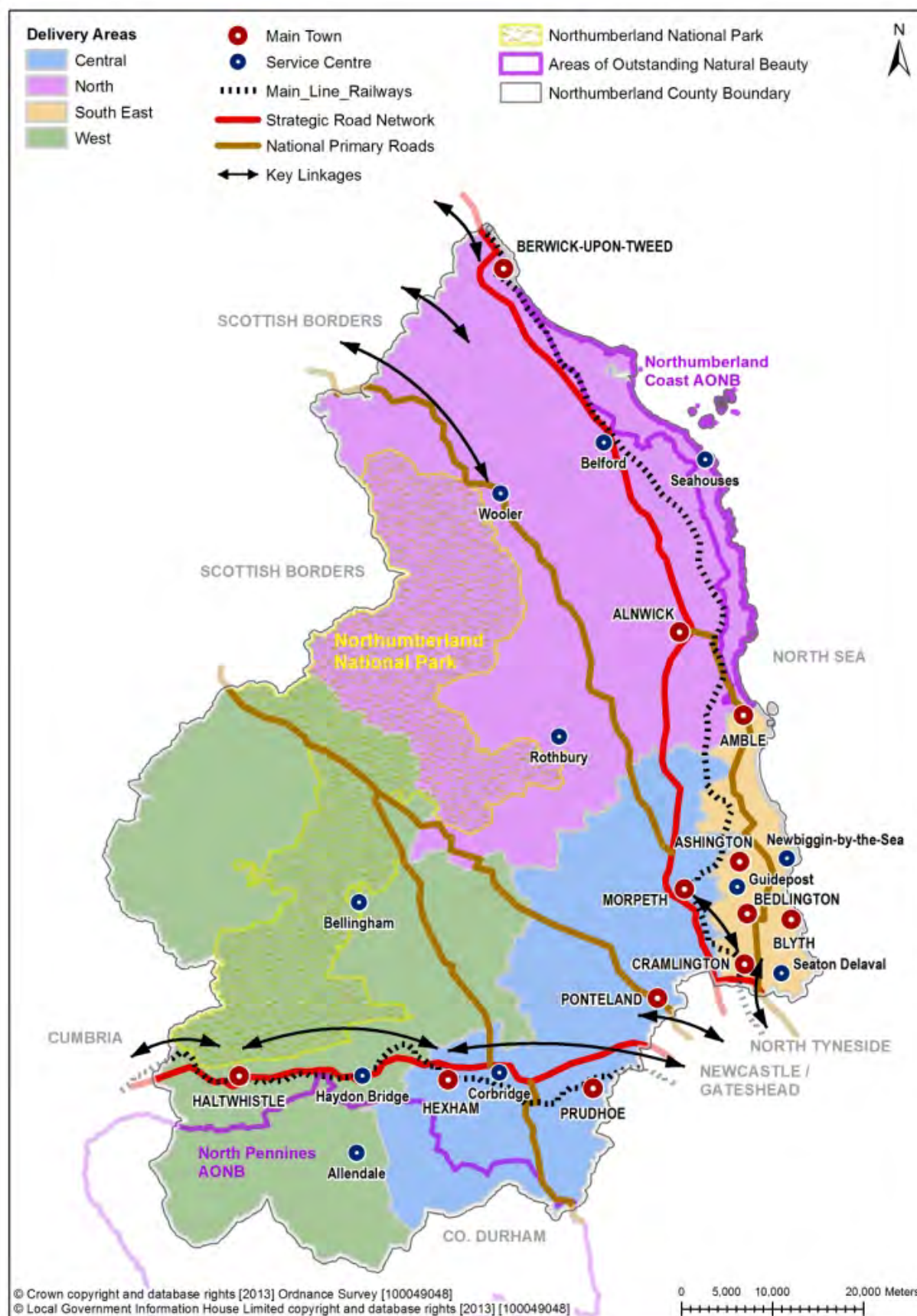
- 2.37** Northumberland is rich in a number of mineral deposits. Where they are or may become of potential economic interest as a basis for the extraction of a commodity then they can be considered as a mineral resource. The minerals currently extracted in Northumberland include Carboniferous limestone, clay (including brick clay, brick shale and fireclay), coal, igneous rock, sandstone and sand and gravel. These provide the materials necessary to support the infrastructure, buildings, goods and energy that both society and the economy needs.
- 2.38** Households, businesses and other institutions produce a range of wastes. Wider policy seeks to minimise the amount of waste generated and where waste is generated manage it as a resource rather than disposing it. This has meant a move away from landfill as a method of managing waste to more sustainable waste management practices. Northumberland has a network of facilities to manage materials collected for recycling, re-use and other recovery but opportunities exist for new or enhanced facilities to further improve resource recovery.
- 2.39** Renewable and low carbon energy is currently generated from a number of sources in Northumberland. Sources include anaerobic digestion, biomass, heat pumps, hydro, onshore wind and solar photovoltaics. Northumberland's potential to provide renewable and low carbon energy from these sources must be balanced against landscape, heritage and local amenity considerations.

### Delivery Areas

- 2.40** Northumberland is large and diverse and different parts of the County have distinct characteristics, functions and needs. The Delivery Areas are shown in Figure 2.1.



Figure 2.1 Delivery Areas in Northumberland



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### 2.41 The four Delivery Areas:

- Are defined in terms of their social, economic, and cultural characteristics;
- Take account of the roles and relationship between towns and villages across Northumberland; and
- Take account of the interaction of places with adjoining areas, particularly Tyneside and Scotland.

### 2.42 Defining Delivery Areas has helped the Council to:

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

### 2.43 However, a Countywide policy approach remains appropriate in some instances.

### 2.44 The remainder of this section provides some context to each of the areas of Northumberland.

## South East Northumberland Delivery Area

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

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

### 2.46 The Green Belt extends across parts of the area to prevent coalescence with the Tyneside conurbation to the south. There are important green infrastructure links along the coast, many of which are protected by nature conservation designations. The landscape of the area was historically dominated by coal mining. While examples of this mining heritage are retained, notably at Woodhorn, the majority of mining sites in the area have now been restored and provide important ecological and recreational resources. Surface coal mining is still present and makes a valuable contribution to the local economy. There is one coal producing site at Shotton, which overlaps into the Central Delivery Area. A further site, at Ferneybeds near

Widdrington Station, has been granted planning permission but has yet to commence. Potland Burn and Butterwell are currently being restored and former workings at Steadsburn and Stobswood are now largely restored.

### Population

- Most densely populated part of Northumberland at 737 people per square kilometre, with 163,239 people in 71,630 households;
- While the population is ageing, the proportion aged over 65 (17.6%) is smaller than in the other Delivery Areas and it has the largest proportion of younger residents aged up to 15 years (17.9%)<sup>(6)</sup>.

### Roles of the Main Towns and Service Centres

- 2.47** Amble, Ashington, Bedlington, Blyth and Cramlington provide the largest concentrations of housing, employment, retailing and services within the area.
- 2.48** **Amble** is a key centre in the northern part of the Delivery Area. It is Northumberland's most important fishing centre and has an important tourism role as a result of its location at the southern approach to the Northumberland Coast AONB and the establishment of a marina. It has a small catchment area that stretches across into the North Delivery Area, taking in villages such as Warkworth.
- 2.49** **Ashington** was once a centre of the coal mining industry. The town now plays an important strategic employment role in the County and includes the strategically important Ashwood Business Park. Northumberland College and Wansbeck Hospital are also located in the town.
- 2.50** **Bedlington**, together with the linked settlement of Bedlington Station provides housing for those working in the neighbouring towns and commuting to Tyneside. Given the close proximity of larger towns, services provided predominantly serve the local market, however the redevelopment of the town centre will strengthen the role of the town.
- 2.51** **Blyth** has a strategically important employment function. There is significant economic growth potential around the Blyth Estuary, which includes sites with Enterprise Zone status. Opportunities exist that build on existing assets including the national Offshore Renewables Catapult, and the Port of Blyth which is a sizeable commercial port with a deep-water harbour and warehousing facilities. Specific sectors being targeted include offshore oil and gas, renewables and advanced manufacturing. The town is on the edge of the Green Belt which lies to its south.
- 2.52** **Cramlington** has a sub-regional role as a centre for industry and houses the largest concentration of manufacturing businesses in Northumberland, including a cluster of pharmaceuticals companies. It is a prime location for inward investment because of the quality of its environment and road network. The redevelopment of the town

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6 Northumberland Knowledge 2011 Census Fact Sheet - South East Delivery Area



centre, including a cinema, and a new specialist emergency care hospital to the east of Cramlington has strengthened the role of the Town. The town is on the edge of the Green Belt which lies to its south and west.

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

### Housing – development pressure and delivery

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

### Transport

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

### Employment

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

- 2.56** Key opportunities for future economic growth:

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

### Relationship with other areas

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

### **Central Northumberland Delivery Area**

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

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

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

### Population

- The population density is 83 per square kilometre, with 78,976 people in 33,713 households;
- The proportion of the population aged over 65 is relatively high, compared to the county as a whole, at 22.1%, as is the proportion aged up to 15 years at 16.8%<sup>(7)</sup>.

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7 Northumberland Knowledge 2011 Census Fact Sheet - Central Delivery Area

### Roles of the main towns and service centres

- 2.60** Morpeth, Hexham, Ponteland and Prudhoe are the key hubs for housing, employment, retailing and services.
- 2.61** **Morpeth** is a historic market town, serving a wide rural hinterland that extends into the North Northumberland Delivery Area. It has a commuter housing role due to good transport links and the close proximity of the Tyneside conurbation, although significant numbers also work and use services within Morpeth. It also has a strong relationship with the South East of the County, particularly Cramlington. This has been strengthened through the construction of the Morpeth Northern bypass, which will facilitate development to the North of the town and remove some through traffic from the ancient market town centre.
- 2.62** **Hexham** is a historic market town in the Tyne Valley. It serves a wide rural hinterland that extends into both the North Northumberland and West Northumberland Delivery Areas. It has a longstanding local employment, housing and service centre role with good transport links to the Tyneside conurbation and into Cumbria. Its auction mart is regionally and nationally significant. The town serves as a gateway to the Northumberland National Park and to the Hadrian's Wall Heritage Site. It has an important commuter housing role for Tyneside. Future growth of the town is constrained by the Green Belt.
- 2.63** **Ponteland** is a town that provides services to a wider rural area, although not to the same extent as Morpeth and Hexham. Ponteland looks to Newcastle upon Tyne for its main employment, retailing and services and provides an executive housing offer for those commuting to Tyneside and the wider region. While the vacating of the Police Headquarters complex has provided some expansion opportunity on brownfield land, the settlement's further growth is constrained by the Green Belt.
- 2.64** **Prudhoe** is located on a hillside, overlooking the Tyne Valley, close to the Tyneside conurbation. Within the influence of Tyneside, it has a commuter housing role but also has a longstanding local employment, housing and service centre role. Future growth of the town is constrained by the Green Belt.
- 2.65** **Corbridge** is a village of great historic and architectural significance. It has a commuter housing role but also is an important service centre, which provides services to a wider rural area. It looks to Hexham for its higher services. The village is surrounded by the Green Belt.
- 2.66** Other smaller settlements within the area also provide local services to their resident communities, many of which are surrounded by or located in the Green Belt.

### Housing – development pressure and past delivery

- 2.67** Much of the Central area of the County is covered by Green Belt; this has sought to protect the countryside from encroachment from the Tyne and Wear conurbation and maintain the separation of settlements. This area has some of the highest levels of development pressure within Northumberland, largely due to the ease of commuting into Tyneside. House prices are high, resulting in affordability pressures

across the area. Past planning policies, including the former Regional Spatial Strategy, have constrained development across the Central area, through Green Belt designations, low housing targets and policies to restrict development in the countryside. In the former Castle Morpeth area, despite Morpeth and Ponteland being identified as the focus for new housing development in the Castle Morpeth Local Plan, in accordance with regional planning policy at that time, the majority of housing development [prior to 2016](#) has taken place in the Morpeth hinterland and former coalfield areas and not the main settlements.

### Transport

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

### Employment

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

### Relationships with other areas

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

### North Northumberland Delivery Area

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

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

#### Population

- Much of the Area is sparsely populated, with an overall density of 26.3 people per square kilometre, and a population of 53,585 in 24,246 households;
- With 23.7% of its resident population aged over 65, it is the Delivery Area with the largest proportion of older residents, and its proportion of younger residents, up to 15 years (15.4% of the population), is the smallest<sup>(8)</sup>.

#### Roles of main towns and service centres

- 2.71** The towns of Berwick-upon-Tweed and Alnwick are the key locations for housing, employment, retailing and services within the area.
- 2.72** **Berwick-upon-Tweed** is the northernmost market town in Northumberland, one of England's outstanding historic towns and a key hub between the conurbations of Edinburgh and Tyneside. Its history and geography give the town a unique sense of place and it is a popular tourist destination.
- 2.73** **Alnwick** is another of Northumberland's important historic market towns, providing services for a wide rural hinterland; the centre is dominated by the 11th century castle. Alnwick Castle and [The](#) Alnwick Garden are popular tourist attractions.
- 2.74** **Belford and Seahouses** provide a range of services to support the local communities and the tourism industry. Seahouses is a key hub for visitors to the North Northumberland coast and the Farne Islands.
- 2.75** **Rothbury** is the largest settlement in western Coquetdale with its services supporting its resident population and those people who live in the more remote villages, including those in the Northumberland National Park. The village acts as a gateway to the Park for visitors and has important relationships with Alnwick and Morpeth.

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8 Northumberland Knowledge 2011 Census Fact Sheet - North Delivery Area

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

**2.77** Other smaller settlements within the area also provide local services to their resident communities.

#### Housing – development pressure and past delivery

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

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

#### Transport

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

#### Employment

- The towns of Berwick-upon-Tweed and Alnwick have large industrial estates, with smaller estates in settlements such as Wooler, Rothbury and Belford;



- The port of Berwick-upon-Tweed is important to the wider area; it is capable of handling larger freight vessels and is considered to have an important role in increasing exports and catering to the visitor industry;
- There are a number of small harbours in the area, at Beadnell, Craster, Holy Island and Seahouses, which primarily support the local fishing industry. Seahouses provides access by boat for visitors to the Farne Islands, and this function is important to the visitor economy;
- Tourism is an important employment sector in coastal settlements, both year round and seasonal;
- Further inland, there remains a reliance on the traditional rural industries but tourism is becoming increasingly important.

### Relationship with other areas

- The Area is influenced by the Tyne and Wear conurbation in terms of travel to work, but not to the same extent as the Central and South East Areas;
- The north of the Area, in particular Berwick-upon-Tweed, is influenced by the Edinburgh City-Region, which extends across the Scottish Borders and which is the focus of a strategic growth strategy. Proposals for expansion in the central Scottish Borders and the re-opening of the Waverley line could also have implications for the social and economic well-being of the north section of the Area;
- There are strong links with the town of Amble in the South East Northumberland Delivery Area, especially from Alnwick and intervening villages such as Warkworth.

## **West Northumberland Delivery Area**

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

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

### Population

- The West Northumberland Delivery Area is the most sparsely populated in the County, with 11.2 people per square kilometre; it has the lowest population of the four areas with approximately 20,228 people in 8,945 households;
- The proportion of population aged up to 15 years is small at 15.5%, while 21.5% are aged 65 years or older<sup>(9)</sup>.

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9 Northumberland Knowledge 2011 Census Fact Sheet - West Delivery Area

### Roles of main towns and service centres

- 2.81 Haltwhistle** is the largest settlement in the Area; it is located in the South Tyne Valley. It grew as an industrial town when the Newcastle to Carlisle railway opened in the 1830s. It is a hub for housing, employment, retailing and other services, and is one of the key gateways to Hadrian's Wall. Haltwhistle has good links with Hexham, Carlisle and Cumbria, and is served by the high school at Haydon Bridge.
- 2.82 Bellingham** is the largest settlement in the North Tyne Valley and provides services to a wide rural hinterland. It grew as an agricultural market town during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For a time the village had industries associated with surrounding coal and iron working and it was linked by railway to the rest of the North East, as well as Scotland. Bellingham acts as a gateway for people visiting the National Park and Kielder Water and Forest Park. It looks to Hexham for many higher level services. An increasing number of residents commute to Tyneside.
- 2.83 Allendale** is located within the North Pennines AONB in the East Allen Valley. Its main role is as a local centre for housing and services, supporting the agricultural sector and tourism. The village is within commuting distance of Tyneside.
- 2.84 Haydon Bridge** is located in the South Tyne Valley, west of Hexham. While it is within the commuting influence of Tyneside, its main role is as a local housing and service centre for its immediate surroundings. The main high school in the south-west of the County is located in Haydon Bridge.
- 2.85** Other smaller settlements within the area also provide local services to their resident communities.

### Housing – development pressure and delivery

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

### Transport

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



### Economy

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

### Relationships with other areas

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

### **Key issues**

**2.89** The spatial portrait identifies a number of key issues which the plan proposes to address. These include the need to:

- Improve the quality of jobs and skills to attract new businesses in high value sectors, improve economic activity in the south of the county and improve access to jobs in rural areas;
- Attempt to stem the decline in the age of the working age population to prevent a consequential reduction in the ability to provide a labour force to existing or potential employers who want to locate in the County, reduce the increasing strain on already stretched healthcare services, and enhance the future sustainability and resilience of Northumberland's communities;
- Provide a mix of quality well designed housing, in the right places, to meet the diverse needs of current and future population, including homes which are affordable, and which meet the needs of an increasingly ageing population;
- Ensure that there is good and equitable access to good health care facilities, and that new development enables people to live healthier lives;
- Ensure that the County's many natural and ~~built~~ heritage assets are carefully protected, enhanced or managed to ensure that their vulnerability to development and human activity is minimised;
- Ensure the County is well connected in terms of transport, broadband and telecommunications, to ensuring the mobility of knowledge, people, goods and services;
- Ensure an adequate supply of minerals is maintained to support the county's economic ambitions, and that opportunities to minimise waste, and utilise renewable energy resources are embraced, but that these needs are balanced against landscape, heritage and local amenity considerations.

### 3. Spatial Vision, Objectives and Outcomes

#### Vision

- 3.1** The vision sets out what the Local Plan intends to achieve, the vision informs all of the policies within the plan. It has been informed by the context of partnership strategies outlined in the 'Duty to Cooperate' section above. It reflects the Council's Corporate Priorities set out within the Corporate Plan 2018-2021 and the Northumberland Economic Strategy 2019-2024 which are complementary and seek to deliver a prosperous, inclusive and connected economy for Northumberland.

By 2036:

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

The economy will be thriving and competitive, and deliver more and better jobs. Supported by investment and infrastructure, building on existing strengths whilst diversifying and realising the potential of the rural and visitor economy.

The health and wellbeing of the county's people and communities will be safeguarded by continually improving education and skills, and ensuring access to decent, affordable homes, services and facilities is secured.

#### Strategic objectives

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

**Figure 3.1 Strategic Objectives in Northumberland**



**The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies.**

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## Strategic objectives and outcomes

- 3.3** Each strategic objective can be explained in terms of the outcomes expected. These are explained below and identify what Northumberland will be like in 2036.

## Economy and jobs

- 3.4** The Northumberland Economic Strategy (2019-2024) sets out a vision for growing Northumberland's economy to 2024. It seeks to deliver a prosperous, inclusive and connected Northumberland. The Local Plan provides positive planning policies to enable development to take place, encourage economic vitality and to allow Northumberland residents to be able to access facilities, education and training and retail choice in convenient locations across the County. It complements the North East Enterprise Local Economic Strategy Economic Plan and the emerging North of Tyne Combined Authority ambitions and Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal.

- 3.5** Key outcomes:

- Land and buildings will have been identified in sustainable locations to meet demand, allow for choice and to provide for an additional 15,000 new jobs between 2016 and 2036;
- Close cooperation with partners across administrative boundaries will ensure that locations in the south east and central areas of Northumberland will be seen regionally, as attractive alternatives to the Tyneside market and that the north of the County can benefit from the Scottish Borders and Edinburgh employment markets. Likewise the western areas of Northumberland can benefit from the economic opportunities arising from its connection with Cumbria;
- Existing employment sites will have been protected relative to need and demand;
- A diverse range of interconnected sites around the Blyth Estuary will have been provided and will have supported growth of strategically important sectors;
- High quality office accommodation will have been developed at Northumberland Business Park and in the other Main Towns;
- Northumberland's market towns will be key drivers of economic activity;
- The creation and expansion of hubs for business services and creative industries in the County's historic market towns, rural business developments, and more home run enterprises will have been realised;
- The tourism sector will have grown in a sustainable way benefiting rural areas, communities and visitors. The potential for Northumberland's environmental and historic assets to make a substantial contribution to the County's economy will have been realised, while ensuring their full protection, and where possible their enhancement. Tourist and visitor facilities will be located in appropriate places, enhancing Northumberland as a visitor destination;
- The economic benefits of the extraction of minerals will have been given the appropriate weight in the determination of planning applications;
- A range of accessible opportunities for adults and young people to support them into education, employment and training will have been provided;

- Businesses will have benefited from the economic opportunities presented by an ageing population to offer goods and services to older people as consumers as well as using their skills and experience as part of the County's workforce;
- Forest management and processing and agriculture industries will have been supported and their economic growth facilitated;
- Appropriate retail, leisure and employment opportunities will have been located within town centres, with the existing vitality and viability protected;
- Transport and communications networks and the County's gateways to international growth – the Ports of Blyth and Berwick, and links to Newcastle International Airport and the East Coast Main Line - will have been supported and improved.

## Homes

**3.6** To assist in the delivery of economic growth the Local Plan makes provision for at least 17,700 new homes in Northumberland over the plan period 2016-2036. It sets out a plan for an appropriate mix of types, sizes and tenures, to address both market and affordable housing needs. It will ensure a continuous supply of housing over the plan period that is aligned to job growth and infrastructure capacity.

**3.7** Key outcomes:

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



## Environment

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

**3.9** Key outcomes:

- Northumberland's natural, water, historic and built environments will continue to be experienced and valued by residents and visitors, within the scope that is possible to maintain their full conservation and allow for their enhancement where appropriate;
- Wherever possible, development will have been directed away from our most sensitive and valuable natural assets, habitats and species, towards less sensitive locations and no net loss to biodiversity will have been experienced;
- New development will have contributed to the delivery of priorities set out by the Local Nature Partnerships or other strategic biodiversity initiatives;
- Northumberland's Green Infrastructure networks will have been maintained and enhanced;
- The landscape character of Northumberland will have been protected and enhanced, including protection of significant views, particularly to and from iconic heritage features in the landscape of Northumberland;
- Tranquillity and Northumberland's dark skies will have been protected;
- Development will have been avoided that would have an adverse impact on water quality;
- Satisfactory provision will have been made as part of development proposals for water supply and sewerage infrastructure to ensure sustainable water management and drainage;
- The character of the historic settlements will have been conserved and enhanced;
- Features and areas of historical and cultural value will have been conserved and where possible enhanced in accordance with their significance, including the sensitive re-use of historical buildings and a reduction in buildings at risk;
- Northumberland's distinctive heritage will have been used as the inspiration for new developments;
- Archaeological sites and features will have been protected in accordance with their significance;
- The Outstanding Universal Value of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire - Hadrian's Wall World Heritage site will have been protected and enhanced;
- Opportunities will have been taken to better reveal the significance of heritage assets;
- The design and management of public spaces is suitable for all.



#### Connections

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

**3.11** Key outcomes:

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

#### Community health and wellbeing

**3.12** Key outcomes:

- Accessible local services and community facilities will have been protected and where possible, enhanced;
- Green infrastructure, open space provision and recreational facilities will continue to be protected and where possible, enhanced to help promote social inclusion and health and wellbeing;
- State of the art hospitals will provide improved healthcare;
- Communities will have access to high quality education facilities;

- Neighbourhood Plans will have been produced by communities that wish to promote particular development in their areas, adding detail to the overarching policies within the Local Plan;
- Strategic growth will have been matched by the delivery of improved and new community infrastructure.

## Climate change

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

**3.14** Key outcomes:

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

## Resources

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

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

**The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies.**

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#### 3.17 Key outcomes:

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

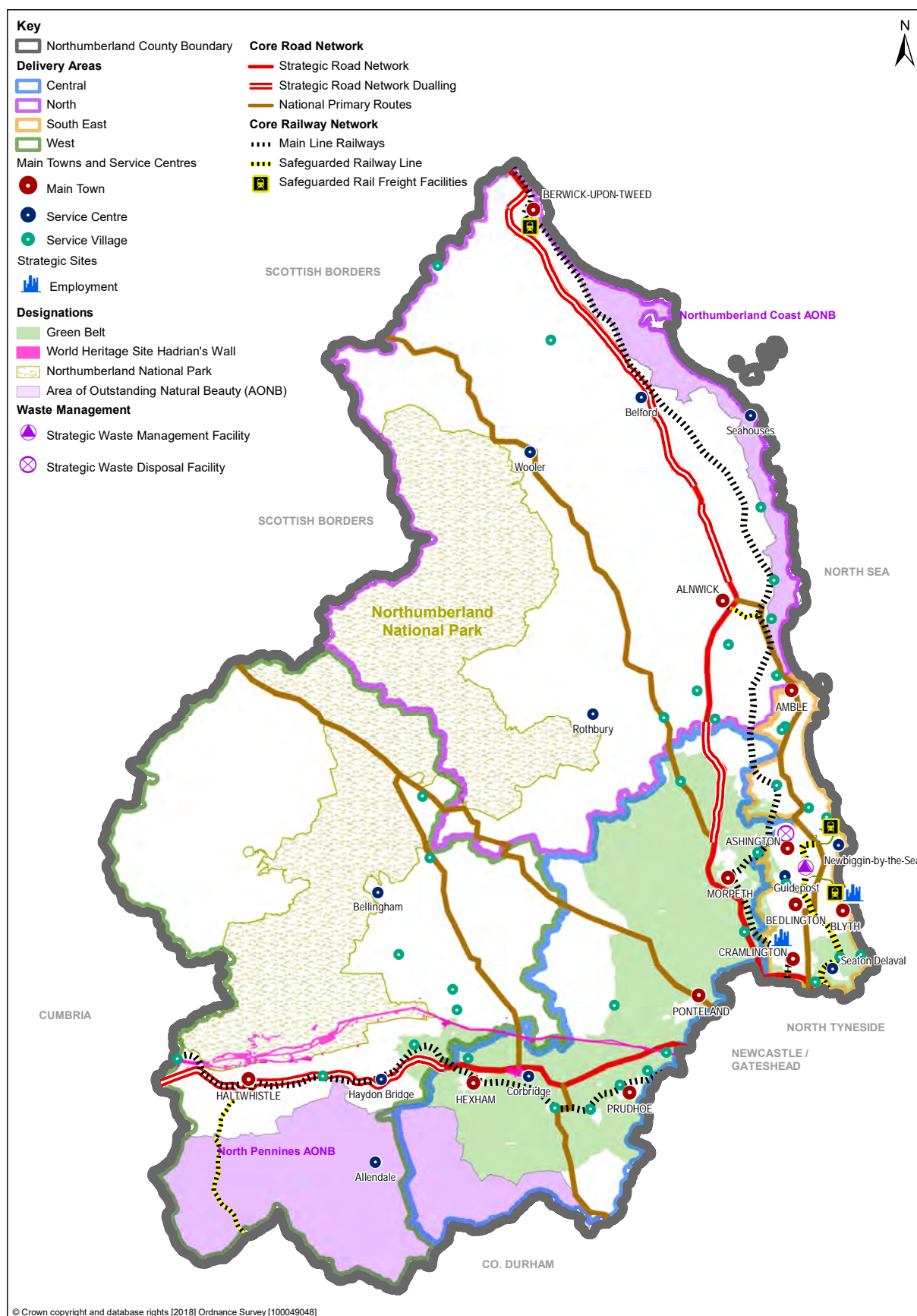
#### Quality of place

**3.18** The way in which we experience the places that we live, work and spend our leisure time in has a huge impact on our sense of well being. Northumberland has many very high quality places and landscapes that are valued greatly by communities and visitors.

#### 3.19 Key outcomes:

- The design of new development will have been of a high quality for its purpose;
- The individual character of the places in Northumberland will have been maintained and improved;
- New development in Northumberland will have provided attractive living and working environments that are valued by their communities;
- Development will have improved the accessibility to services for communities;
- Public spaces will be welcoming and easy to move around;
- The people of Northumberland will continue to be proud to live in the County.

Figure 3.2 Northumberland Key Diagram



The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies.

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# 4. Delivering the Vision for Northumberland

## Development strategy

- 4.1** The Local Plan defines the level and distribution of development and includes specific policies that are required to deliver the spatial vision. The vision and objectives highlight the importance of protecting and enhancing the physical and cultural identity of Northumberland, but also the need to allow development to grow and diversify the economy, and provide homes and facilities which will help to safeguard the wellbeing of local communities.

## Northumberland - A predicted future

- 4.2** A significant challenge to the delivery of the vision of the Local Plan is the profile and dynamics of the Northumberland population. While the overall population is projected to increase from 316,287 in 2016, to 321,878 in 2036<sup>(10)</sup> or by a modest 1.8%, this increase is dependant upon migration as natural change (the difference between births and deaths) would result in a loss of circa 21,000 people.
- 4.3** The projections show that there is likely to be a significant acceleration in the ageing of Northumberland's population profile. Between 2016 and 2036 there is projected to be a significant increase in older age groups:
- 43.8% increase in the over 65 years age group (from 74,494 to 107,105);
  - 100% increase in the over 80 years age group (from 18,856 to 37,737); and
  - 161.1% increase in the over 90 years age group (from 3,322 to 8,673).
- 4.4** Alongside this, the core working age population of 20 to 64 year olds is projected to decrease from 176,529 to 154,148, a reduction of 22,381 (-12.7%). The impact of this is a significantly shrinking labour force, with fewer working age people within the County. It is true that people are predicted to work until they are older in the future, in part as a result in changes to the state pension age. Indeed the older demographic make a significant contribution to the Northumberland economy. Even so, if the projections in paragraph 4.3 are realised, they have the potential to have a significant negative impact on the long term prosperity of Northumberland and the diversity and wellbeing of communities across the County.
- 4.5** To plan for a level of growth aligned with the population projections has the potential to have a number of adverse effects:
- A reduction in the level of wealth created and retained within the County;
  - Impact of reduced local expenditure - reducing income to local businesses and threatening further job losses;
  - Those who have marketable or transferable skills may move elsewhere to find employment or further, higher education or training;

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10 These figures are from the 2014-based Sub-national Population Projections. While later 2016-based projections have been released, the 2014-based projections were used in the Council's latest population studies so are also presented here for consistency.



- The County as a whole could become less competitive in increasingly competitive markets;
- A reduction in wealth creation may be accompanied by reduced investment in the buildings and spaces which make up the fabric of the County's towns and villages, together with its natural and historic environments;
- This in turn may impact on the ability to attract new investment in the new economy; and
- A lack of choice in the housing market across the County, inhibiting the ability of existing household to secure the homes they need, and attract a working age population.

**4.6** The Local Plan therefore puts policies in place to minimise these risks, and sets out a strategy to support economic growth and expand choice in the housing market.

### A strategy for sustainable growth across Northumberland

**4.7** The growth strategy for Northumberland is predicated on an ambition to support the delivery of additional, better paid and higher skilled jobs in the County, and to provide homes to meet not only the needs of the resident population, but also to accommodate the needs of people moving into Northumberland, who create and fulfil jobs across the County. The strategy aims to help deliver the five foundations of the Industrial Strategy (2017) <sup>(11)</sup>, the aspirations of the North East Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) (2017), and the North of Tyne Devolution Deal and the Borderlands Initiative, and the Council's Economic Strategy.

**4.8** The **North East Strategic Economic Plan (SEP)** (2017) proposes to deliver more and better jobs. The SEP aims to support the economy to deliver 100,000 additional jobs in North East England by 2024, an uplift of 11% on 2014, and ensure 60% of the new jobs delivered are 'better' jobs – offering higher skilled, more productive and better quality opportunities to more people in the area.

**4.9** To achieve these aims the SEP recognises the importance of business park opportunities in Cramlington and activities around the Port of Blyth, as well as the Enterprise Zones that have been designated around Blyth Estuary ('Round 1' Enterprise Zones), and in parts of Ashington, Berwick-upon-Tweed and Morpeth, ('Round 2' Enterprise Zones). These locations can, therefore, be regarded as important regionally, as well as at a Northumberland level.

**4.10** In addition to the SEP, new powers and funding will be available through the **North of Tyne Devolution Deal**, administered through a directly elected Mayor. It supports economic growth across all three constituent authorities (Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland). Northumberland, together the five local authority areas either side of the border with Scotland will also deliver the **Borderlands Initiative**, which

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11 The Industrial Strategy Government White Paper sets out five foundations of productivity as Ideas (the world's most innovative economy), People (good jobs and greater earning power for all), Infrastructure (a major upgrade to the UK's Infrastructure), Business Environment (the best place to start and grow a business) and Places (prosperous communities across the UK).



aims to unlock cross-border growth potential in the types of tourism and small scale activities that can flourish in more remote rural areas, thanks to advances in technology.

- 4.11** While there is an element of competition across the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) area as a whole, and the North of Tyne area, many of the County's strengths are in different economic sectors and complementary to those elsewhere. It is recognised that Northumberland's offer is different to that of its partners. Within the North of Tyne Devolution Deal, Northumberland will be the focus of initiatives to help rural communities, as the rural economy and tourism sectors in particular are strengths of Northumberland.
- 4.12** The Local Plan proposes to **support the delivery of an appropriate proportion of the jobs uplift identified in the SEP** in Northumberland. Rather than assuming growth across all sectors of the economy represented in the wider LEP area, the growth strategy assumes that additional growth will occur in those sectors in which historically Northumberland has been strong, but also sectors which can be anticipated to grow as a result of investments and local policies and initiatives.
- 4.13** Evidence indicates that the sectoral growth forecast by the Plan's growth strategy <sup>(12)</sup> will see:
- The number of 'workplace jobs' in Northumberland increase by 16,500, or 750 per annum over the period 2014 to 2036, 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 to 64 years;
  - A reduction in the unemployment rate.
- 4.14** To support the number of jobs forecast, sufficient land is required to be protected for employment purposes, to ensure there is land available for businesses wanting to either start up in Northumberland or expand. The plan proposes to allocate and reserve considerably more land for employment purposes than the forecast suggests is required. <sup>(13)</sup> The rationale for this approach is set out in more detail in the economic development chapter. However, the plan only proposes to protect land which may be needed for employment uses. While some land is protected for B-class land uses only, the plan allows for other employment generating uses on other sites.
- 4.15** The majority of jobs however are forecast to come forward in sectors which are not B-Class land uses such as offices, general industrial uses, storage and distribution. Many of these will be service sector jobs, such as accommodation and food services, retail, professional services, health and education. These jobs do not necessarily need allocated, dedicated employment land to support them.
- 4.16** The Local Plan will assist in delivering this growth by:

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12 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).

13 The ambitious growth scenario indicates 40 hectares of employment land is required.

- Protecting key employment sites, including those identified in the SEP, and ensuring there is a sufficient supply of land available to support economic development in locations which are attractive to the market;
- In total, providing for the supply of 242 hectares of available employment land, comprising 201 hectares of general employment land, plus 41 hectares on strategic employment sites in the Blyth and Cramlington areas;
- Ensuring an appropriate distribution and quality of employment land including, within the 201 hectares of available land, 78 hectares on new sites, ensuring that all towns have a sufficient and appropriate supply;
- Enabling the development and diversification of the rural economy, by supporting the creation and expansion of hubs for business services and creative industries, the visitor economy and enabling home run enterprises;
- Supporting improvements to town centres;
- Supporting improvements to the County's gateways to international growth – The Ports of Blyth and Berwick, and links to Newcastle International Airport;
- Recognising the importance of developments along the main transport corridors to the economic strategy, supporting improvements to the East Coast Main Line, the re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Rail Line, and improvements to the strategic highway corridors of the A1, the A19, the A189 and the A69;
- Supporting the rollout of effective superfast broadband across the County, and improvements to mobile communications.

**4.17** By continually improving education, skills and transport in the County, opportunities for residents to access better jobs, start their own business, and earn a decent wage will be enhanced. A better skilled workforce will also be more attractive for potential investors in the County, generating more and better jobs, which will assist in retaining those of working age. While there is significant scope for the County's economically active population to start businesses and take up jobs, in order to deliver on its objectives, there is also a need to attract people of a working age, with the appropriate skills to Northumberland.

**4.18** In order to meet the needs of Northumberland's resident population, including the diverse needs of an ageing population, and to provide attractive housing options for those moving into the County to boost the economy, the plan proposes to extend choice in the housing market.

**4.19** Evidence indicates that to support the additional 15,000 workforce jobs over the plan period, approximately 17,700 dwellings are required, equating to 885 per annum. As such, the plan proposes to support the delivery of at least 17,700 dwellings. This is significantly more than the minimum 'Local Housing Need'

calculated using the standard methodology,<sup>(14)</sup> but is considered to be reasonable given the aspirations of the wider LEP, the Council itself, the Devolution and Growth Deals with the Government, and committed infrastructure.

**4.20** The plan proposes to deliver the right types of homes in the right places. The amount, and varying type and tenure of housing will:

- Provide a range of attractive housing options for those skilled workers moving into, or considering moving into the County; and
- Enable residents of a working age to access homes they can afford to buy or rent, which together with increased attractive employment options will reduce the number moving away; and therefore
- Help to rebalance and re-energise the resident population, and strengthen the labour force; and
- Help to maintain and enhance vitality, and the provision of local services in the County's rural communities; and
- Help deliver affordable homes, and specialist housing including extra care to meet the needs of Northumberland's ageing population.

**4.21** While the growth strategy, informed by regional and sub-regional economic ambitions, sets out the overall quantum of job growth, employment land and housing over the plan period, the spatial strategy indicates at a strategic level, how this will be delivered across the county, and which locations will be the focus of development.

### Spatial strategy

**4.22** One of the ways in which the Local Plan can contribute to a more sustainable future for Northumberland is by providing a steer to the location of development. The spatial strategy sets out the overall approach to the distribution of development across the county. While delivering the Growth Strategy, it takes into account and assists in delivering a number of key strategic objectives with a spatial dimension.

**4.23** The spatial strategy of the plan is founded on the principle of **proportionate distribution within the constraints of the Green Belt**. This approach focuses the majority of new development in Northumberland's key settlements with smaller scale development allowed elsewhere in order to support local services and the rural economy. It restricts development in the open countryside. While focussing development in the most sustainable locations, this approach will leave existing Green Belt boundaries largely intact, ensure that the countryside in the Green Belt is safeguarded from encroachment, check unrestricted urban sprawl, prevent the merging of settlements, and preserve the character and setting of historic settlements.

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14 Using the Standard Methodology for calculating Local Housing Need, as set out in Planning Practice Guidance, Northumberland's requirement is for 558 dwellings per annum. MHCLG is considering changing the methodology, and until this time, is proposing the use of the 2014-based household projections, rather than the latest 2016-based projections in the calculation. On this basis Northumberland's Local Housing Need figure is for 717 dwellings per annum.

- 4.24** It is considered that this approach will contribute to the vitality and viability of the market towns and urban areas and assist the regeneration of town centres. It will allow for an appropriate level of development in villages, particularly those with key services, support the rural economy, helping to create a critical mass of development to ensure the maintenance and delivery of new services, infrastructure and facilities, and enable local people to live in the communities in which they grew up. It is recognised that in some Green Belt settlements the level of development will however be less than that which may be expected, when compared to similar sized settlements outwith the Green Belt.
- 4.25** The Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal confirms that this approach performs well in terms of sustainability.
- 4.26** The spatial strategy directs development to locations where it can support, and benefit from the use of existing local infrastructure and facilities, and support economic growth, whilst protecting the countryside and character of settlements. New development is focussed in those locations which benefit from facilities and/or have the greatest potential to support new facilities and services, as a result of their location and / or a result of the size of the population within them. Such an approach will allow for limited resources to be allocated in an effective way that maximises access to facilities and services.
- 4.27** The Green Belt in Northumberland, which forms part of the wider Tyne and Wear Green Belt has an important role in helping to direct development to the most sustainable locations. The defined Green Belt wraps around the Tyneside conurbation and extends to the west of Hexham, while a Green Belt extension extends north of Morpeth.<sup>(15)</sup> National policy attaches great importance to Green Belts to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Given that Northumberland already has a significant amount of housing committed across the County, it is not considered that exceptional circumstances exist to justify the alteration of Green Belt boundaries for residential development. Therefore, while the plan aims to direct most housing to the larger settlements, and villages with a number of key services, this is done without delivering housing in the Green Belt. However, in order to support economic growth, it is proposed that limited changes in past Green Belt boundaries are required in a number of locations.
- 4.28** The spatial strategy also gives recognition to the fact that the Green Belt extends across wide swathes of the Northumberland countryside, which also happens to be the most easily reached from the conurbation. This area contains many hundreds of farming and other small rural businesses. It is vital to ensure that the Green Belt status does not unduly stifle rural economic development or the local visitor economy. So, within the bounds of Green Belt restriction, the Plan seeks to ensure that the Green Belt rural economy can thrive just as other countryside areas and aims to add value to Green Belt areas as a resource for visitors.

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15 The general extent of the Green Belt extension was established in Policy S5 of the revised Northumberland County and National Park Joint Structure Plan (2005), the details of which are defined in this plan.

**4.29** Northumberland is a diverse county. The following paragraphs set out what the spatial strategy means across the four Delivery Areas identified in the spatial portrait.<sup>(16)</sup>

**4.30** More than half of the county's population is located in the **South East Delivery Area**, the only part of the county which could be considered urban in nature. This area is also where many of Northumberland's key employment centres are located, including some of those of regional importance. Located close to Tyneside, the area is considered a cost effective alternative location for both industrial development and housing. The A189 'Spine Road' runs through the Delivery Area from north to south. The plan proposes to reinforce the role of South East Northumberland by:

- Protecting strategic employment areas around the Port of Blyth and Cramlington, enterprise zone sites in Blyth and Ashington, and a range of other employment sites across the area;
- Supporting the regeneration of the former Alcan aluminium smelter site at Lynefield Park;
- Directing more than half of the plan's proposed housing to this area, particularly the towns of Cramlington, Blyth and Ashington; and
- Supporting the re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Rail Line, to provide better access to jobs.

**4.31** The **Central Delivery Area** is home to approximately 25% of Northumberland's population, and includes a number of market towns. It is located close to Tyneside along the A1 and A69 corridors. The area is one of high market demand for both housing and employment space. The plan proposes to reinforce this role by:

- Protecting key employment sites including the enterprise zone in the northern part of Morpeth;
- Taking land out of the Green Belt in Hexham, Ponteland and Prudhoe for employment uses; settlements where there is strong demand;
- Directing approximately a quarter of the plan's housing to the area, particularly Morpeth with its strong links to South East Northumberland; and
- Ensuring that Hexham, Ponteland and Prudhoe accommodate as much housing as possible to meet needs, without taking land out of the Green Belt.

**4.32** The **North Delivery Area** is home to approximately 17% of the county's population, is largely rural in nature but also contains a number of market towns along the A1 corridor, and bordering Northumberland National Park. With proposed improvements to the A1, Alnwick and Berwick-upon-Tweed will be more accessible, and attractive to the market, while the Borderlands Initiative will support job growth in rural areas. The plan will support the area's role by:

- Protecting key employment sites, including the enterprise zone in Berwick-upon-Tweed<sup>(17)</sup>;

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16 See Figure 2.1 Delivery Areas in Northumberland for Delivery Area boundaries.

17 The Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan allocates employment sites around Alnwick.

- Supporting rural economic development and the visitor economy through positive policies;
- Directing approximately 19% of the plan's housing to area, with half of this going to Alnwick and Berwick-upon-Tweed; and
- Allocating land for housing in Berwick-upon-Tweed to boost delivery here.

**4.33** The **West Delivery Area** is the smallest in population terms, with approximately 6% of the county's population living here. Much of the area is rural, but it also includes key market towns and villages along the A69 corridor and in upland areas. Much of the area has seen little residential development in recent years, and it is not an area of high market demand for employment land or housing. With the help of the Borderlands Initiative, the plan proposes to strengthen the role of the west by:

- Protecting the most important employment land, particularly in Haltwhistle to support economic growth in the area;
- Supporting rural economic development and the visitor economy through positive policies;
- Directing approximately 5% of the plan's housing to the area. While this is slightly less than may be expected given the share of population, delivering these numbers would represent a step change in this area;
- Allocating land for housing in Haltwhistle, Bellingham, Haydon Bridge and Allendale to boost delivery; and
- Supporting improvements to the A69.

### Settlement hierarchy

**4.34** In the context of the principle of **proportionate distribution within the constraints of the Green Belt**, a hierarchy of settlements for development is set out, which gives priority to identified Main Towns, Service Centres and Service Villages. There is no specific definition of a Main Town, Service Centre or Service Village, in respect of the particular facilities they provide rather their importance lies in their functional context. The role of settlements within these categories varies across the County. In rural parts of Northumberland, a smaller settlement may provide the focus for a spread of communities, offering key services for a wide catchment area, and be the clear primary centre for different levels of services. In more urban parts of the County in particular, where settlements are closer together, the roles of different settlements are less easily defined. The catchment of some larger settlements in the south east of Northumberland may be more limited as residents utilise a range of services across different settlements. However, many of Northumberland's key employment areas are located in the south east, with employees being drawn from further afield including from outside the County. The pull of the Tyneside conurbation is more significant in the south east, both for work and accessing higher level services.

**4.35** The Local Plan directs larger scale development to Main Towns which offer the greatest range of services including schools, healthcare facilities, leisure facilities, shops and employment opportunities. Service Centres also have a number of key



services for their communities and surrounding areas, but the range and number is generally more limited than the Main Towns, so the level of development directed towards them is also at a lower level.

- 4.36** Service Villages generally have a school or a shop, and population of a size considered likely to maintain the viability of such services into the future. They have a reasonable level of public transport to enable residents to access some higher level services without the reliance upon private transport. A settlement's status is not reliant upon one specific criterion, and may be influenced by its close proximity to other settlements. A proportionate level of growth is supported in Service Villages to support the provision and retention of services and facilities.

**4.36a** Northumberland contains many small villages and hamlets. While the Local Plan does not actively direct development to small villages, it is recognised that a level of development is required in rural areas to support social and economic vitality, and that development in one village can support services and facilities in another nearby. In small villages not identified as Main Towns, Service Centres or Service Villages, small scale development will be supported subject to a number of criteria.

**4.36b** A small village is defined as a cluster of dwellings and associated buildings which has a recognised name and identity, a definable centre, and a church or other community building.

**Table 4.1 Settlement hierarchy [Note this version of the table is superseded by the revised version below]**

<b>Main Towns</b>
Alnwick, Amble, Ashington, Bedlington/Bedlington Station, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Blyth, Cramlington, Haltwhistle, Hexham, Morpeth, Ponteland, Prudhoe
<b>Service Centres</b>
Allendale, Belford, Bellingham, Corbridge, Guidepost/Stakeford/Choppington, Haydon Bridge, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Rothbury, Seahouses/North Sunderland, Seaton Delaval/Holywell, Wooler
<b>Service Villages</b>
Acomb, Barrasford, Bardon Mill/Henshaw/Redburn, Broomhill/Togston, Chollerford/Humshaugh, Ellington, Embleton, Felton, Gilsland, Hadston/South Broomhill/Red Row, Heddon-on-the-Wall, Lesbury/Hipsburn/Bilton/Alnmouth, Longframlington, Longhorsley, Longhoughton, Lowick, Lynemouth, New Hartley, Newbrough/Fourstones, Norham, Otterburn, Ovingham, Pegswood, Riding Mill/Broomhaugh, Seaton Sluice/Old Hartley, Seghill, Shilbottle, Stamfordham, Stannington, Stocksfield/Broomley, Swarland, Wark-on-Tyne, Warkworth, West Woodburn, Widdrington Station, Wylam

Table 4.1 Hierarchy of settlements by Delivery Area

<b>Main Towns</b>	
<u>South East:</u>	<u>Amble, Ashington, Bedlington/Bedlington Station, Blyth, Cramlington</u>
<u>Central:</u>	<u>Hexham, Morpeth, Ponteland, Prudhoe</u>
<u>North:</u>	<u>Alnwick, Berwick-upon-Tweed</u>
<u>West:</u>	<u>Haltwhistle</u>
<b>Service Centres</b>	
<u>South East:</u>	<u>Guidepost/Stakeford/Choppington, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Seaton Delaval/Holywell</u>
<u>Central:</u>	<u>Corbridge</u>
<u>North:</u>	<u>Belford, Rothbury, Seahouses/North Sunderland, Wooler</u>
<u>West:</u>	<u>Allendale, Bellingham, Haydon Bridge</u>
<b>Service Villages</b>	
<u>South East:</u>	<u>Broomhill/Togston, Ellington, Hadston/South Broomhill/Red Row, Lynemouth, New Hartley, Seaton Sluice/Old Hartley, Seghill, Widdrington Station</u>
<u>Central:</u>	<u>Acomb, Heddon-on-the-Wall, Longhorsley, Ovingham, Pegswood, Riding Mill/Broomhaugh, Stamfordham, Stannington, Stocksfield/Broomley, Wylam</u>
<u>North:</u>	<u>Embleton, Felton, Lesbury/Hipsburn/Bilton/Alnmouth, Longframlington, Longhoughton, Lowick, Norham, Shilbottle, Swarland, Warkworth</u>
<u>West:</u>	<u>Barrasford, Bardon Mill/Henshaw/Redburn, Chollerford/Humshaugh, Gilsland, Newbrough/Fourstones, Otterburn, Wark on Tyne, West Woodburn</u>

### Settlement boundaries

- 4.37** In order to enable the Local Plan to better control the location of development, settlement boundaries are proposed. While criteria based policies will also be used, it is considered that settlement boundaries will provide a higher degree of certainty to communities regarding future development. They will help to protect the countryside from ad hoc development encroachment, prevent the merger of settlements, maintain the character and form of settlements, and protect the settings of historic and ecological assets.
- 4.38** The plan defines settlement boundaries for all Main Towns, Service Centres and Service Villages (except in the Green Belt where inset boundaries are defined) unless local communities, through the neighbourhood planning process:
- are defining boundaries;
  - have specifically chosen not to define a boundary; or
  - have indicated that they do not wish to retain a previously defined boundary.

~~Except in these circumstances, all settlements which benefit from settlement boundaries in previous development plan documents, have retained their boundaries, albeit that, in some instances, they may have been adjusted due to more recent development or other changes that have taken place. Settlement boundaries are defined on the policies map.~~

**4.38a** Except in these circumstances, all settlements which benefit from settlement boundaries in previous development plan documents, have retained their boundaries, albeit, that in some instances they may have been adjusted. Settlement boundaries are defined on the policies map.

**4.38b** Settlement boundaries defined in neighbourhood plans are not replicated in the Local Plan. Neighbourhood plan settlement boundaries, including those for small villages not listed in the settlement hierarchy, are shown on the Local Plan policies map for information only.

- 4.39** In all of the Main Towns, Service Centres, and Service Villages, settlement boundaries are defined in order to support a level of housing and economic growth over the plan period which is considered appropriate to its size, role and function. In some settlements, housing allocations are proposed to support the delivery of a level of new dwellings appropriate to their role. In these instances, the boundaries direct development to the most suitable and sustainable locations, to protect the countryside from ad hoc incursion. In a number of settlements where there are sufficient housing commitments in place to meet identified needs, boundaries are defined to accommodate these commitments, and restrict further expansion.
- ~~**4.40** In order to support sustainable development in settlements not identified as Main Towns, Service Centres or Service Villages, small scale development, subject to a number of criteria, will be supported. Community support will need to be demonstrated if major development is to be permitted in these smaller settlements.~~

**The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies.**

Northumberland Local Plan - Publication Draft (January 2019) showing proposed minor modifications

~~A smaller settlement is defined as a cluster of dwellings and associated buildings which has a recognised name and identity, a definable village centre, and a church or other community building.~~

- 4.41** In areas where there is particular development pressure, most notably along the A1, A69, and A697 corridors, the north Northumberland coast, and just beyond the boundaries of the Green Belt, settlement boundaries are defined for a number of smaller settlements, around existing commitments. These boundaries are defined to apply a policy of constraint, to protect the countryside and character of these settlements.
- 4.42** In the open countryside, development will be restricted and need to demonstrate that it meets a policy test. The open countryside is defined as:
- Land beyond settlement boundaries, where they are defined on the policies map,
  - Land not within, or immediately adjacent to the built up form of settlements where limits are not defined.
- 4.43** The above approach will support economic growth, provide the right homes in the right places, and protect the character of Northumberland's towns and villages and its valued countryside.

## Policy STP 1

### Spatial strategy (Strategic Policy)

1. To deliver sustainable development which enhances the vitality of communities across Northumberland, supports economic growth, and which conserves and enhances the County's unique environmental assets:
  - a. The Main Towns of: Alnwick, Amble, Ashington, Bedlington/Bedlington Station, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Blyth, Cramlington, Haltwhistle, Hexham, Morpeth, Ponteland and Prudhoe will be the main focus for employment, housing, retail and services;
  - b. The Service Centres of Allendale, Belford, Bellingham, Corbridge, Guidepost/Stakeford/Choppington, Haydon Bridge, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Rothbury, Seahouses, Seaton Delaval/Holywell and Wooler will accommodate employment, housing and services that maintains and strengthens their roles;
  - c. The Service Villages of Acomb, Barrasford, Bardon Mill/Henshaw/Redburn, Broomhill/Togston, Chollerford/Humshaugh, Ellington, Embleton, Felton, Gilsland, Hadston/South Broomhill/Red Row, Heddon-on-the-Wall, Lesbury/Hipsburn/Bilton/Alnmouth, Longframlington, Longhorsley, Longhoughton, Lowick, Lynemouth, New Hartley, Newbrough/Fourstones, Norham, Otterburn, Ovingham, Pegswood, Riding Mill/Broomhaugh, Seaton Sluice/Old Hartley, Seghill, Shilbottle, Stamfordham, Stannington, Stocksfield/Broomley, Swarland, Wark on Tyne, Warkworth, West Woodburn, Widdrington Station, and Wylam will provide for a proportionate level of housing and be the focus for investment in rural areas, to support the provision and retention of local retail, services and facilities;
  - d. Sustainable development will be supported within the constraints of the Green Belt and settlement boundaries defined on the Local Plan policies map or in neighbourhood plans. Sustainable development within or immediately adjacent to the built up form ~~or immediately adjacent to of~~ Main Towns, Service Centres and Service Villages without defined settlement boundaries ~~;~~ will be supported, if it is commensurate with size of the settlement, and it can be demonstrated that it does not adversely impact upon the character of the settlement;
  - e. In order to support the social and economic vitality of rural areas, and recognising that development in one small village can support services and facilities in ~~a other~~ nearby small villages, small scale sustainable development within, or immediately adjacent to the continuous built form of settlements not listed in this policy, will be supported if it:
    - i. Retains the core shape and form of the settlement; and
    - ii. Does not adversely impact upon the character and appearance of the settlement, the rural setting of the settlement or the surrounding countryside; and
    - iii. Does not increase the number of dwellings in the settlement over the plan period by more than 10%.

- f. Major development, or development which exceeds the 10% threshold will only be permitted adjacent to ~~small villages settlements~~ not named in this policy if it has clear community support. Community support should be demonstrated through a thorough but proportionate pre-application consultation exercise, including engagement with the relevant parish council where the development proposal is located, and/or through a neighbourhood plan;
- g. Development in the open countryside will only be supported if it can be demonstrated that it:
  - i. Is directly related to the needs ~~of primary activity in~~ agriculture, forestry, other land based industries, and rural businesses, or the sustainable diversification of such activities; or
  - ii. Supports the sustainable growth and expansion of an existing business; or
  - iii. Supports a newly forming business; or
  - iv. Supports or adds to the range of sustainable visitor attractions and facilities appropriate to the character of the area; or
  - v. Reuses redundant or disused buildings and leads to an enhancement of to the immediate setting; or
  - vi. Provides for essential transport, utilities and energy infrastructure in accordance with other policies in the Local Plan; or
  - vii. Relates to the extraction and processing of minerals, in accordance with other policies in the Local Plan; or
  - viii. Is a house, the architecture of which is innovative and of the highest standard, it significantly enhances its immediate setting, and is sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.
- h. Development in the open countryside should be sensitive to its surroundings, not have an unacceptable impact upon the local road network, and use previously developed land where opportunities exist.



### Sustainable development

- 4.44** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and the Local Plan seeks to encourage sustainable development through growing the economy, supporting healthy and vibrant communities and contributing to protecting and enhancing the natural, built, water and historic environment of Northumberland.
- 4.45** The presumption in favour of sustainable development will not apply when the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of importance provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposal<sup>(18)</sup>, or when any adverse impacts of development would significantly outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF as a whole. It is also important to note that paragraph 177 of the NPPF states that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment because of its potential on a habitats site is being planned or determined.
- 4.46** The policies in the Local Plan set out how the Council will apply the presumption in Northumberland. Policy STP 2 explains how the presumption will be applied overall and Policy STP 3 identifies a number of sustainable development principles to which development proposals will be expected to adhere to.

#### Policy STP 2

##### **Presumption in favour of sustainable development (Strategic Policy)**

1. When considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It will always work pro-actively with applicants to seek to find solutions that mean proposals that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area can be approved wherever possible.

18 The policies referred to are those in the NPPF relating to: habitat sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 176 of the NPPF) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in the NPPF); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.

2. Planning applications that accord with the policies in the Northumberland Local Plan, and policies in 'made' Neighbourhood Plans, and those which have passed referendum independent examination, will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
3. Where there are no relevant policies or the policies which are most important for determining an application are out of date the Council will grant permission unless:
  - a. The application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposed, or
  - b. Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

## Policy STP 3

### Principles of sustainable development (Strategic Policy)

1. In applying the presumption in favour of sustainable development in Northumberland and to deliver against economic, social and environmental objectives, development proposals will be expected to deliver across the range of the economic, social and environmental factors, and adhere to the following principles where appropriate:
  - a. Contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy across Northumberland, support more and better jobs, protect and enhance the vitality and viability of Northumberland's town centres and other important economic sectors;
  - b. Provide a type and mix of homes housing to meet local housing need, and increase choice in the local housing market; including meeting the needs of an ageing population;
  - c. Support and provide opportunities to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and provide the infrastructure which is required to enhance the quality of life of individuals and communities;
  - d. Contribute to the conservation and enhancement of Northumberland's natural, historic, water and built environment assets, and contribute to increasing the natural capital resource;
  - e. Minimise their impact upon local amenity for new or existing residents and businesses, adjoining premises and land uses;

- f. Contribute to net gains for biodiversity and establish a coherent and resilient ecological network;
- g. Prevent or minimise waste and make prudent and effective use of Northumberland's available finite and renewable resources, ~~including water, minerals, soil, and buildings~~;
- h. Make efficient use of land including achieving higher densities in more accessible locations where appropriate, and through the re-use of brownfield sites (except where priority species have been demonstrated to rely on a brownfield site);
- i. Demonstrate high quality sustainable design which is accessible to all, and which respects and enhances the local distinctiveness of the natural, historic and built environment, helps promote a sense of place, reduces the need for energy, and facilitates flexible and adaptable buildings and environments;
- j. Be accessible by, or be able to be made accessible by public transport, walking or cycling where feasible, thereby reducing the need to travel for both people and goods, and the dependence on travel by private car;
- k. Make best use of existing facilities and infrastructure, whilst making appropriate provision for new or additional infrastructure as required;
- l. Effectively manage the impact on the highway network and utilities infrastructure;
- m. Maximise energy efficiency and the use of renewable and low carbon energy sources including, but not limited to decentralised energy supply systems;
- n. Be located in areas which are least vulnerable to climatic impacts such as risk from all sources of flooding and rising sea levels; and
- o. Anticipated impacts, including those from climate change, on the historic and natural environment, including landscape, biodiversity, ecosystems and water resources should be avoided by locating development elsewhere, adequately mitigated, or as a last resort, adequately compensated for.

### Climate change mitigation and adaptation

**4.47** Climate change is one of the biggest challenges facing the environment, society and the economy both at a global and local level. Spatial planning has an important role to play in influencing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing the resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change through influencing the location and design of development. This seeks to assist in meeting the UK's requirement under the Climate Change Act 2008 to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% (from the 1990 baseline) by 2050. Local planning authorities are also importantly bound by the legal duty in Section 19 of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (as amended) to ensure that, taken as a whole, local plan policies contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.

- 4.48** Policy STP 4 sets out how development proposals should contribute to climate change mitigation and build resilience to the effects of climate change. Other policies throughout the plan set out more detailed policy requirements to mitigate and build resilience to climate change.

## Policy STP 4

### Climate change mitigation and adaptation (Strategic Policy)

1. Development proposals should mitigate climate change and contribute to meeting nationally binding targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. When determining planning applications, consideration support will be given to how development proposals that help mitigate climate change and consideration will be given to how proposals:
  - a. Through their location, layout and pattern of development, reduce the need to travel for both people and goods, and encourage sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and the use of public transport;
  - b. Are designed to reduce energy consumption;
  - c. Incorporate decentralised, renewable and low carbon energy;
  - d. Include the re-use of existing buildings, and materials;
  - e. Incorporate multi-functional green infrastructure, which can provide carbon storage and provide environments that encourage walking and cycling;
  - f. Protect and enhance habitats that provide important carbon sinks, including peat habitats and woodland; and
  - g. Incorporate electric vehicle charging facilities.
2. Development proposals should support adaptation to climate change, be resilient to climate change, and not make neighbouring areas more susceptible to the negative impacts of climate change. When determining planning applications consideration support will be given to how development proposals that help provide future resilience to climate change and consideration will be given to how proposals:
  - a. Incorporate design features to ensure that they provide resilience to climate change;
  - b. Are designed to reduce demand on water resources;
  - c. Through their location, take into account the risk of flooding and coastal change;
  - d. Incorporate the use of sustainable drainage systems, to minimise and control surface water run-off; and
  - e. Incorporate, where feasible, multi-functional green infrastructure, which can help species adapt to climate change through preventing fragmentation or isolation of habitats, reduce the heating of the urban environment, and manage flooding.

### Health and wellbeing

- 4.49** Evidence shows that health and wellbeing, and quality of life is linked to a range of social, economic and environmental factors. Development, through its location and design, has the ability to positively influence health and wellbeing. It can improve access to community facilities, healthy housing, healthcare facilities, local employment opportunities, open space, healthy food, and encourage active lifestyles.
- 4.50** The provision of green and blue infrastructure, open space, sport and recreation facilities is an important factor. Areas of open space that are valued by residents provide an important community function, and can make a significant contribution to quality of life. Allotments, community gardens, community orchards and private gardens, in addition to providing green space in an area, also provide opportunities for outdoor recreation, contribute to physical and mental wellbeing by providing a place for people to interact, and to produce healthy locally grown food. The presence of natural and semi-natural features such as green spaces, watercourses, street trees and other vegetation is linked with higher levels of physical activity and general wellbeing as well as improving health indirectly through supporting better air quality, climatic conditions and tranquility.
- 4.51** With an increasing proportion of older people in the County, and communities with diverse requirements, it is essential to make sure that the needs of all are met in a fair and inclusive way. Development can contribute to ensuring that residents have equal access to opportunities in employment, housing and health, and that opportunities for social interaction are provided in a safe environment. By seeking an equitable distribution of services and amenities, the plan can help reduce health inequalities and encourage healthy lifestyle choices.
- 4.52** National Planning Practice Guidance recognises Health Impact Assessment (HIA) as a useful tool to assess and address the impacts of development on health. HIAs ensure that the impact of development on health is considered and responded to effectively during the planning process.
- 4.53** Policy STP 5 requires ~~that a HIA Screening a proportionate HIA to be is carried out submitted~~ for all major development ~~proposals, appropriate to the size and type of development and its likely impact on health. As a minimum, HIA screening should be carried out~~ to determine whether the potential impact on health resulting from the development warrants any further assessment. Where there ~~are is~~ likely to be ~~an negative~~ impacts on health, ~~a proportionate HIA further assessment~~ will be required ~~to be submitted as part of the application process. Where there are likely to be significant impacts upon health, a comprehensive HIA will be required.~~ A HIA may be a separate statement or may form part of a Design and Access Statement or a required environmental assessment.
- 4.54** HIA screening should consider:

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- whether the proposal is likely to impact on health, including consideration of determinants of health;
- the possible scale of the impacts, who they are likely to affect and whether these are likely to be positive or negative; and
- the type of HIA that is appropriate for the development proposed. <sup>(19)</sup>

**4.55** Wellbeing, health and equality are cross-cutting themes, and Policy STP 5 is therefore one of the many policies throughout the plan that address the wider determinants of health and wellbeing.

### Health and wellbeing commitments

To improve the health and wellbeing of those living and working in Northumberland, the Council will:

- a. work in partnership with relevant stakeholders;
- b. support the protection of existing and provision of new or improved health facilities in locations which are accessible to residents and workers;
- c. promote allotments and gardens for exercise, recreation and for healthy locally produced food;
- d. promote improvements and seek to enhance accessibility to good quality green spaces, green infrastructure and cycling and walking routes;
- e. control the location of unhealthy eating outlets, and promote healthy options;
- f. seek contributions towards new or enhanced facilities from developers where development results in a shortfall or worsening of provision.

<sup>19</sup> Guidance on the type of Health Impact Assessment required for different development proposals is provided in the Council's planning application validation checklist.



## Policy STP 5

### Health and wellbeing (Strategic Policy)

1. Development which promotes, supports and enhances the health and wellbeing of communities, residents, workers and visitors will be supported.
2. Development proposals will be required to demonstrate that they:
  - a. are safe, comfortable, inclusive and attractive and prioritise pedestrian and cycle movement;
  - b. have a strong sense of place which encourages community cohesion and social interaction;
  - c. provide access to a range of facilities including public transport, health, education, social care, green spaces, sport, play and leisure facilities;
  - d. include appropriate green and blue infrastructure wherever possible, responding to opportunities to contribute positively towards urban greening;
  - e. are designed to promote and facilitate physical activity, and healthy lifestyles;
  - f. prevent negative impacts on amenity;
  - g. protect, and alleviate risk to people and the environment, support wider public safety, and do not have a negative impact upon ground instability, ground and water contamination, vibration, air and noise pollution.
3. A Health Impact Assessment Screening will be required to be submitted for all major development proposals, ~~and to determine whether the potential impact on health resulting from the development warrants any further assessment.~~ Where further assessment is warranted, and a proportionate Health Impact Assessment will also be required to be submitted as part of the application process. ~~Where adverse health impacts of development are identified, the~~ A Health Impact Assessment will be required to ~~must~~ include proposals to ~~improve health or~~ mitigate any the potential adverse health impacts, maximise potential positive impacts, and help reduce health inequalities.

## Green infrastructure

- 4.56** Green infrastructure is the integrated network of green areas and features, connecting natural habitats, human activities and town and countryside. Green infrastructure is not simply open space, it incorporates many different forms of 'green space' including parks, playing fields, woodlands, urban greening, private gardens and blue spaces <sup>(20)</sup>. Being close to where people live, high quality multi-use local green spaces can play a key role in providing alternative settings for sport and healthy activities for communities, in addition to providing other indirect health and wellbeing benefits. Some of the many other benefits of green infrastructure include supporting wildlife, mitigating and adapting to climate change, improving air quality and regulating micro climates.
- 4.57** Bringing about meaningful green infrastructure across Northumberland is a central aspiration of this plan. The approach recognises the importance of the quality of the environment and availability of green space on health and well-being, wildlife and the environment. Policy STP 6 and a number of other policies throughout the Plan, seek to realise the multiple benefits of green and blue space and reconnect people and nature.
- 4.58** Across Northumberland and reaching into adjoining authority areas, 'green infrastructure' is a network of multi-functional, natural and managed green space and blue space which:
- Helps sustainable planning - by addressing global climate change and providing wide ranging ecosystem services, such as reduced greenhouse gas emissions through carbon storage or reduced car use from walking and cycling provision;
  - Improves air quality and climatic conditions, particularly in urban areas;
  - Supports networks which link habitats and biodiversity sites - preventing fragmentation or isolation of habitats;
  - Protects and enhances natural, historic and built assets and links between them;
  - Connects people with their environment and heritage - creating a sense of place and identity or helping people develop an attachment to their environment;
  - Improves public health locally - making high quality green space available to everyone;
  - Helps people to develop new skills and responsibilities through environmental and heritage volunteering;
  - Provides opportunities for growing healthy food;
  - Helps to get more children learning outdoors - removing barriers and increasing schools' abilities to teach outdoors; and
  - Balances the potential of green infrastructure to support economic growth and sustainable tourism with the protection of vulnerable environmental and heritage assets.

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20 Blue spaces such as streams and other water bodies are considered to be part of the green infrastructure network but may also be referred to as blue infrastructure

- 4.59** The government has made a commitment in its 25 Year Environment Plan (2018) to adopt national standards for green infrastructure, which will be identified in partnership with Natural England. The standards, due to be published in 2019, are anticipated to determine the contribution of new developments towards green infrastructure. Should these standards or any other national standard for green infrastructure come forward within the plan period, consideration will be given to how development proposals address green infrastructure in line with national standards.

### Strategic green infrastructure

- 4.60** Northumberland's strategic green infrastructure includes many features including international and national natural designations, key moorlands, forests, river valleys, rivers, ponds and other water bodies including the sea itself. Together, these represent an overlying network of assets, some linear, some covering wide areas, which bring a range of quality of life benefits for local communities. However, the network can never be regarded as complete as long as there are disconnects between natural, green areas and there are opportunities to add to the network. Green infrastructure does not stop at local authority boundaries. The Council continues to work with neighbouring authorities and Local Nature Partnerships to ensure that strategic green infrastructure assets are aligned.
- 4.61** Maintaining and enhancing well-planned green infrastructure networks, by creating new assets and links or new functions for existing green spaces, will significantly improve the existing attraction of Northumberland as a place in which to live and work, visit or invest. However, for successful integration and multi-functionality, green infrastructure needs to be planned at all levels or scales. The Local Plan identifies 'strategic green infrastructure' that sets the strategic framework for developing 'local green infrastructure' such as village greens / Local Green Spaces, bridleways, street trees or amenity planting. The Plan also identifies and protects areas of existing green space and sets requirements for creating new green space and vegetation within new development. It is considered that local green infrastructure may also be identified through Neighbourhood Plans, including Local Green Spaces and wildlife corridors.
- 4.62** As well as scale differences between strategic and local green infrastructure it is important to recognise differences in the scope of green infrastructure provision between rural and urban areas. Northumberland's more urban south east has significant local green assets but a lack of overall connectivity, while in the rural areas an apparent abundance of open countryside can mask an actual lack of multi-functionality and public access. The South East Northumberland Wildlife Network, as shown on the Policies Map, identifies the network of natural and semi-natural green spaces in the more urban area of the County which should be preserved and enhanced to enrich the connectivity of nature in this area. Figure 4.1 shows Northumberland's strategic green infrastructure network.

### Figure 4.1 Strategic green infrastructure and corridors



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### Policy STP 6

#### Green infrastructure (Strategic Policy)

1. In assessing development proposals, the contribution of strategic and local green infrastructure to the health and well-being of Northumberland's communities and visitors, as well as its economy, will be recognised, promoted and enhanced.
2. Development proposals should seek to protect, improve and extend Northumberland's green infrastructure, ~~and integrate with it~~. When determining planning applications, consideration will be given to how development proposals:
  - a. Protect and enhance strategic and/or local green infrastructure assets, provide high quality links between existing assets including links with green infrastructure networks in adjacent authority areas and/or provide additional uses for multi-functionality;
  - b. Secure improved access to green infrastructure, including rights of way, the network of cycle routes and high quality provision for the widest possible range of ages, abilities and interests where this would not have an unjustified adverse effect on biodiversity and environmental and heritage assets;
  - c. Secure net-gains for biodiversity through the protection, creation and enhancement of coherent ecological networks;
  - d. Improve the potential green infrastructure to support economic growth and sustainable tourism without adverse effects on environmental and heritage assets;
  - e. Create a sense of place by fully integrating high quality, green infrastructure into the plan or proposal design to reflect locally distinctive character having regard to rural and urban character, open space, connective corridors and links with the wider countryside;
  - f. Integrate green infrastructure with sustainable drainage and the management of flood risk;
  - g. Consider the management and maintenance of new and existing green infrastructure throughout and beyond the plan period, including opportunities for community-led management;
  - ~~h. Provide opportunities for the protection and enhancement of local environments that are important to affected communities;~~



i. h. Provide opportunities for growing healthy food, including through community schemes; and

j. i. Comply with any national standards for green infrastructure.

## Green Belt in Northumberland

**4.63** The Green Belt in Northumberland forms part of a wider area of Green Belt designation surrounding the conurbation of Tyne and Wear. Since the original designation in 1963<sup>(21)</sup>, the Green Belt in Northumberland has undergone a number of modifications, with areas being added to as well as removed from the Green Belt. This Plan consolidates the boundaries defined in the Local Plans and Core Strategies of the former Tynedale, [Castle Morpeth](#) and Wansbeck districts, and the Borough of Blyth Valley, and identifies the detailed boundaries of the Green Belt around Morpeth<sup>(22)</sup>. The Northumberland Local Plan identifies the full extent of the revised Green Belt in Northumberland, as defined on the Policies Map.

## The purpose of the Green Belt

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

**4.65** The NPPF sets out the five purposes of the Green Belt<sup>(23)</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.

**4.66** 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. The protection of the Green Belt is a key element of the Plan's development strategy. In line with the purposes of the Green Belt identified in the NPPF, the strategic approach to the Green Belt in Northumberland is set out in Policy STP 7.

21 Northumberland County Development Plan: Amendment No. 16 (1963) North Tyneside Green Belt

22 The Green Belt Review Technical Paper (December 2018) provides a summary of the Green Belt Review process undertaken and outlines the rationale supporting changes that have been made to the Green Belt

23 National Planning Policy Framework, July 2018, paragraph 134.



### Policy STP 7

#### Strategic approach to the Green Belt (Strategic Policy)

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

#### Development in the Green Belt

**4.67** 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 sets out a list of development that is appropriate in the Green Belt. Where development is considered appropriate in the Green Belt it will still be subject to other planning considerations. Where proposed development is inappropriate in the Green Belt (as defined by the NPPF) it is considered harmful to the Green Belt and will only be permitted where very special circumstances are demonstrated. Very special circumstances will only exist where harm to the Green Belt, and any other harm caused by the development, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

**4.68** Whilst the Plan seeks to resist inappropriate development in the Green Belt, it is recognised that development can be positive, for instance where it improves access to the countryside or supports outdoor sport and recreation. Proposals that support a positive use in the Green Belt will be encouraged, providing they comply with the restrictions on Green Belt development set out in national planning policy.

**4.69** Policy STP 8 sets out how Green Belt in Northumberland will be protected and enhanced in accordance with national planning policy. Policy ECN 16 within the Economic Development Chapter of the Plan sets out further requirements in relation to Green Belt and the tourism and visitor economy.

**4.70** In accordance with the NPPF, limited infilling is appropriate development in the Green Belt in villages and on previously developed land<sup>(24)</sup>. Infilling is not defined in the NPPF and case law suggests that the decision of what constitutes limited

24 Infilling on previously developed land is appropriate subject to further tests related to impact on openness

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infilling is a matter of planning judgement. 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, particularly in relation to where limited infilling occurs in villages. It is acknowledged that there are other forms of development which may be recognised as limited infilling, for example on previously developed commercial sites where the pattern of development may not be arranged along a frontage. However, development which diminishes the open character of the Green Belt, for instance where it would consolidate loose-knit or isolated buildings into built-up areas, will not be considered to be limited infilling.

- 4.71** The NPPF implies that villages washed-over by the Green Belt contribute towards the openness of the Green Belt due to their open character. The scale and form of the development would therefore be relevant in relation to whether the infilling is sufficiently limited to ensure that the loss of significant gaps between the built form are not diminished and the open character is preserved.
- 4.72** When determining whether a proposed development is within a village, this will require a judgement from the decision maker regarding whether, on the ground, the site appears to be within the village. Whether the site is physically and visually linked to the settlement will be of particular relevance. Gaps between the built edge of a village and other buildings which are not physically and visually linked to the settlement are not appropriate locations for infill development.

## Policy STP 8

### Development in the Green Belt (Strategic Policy)

1. In assessing development proposals within the Green Belt:
  - a. Development that is inappropriate in the Green Belt, in accordance with national planning policy, will not be supported unless very special circumstances clearly outweigh the potential harm to the Green Belt, and any other harm resulting from the proposal;
  - b. Development which is appropriate in the Green Belt, as defined in national planning policy, will be supported;
  - c. Development which improves access to the countryside; provides opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; enhances landscapes and biodiversity; or improves damaged and derelict land will be encouraged and supported, provided it does not conflict with national policy in relation to Green Belt.
2. Limited infilling of a small gap in an otherwise built up frontage in a village in the Green Belt will be supported. Other forms of limited infill development in the Green Belt ~~may~~ will be supported if it is justified and meets the tests of the NPPF. The following will not however be recognised as limited infill development:
  - a. Development between loose-~~knit~~ groups of buildings;
  - b. Gaps between the built edge of a village and other buildings which are not physically and visually linked to the settlement;

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- c. 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~~ a village.

### Safeguarded land

- 4.73** Green Belt boundaries are intended to endure over the longer term, therefore when reviewing Green Belt boundaries, it is important to draw new boundaries having regard to potential development needs arising beyond the plan period. Green Belt boundaries have been reviewed to meet employment land requirements for the Plan period. In order to avoid the need for another review of the Green Belt at the end of the Plan period safeguarded land has been identified within Policy ECN 6 to meet the long-term employment requirements of Morpeth and Ponteland. The monitoring framework identifies indicators to help determine when a Plan review may be required.

## Policy STP 9

### Safeguarded land (Strategic Policy)

1. Safeguarded land that may be required to meet long term employment needs, beyond the period of the Local Plan, is identified ~~on the Policies Map~~ within Policy ECN 6.
2. When assessing development proposals on or affecting safeguarded land, the following principles will apply:
  - a. Safeguarded land is not allocated for development during the plan period. Permanent development of safeguarded land will only be permitted following the adoption of a replacement Local Plan which proposes such development; and
  - b. Any development which would prejudice the future comprehensive development of safeguarded land will not be supported.

## 5. Economic Development

### Introduction

**5.1** The Development Strategy, at Chapter 4, set out an ambitious growth scenario for employment that will deliver on the Local Plan's main 'Economy and Jobs' and other objectives that aim to benefit economic well-being. The Development Strategy goes on to list what the Local Plan can do to deliver on this, by way of:

- A **locational strategy** that will recognise the importance to Northumberland's economy of each of its component parts - the urban core areas of South East Northumberland; the key strategic sites, the main 'gateways' (such as ports and the Airport), the rural economy, the County's town centres and its very wide range of visitor destinations.
- A **strategy for businesses and the workforce** aimed at increasing the quality of jobs, the skills of the workforce and working in partnerships to support business investment.

### A planning strategy for the Northumberland economy

**5.2** The spatial strategy for planning economic development and regeneration will reflect the overarching spatial strategy set out in the Plan. It will:

- Continue to focus economic development opportunities in Northumberland's **towns**, in their centres, their dedicated employment areas and through other opportunities;
- Promote the main **communication lines and hubs** - notably the North-South and East-West corridors, the Port of Blyth and Newcastle International Airport;
- Maximise opportunities for the **rural economy** in the context of local constraints, including through supporting digital communications, farm diversification and the reuse of redundant buildings;
- Continue to build on the economy of **South East Northumberland**, strengthening links with the conurbation and promoting specialised economic opportunities, including at Blyth estuary; and
- Seek to provide more widely for latent **visitor and tourism** demand through efforts to increase opportunities throughout the year and across the County.

## Policy ECN 1

### Planning strategy for the economy (Strategic Policy)

1. The Plan will deliver economic growth, while safeguarding the environment and community well-being, so helping to deliver the objectives of the Council's economic strategy.
2. Development proposals will:
  - a. Seek to deliver sufficient employment land and premises of the necessary range and quality and in ~~the right locations~~ sustainable locations compatible with the spatial strategy to meet requirements;
  - b. Support town centres as locations for employment and business;
  - c. Assist the regeneration of existing areas through employment-related measures;
  - d. Support rural enterprise;
  - e. Support and promote tourism and the visitor economy;
  - f. Recognise the role of the County's natural and historic environment as drivers of economic development;
  - g. Support the further development of ~~the~~ the County's key infrastructure and the digital economy;
  - h. Recognise the continued importance of military-related activity as a source of employment;
  - i. Facilitate the training and upskilling of the workforce.

### Planning for employment growth

- 5.3** Long-term employment forecasts inform how jobs are likely to grow. These forecasts provide the basis for objectively assessing how much land needs to be made available for economic development through the plan period. This is looked at in the context of what proportion of the forecast jobs growth can be accommodated in ways other than land provision.
- 5.4** The Local Plan evidence base applies an employment sector based approach, to arrive at forecast jobs growth. This involved examining which sectors are successful in Northumberland and applying a series of assumptions about the speed at which sectors could grow and what this could mean for jobs. The Local Plan promotes an ambitious job growth scenario, which would see growth of an average of around +750 jobs a year.<sup>(25)</sup> The strategy aims for a situation where the Council will be able

25 The derivation of the ambitious jobs led scenario can be found in the 'Housing and Economic Growth Options Findings Report' June 2018, (prepared for the Council by Peter Brett Associates). The report looked at a number of scenarios for housing and economic growth. The forecasts within the report

to keep more of its own residents working in the County, (rather than commuting out). This, in turn will place a greater reliance on the quality of the new jobs and associated training and upskilling.

- 5.5** Translating the potential jobs into additional land is not straightforward. However, analysis has shown that around 30 percent of new jobs will rely on land allocated in dedicated employment areas, with the remainder being generated in key nodes such as town centres, or in a more dispersed manner through activities such as tourism small businesses and rural enterprise.<sup>(26)</sup>
- 5.6** The translation of future jobs growth into purely quantitative, county-wide employment land needs suggests that about 40 hectares of land will be required. This is clearly before different job markets, locations, sizes of site and quality of provision, as well as the extensive size and spatial geography of the County are taken into account.
- 5.7** It is encouraging to understand that most of the jobs generated in the County will not require the effort and expense of bringing dedicated employment land and buildings on stream. However, the Council regards the provision of a wide range of land and premises across the County, appropriate to its scale and settlement pattern and tailored for a wide variety of potential users, as a vital part of its strategy for the County's economy.

### Measuring and meeting the need for employment land

- 5.8** The Council regards it as key to its strategy to allocate and reserve considerably more land for future employment needs than the forecasts would suggest. In deciding the amount, range and distribution of land, the factors that influence the Council's approach include the following:
- It is not desirable or prudent to plan for exhaustion of the supply of land by the end of the plan period: growth could be greater than current projections over a twenty year span; for example, a major inward investment could result in unexpected uptakes of land;
  - There are strategic employment needs that require their own, dedicated land supply;
  - More generally, it is important to maintain a wide portfolio of sites and premises at all times and in all areas. The spread-out geography of the County necessitates extra flexibility in the choice of land: the land needs of a firm looking to a particular town will not necessarily be satisfactorily met simply because land is available in the wider area or the next nearest town;

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have, while informed by the North East Local Enterprise Partnership's Economic Plan and other region-wide strategies and initiatives, strongly reflected a close examination of the unique pattern of employment sectors in Northumberland, their relative success in creating / retaining jobs and their growth potential.

26 See the PBA Report, (June 2018) referred to in the previous footnote.



- The development of employment land does not always result in an increase in jobs, such as when a factory expands onto adjacent land simply to accommodate additional automation;
- Assumptions must be built in to cover unexpected losses from the employment land portfolio: even where the land supply situation would suggest retaining land in employment use, there have sometimes proven to be other sound planning reasons for land to be lost to non-employment uses;
- Conversely, serviced sites in some areas may not have been taken up but deallocating them would be inappropriate, since they would not be suitable for other uses, being in the heart of serviced employment areas, or because deallocation might threaten any future industrial / commercial investment at the site or even the continued existence of a business at the site;
- Some specific cases require a policy intervention. For example, the closure of the former Alcan smelter site is still relatively recent, affecting an area that strongly relied on the plant for its employment. The creation of a new employment area ('Lynefield Park') on the site is therefore still regarded as exceptional. While the new site is intended for general employment, the employee density is likely to be low. For these reasons it is concluded that reductions in available land elsewhere to compensate for this new injection of available land would be neither reasonable nor desirable;
- As employment areas are developed, a proportion is developed for supporting uses such as roads, substations and public landscaping.

### Considerations regarding the allocation of employment land

**5.9** Notwithstanding the low modelled figure for overall employment land needs, the detailed evidence base<sup>(27)</sup> has provided the necessary steer on which areas of the County have experienced surpluses or shortages of suitable employment land. The two independent studies carried out for the Council found that, in terms of quantity, quality, suitability and marketing, there were shortages in towns to the west of Tyneside, and a possible oversupply in parts of SE Northumberland, for reasons relating to Green Belt constraints and industrial legacy (respectively).

**5.10** From the evidence gathered, referred to above, it has been possible to conclude which previously monitored employment areas should now be taken forward as employment designations. These sites contain around 149 hectares of available land, much of which is part and parcel of an existing, otherwise occupied employment area. Made neighbourhood plans have added a further 14 hectares of available land.

**5.11** Besides this, the Local Plan proposes the allocation of **78 hectares** of further land to meet key requirements in certain locations. These include:

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27 The evidence includes: the 'Northumberland 'Employment Land and Premises Demand Study' 2015 (carried out for the Council by the ES Group); the Northumberland 'Employment Land Review' 2011 (carried out for the Council by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners) and its update (2013); the Northumberland 'Employment Land Schedule' (carried out each year by the Council); and the Northumberland 'Employment Land Take-up Study' (also carried out by the Council annually).

- 18 hectares of new land to boost the supply in towns constrained by the Green Belt
- 49 hectares that will result from the regeneration of the land at the former Lynemouth aluminium smelter
- 6 hectares comprising a second phase of Wansbeck Business Park at Ashington
- 3 hectares comprising the key enterprise and service centre site at the new junction of the A1 north of Morpeth

**5.12** In total, therefore, the portfolio of available employment land brought forward, through this Local Plan, in designated areas or separate allocations, amounts to 242 hectares split between 41 hectares on strategic employment sites and 201 hectares of generally available employment land.<sup>(28)</sup>

### Allocating strategic employment sites

**5.13** A vital element of the portfolio of employment land in Northumberland is land for large-scale, specialised and/or strategic purposes. There are three elements to this:

- The **Blyth Estuary** area, devoted to port logistics, energy generation, and more recently specialist research and advanced manufacturing - a significant proportion of the area (at Bates and East Sleekburn) has the advantages of Enterprise Zone status;
- **West Hartford**, a 'prestige' site to meet the needs of businesses requiring a high quality environment, including those proposing a scale of development that could not easily or suitably be accommodated within existing employment areas.
- Three **'Round 2' Enterprise Zones** at Ramparts Business Park (Berwick-upon-Tweed), Fairmoor (Morpeth) and Ashwood Business Park (Ashington) which will complement other initiatives encouraging 'smart specialisation' - often small and medium enterprises contributing to growth sectors. All three are strategic locations in a Northumberland context.

### Blyth Estuary Strategic Employment Area

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

**5.15** Based on numerous factors including the recent growth of these sectors nationally, the North East SEP highlights that low carbon and renewables have the potential to deliver significant new investment and jobs. It identifies Blyth as an 'innovation hub' for this sectoral growth. This is supported by the Northumberland Economic Strategy. Specifically the area around the Blyth Estuary is considered to have a number of advantages which put it ahead of other areas targeting this economic activity:

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28 A further 10 hectares of general employment land is available but under option for development. There are also some substantial areas of largely undeveloped land which are held for expansion by existing companies or operations, mostly within the Blyth Estuary strategic area.

- The offshore renewable energy cluster, located at the Port of Blyth, is the centre of innovation excellence for the development, testing and commercialisation of renewable technologies;
- The Port's existing deep water port facilities and access to marine engineering skills and training;
- Proximity to sites in the North Sea with potential sites for offshore wind energy production, being roughly equidistant from Dogger Bank and the Firth of Forth.

**5.16** The appeal of Blyth Estuary is wider, attracting interest from other businesses related to offshore and sub-sea activity, including those in manufacturing, engineering, relevant service providers and ancillary facilities (such as on-shore convertor stations).

**5.17** In addition, energy generation is a strategic sector to which the Blyth Estuary offers site characteristics which cannot be readily found elsewhere in the country. A large amount of land is for planned future investment in a new power station. Given the strategic nature of the location for energy generating uses, it may also be appropriate for related uses to be sited on unallocated land around the Blyth Estuary. However it is important to avoid uses in the close vicinity of the Port frontages that do not, in some way, need such a location.

**5.18** The potential to attract investment around Blyth Estuary should be greatly helped by:

- **Enterprise Zone (EZ) status**, covering around 16.5 hectares across four sites (parts of East Sleekburn and Bates, as well as Wimbourne Quay, Commissioner's Quay and Dun Cow Quay) - 14 hectares of Enhanced Capital Allowance (applicable to energy and water efficient plant) and around 2.5 hectares of Business Rate Discount.
- **'Local Development Orders'**, which cover a wider area - around 73 hectares straddling the estuary - at Bates Colliery and East Sleekburn - which eases the delivery of offshore energy and marine operations by automatically granting planning permission for related development (to 2019).
- Proximity to key rail freight routes - i.e. the **'Northumberland Line' rail route** where the reintroduction of passenger services is planned, along with its branches. (NB the passenger route would follow the existing Ashington Blyth and Tyne freight line but would not disrupt the important movement of freight to and from the Port of Blyth).

**5.19** The strategic policy approach must also recognise that the Blyth Estuary is a nationally designated ecological site.

**5.20** The competitive advantages of the Blyth Estuary sites and their strategic importance in regional and Northumberland economic strategy for the attraction of inward investment in new economic sectors, indicate their distinction from the supply of general employment land. The likely low job densities and requirement for large sites within the targeted sectors also indicate the need for this substantial land

allocation. Demand for land in the Port and 'Energy Central' areas is high at present. Much of the allocated land is under option, although it is difficult to predict precisely the speed of take up of this land.

## Policy ECN 2

### Blyth Estuary Strategic Employment Area (Strategic Policy)

1. Land at Blyth Estuary is allocated as a 'Strategic Employment Area' within which the following sectors within the B-Class industrial uses will be prioritised:
  - a. low carbon and related environmental goods and services;
  - b. offshore and sub-sea engineering;
  - c. energy generation sectors with special emphasis on renewable and low carbon ;
  - d. development which will support and strengthen the economic role of the Port of Blyth.
2. Other sectors will also be supported within the defined area, particularly if they can demonstrate a link with or reliance on proximity to the above sectors, especially if they have significant land requirements and/or require proximity to the Port.
3. Development proposals in the above categories will be supported where there is no adverse impact upon:
  - a. Neighbouring sites of biodiversity importance, including the Northumbria Coast Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar Site, the Northumberland Marine SPA, the Northumbria Shore Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and the Blyth Estuary Local Wildlife Site, including the Mount Pleasant Peninsula; and
  - b. The Grade II listed Coal Staithes at the former Blyth Power Station site.
4. Within the wider hinterland of Blyth Estuary:
  - a. favourable consideration will be given to proposals which will directly or indirectly support the growth of the Blyth Estuary Strategic Employment Area and its prioritised industrial sectors, especially on key employment sites in South East Northumberland;
  - b. necessary infrastructure improvements will be sought that allow the smooth flow of goods to and from the Port of Blyth and the wider Blyth Estuary area.

### West Hartford Prestige Employment Area

- 5.21** Cramlington has a history of being seen as a strategic location for employment growth given its proximity to Tyneside, former new town status and modern layout.
- 5.22** As such, when the former Regional Spatial Strategy was prepared, the town was identified as the location for a large, 'prestige' employment site and West Hartford was assessed as being the most suitable location for this. It would have the role of meeting the needs of businesses requiring large sites in a high quality environment, on a scale that could not easily or suitably be accommodated within existing employment areas. This continues to be regarded as the priority for the site, although parts of the site could also be opened up for smaller scale employment uses seeking a very high quality setting that is nevertheless close to the Tyneside conurbation.
- 5.23** While considerable infrastructure investment has taken place, the land requires further remediation, as well as provisions for its better connection with the rest of the town, for example for pedestrians.
- 5.24** Given the nature of the proposed use of the site and the remaining investment needed to allow development, it is difficult to predict when development will occur. However there is a good degree of confidence that this will happen well within the Plan period.
- 5.25** It will be important that a masterplan is prepared for the site to reflect the dual role, define the proportion of the site which will be available for prestige and general employment and ensure that development is of the highest quality. In addition, safeguards will be needed to take into account constraints within or adjacent to the site.

### Policy ECN 3

#### West Hartford Prestige Employment Area (Strategic Policy)

1. Land at West Hartford, Cramlington is allocated as a 'Prestige Employment Area' within which the following will be prioritised:
  - a. Large-scale, modern employment uses, within Use Classes B1, B2 or B8, requiring a high quality of environment and which could not be satisfactorily accommodated elsewhere on allocated employment land;
  - b. Smaller scale uses, particularly within Use Classes B1 (Business) that require to be located in a high quality landscaped setting.
2. Significant detailed proposals on the site will be taken forward once a masterplan has been agreed, which should:
  - a. Reflect the dual role of the site;
  - b. Define the proportion of the site which will be available for large scale and smaller scale employment;

- c. Set out the form and means of achieving a suitable landscape structure, connections with the rest of the Cramlington and with existing public rights of way, non-motorised transport and other measures that will ensure that development is of the highest quality.
3. Development proposals will be supported where there is no adverse impact upon:
    - a. Bedlington Country Park Local Nature Reserve along the River Blyth corridor; and
    - b. The significance of the Grade II Listed farm building group and shelter shed at West Hartford Farm, including any contribution made by its setting.

## 'Round 2' Enterprise Zones

**5.26** Enterprise Zones are designated to encourage businesses to invest by putting in place infrastructure and enhancing their access to specific benefits, including discounted business rates or increased levels of capital allowance on investment in plant and machinery.

**5.27** The 'Round 2' Enterprise Zone sites, designated in 2017 and spread across the North-East, were chosen for their potential to provide strategic locations where the scope for 'Smart Specialisation' industries, advanced manufacturing and research, technological / digital industries etc. could be realised. Three sites in Northumberland have 'Round 2' Enterprise Zone status, which are also covered by the General Employment allocations later in this chapter. They are:

- **Ramparts Business Park, Berwick-upon-Tweed**, covers over six hectares and will focus on improving the quality of manufacturing and industrial premises building on these existing economic strengths in Berwick-upon-Tweed. The site is seen as highly strategic, as it is mid-way between Newcastle and Edinburgh, close to the A1 and Berwick-upon-Tweed railway station.
- **Fairmoor, Morpeth**, covers around nine hectares of greenfield land in northern Morpeth on the new junction between the A1 and the 'northern bypass' link to South East Northumberland. The intention has been to support knowledge intensive growth, drawing on a highly-skilled labour pool, by developing an innovation park with new office, light industrial and incubator premises; recent evidence points towards small office premises forming the most likely future occupiers of the location.
- **Ashwood Business Park, Ashington**, covers over sixteen hectares at a strategic point on the South East Northumberland Spine Road (the A189). The focus is on pharmaceuticals and mixed manufacturing, building on past successes and the strengths shown in the local economy.

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### Policy ECN 4

#### 'Round 2' Enterprise Zones (Strategic Policy)

1. Within the defined sites with Enterprise Zone status at Ramparts Business Park in Berwick-upon-Tweed, Fairmoor north of Morpeth and Ashwood Business Park at Ashington, which form part of the general employment site allocations in Policy ECN 6, support and encouragement will be given to high quality employment in line with the overall strategy of these sites as follows:
  - a. At Ramparts, Berwick-upon-Tweed, high quality business premises in the B1, B2 and B8 use classes, so long as there is no adverse impact on the significance of adjoining battlefield site;
  - b. At Fairmoor, Morpeth, knowledge intensive office, light industrial and incubator premises, likely to fall within the B1 Use Class;
  - c. At Ashwood Business Park, Ashington, pharmaceuticals and mixed manufacturing, likely to be in the B1 or B2 Use Classes;
2. Other uses will be supported, especially where these support the preferred sectors;
3. Non employment uses will not be supported unless they meet (2) above and there is a clear need for their location within the Enterprise Zone areas.

#### Large-scale windfall employment development

- 5.28** The Blyth Estuary Strategic Employment Area and West Hartford Business Park, as explained, will include the opportunity for large-scale inward investment opportunities in key sectors. However, some significant inward investment opportunities can be unforeseen and emerge quickly. When large firms plan to invest in a new location, their site requirements can be very particular and therefore the search is often national or wider. Similarly existing local or regional businesses may experience growth at greater rates than expected with no suitable allocated site available.
- 5.29** The windfall employment policy aims to address such circumstances by allowing for the accommodation of large-scale major economic development proposals with specific requirements that cannot be met by the existing land portfolio.
- 5.30** It is important to emphasise that this is an exceptions policy. Northumberland's existing employment land portfolio and key allocations must remain the focus for business development; greenfield land should not be developed unnecessarily; other objectives and policies in this Plan should not be compromised. Therefore, to be considered under this policy:

- The development must be 'large-scale and 'major', the definition of which may vary according to the context (given the range of characteristics that exist across Northumberland's towns, employment areas and landscapes), but at the very least should comprise built floorspace totalling at least 10,000 square metres and/or a site area of at least 2 hectares;
- The development should lead to significant job creation; and
- The needs of the business must not be capable of being met on an existing employment site, both within Northumberland and, within reason, in adjoining authorities which make up the functional economic area of the North East LEP.

**5.31** Clearly the policy is not intended to include Green Belt areas, which could only be considered as a last resort after other areas. Applying Green Belt policies, it would need to be demonstrated unequivocally that there were 'very special' economic circumstances that would outweigh any potential harm to the Green Belt, considering its purposes.

## Policy ECN 5

### Large-scale windfall employment development (Strategic Policy)

1. Development proposals for large-scale major business development within the B use classes, either as a standalone proposal or an extension of an existing business, will be supported on land, which is not designated as employment land, provided that it can be robustly demonstrated that:
  - a. The development represents a major inward investment and would provide a significant number of new, permanent jobs; and
  - b. The needs of the business cannot be reasonably met on allocated employment land within the North East Local Enterprise Partnership area; and
  - c. The proposal would not compromise the viability or deliverability of sites allocated for development that are demonstrably deliverable within the Plan period; and
  - d. The development can be satisfactorily accommodated through proposed mitigation measures in relation to the capacities of critical infrastructure, and timescales associated with investment works.

### General employment land - Introduction

- 5.32** As explained earlier, through evidence<sup>(29)</sup> it has been possible to identify a range of existing employment areas, suitable to take forward. This is based on a range of assessment criteria including the overall distribution of employment land, local demand, sustainability, quality, marketability, and site constraints.<sup>(30)</sup>
- 5.33** The existing areas to be taken forward are those that have good potential to contribute to future employment needs. They largely consist of existing industrial estates and business parks, many of which are substantially occupied by existing employers but include vacant sites of good quality, in a range of locations to meet potential needs. All sites have been subject to a certain level of reassessment; this includes a Heritage Significance Assessment.<sup>(31)</sup> The amount of available, vacant land, totals 109 hectares.
- 5.34** The evidence in the two studies, identified a number of Main Towns where a shortage of employment land would be likely in terms of local supply and demand. Setting aside those locations - notably Alnwick and Morpeth - where the identified shortfall is accounted for in made neighbourhood plans (including 13 hectares of new land in Alnwick), this leaves a handful of settlements where additional allocations of employment land will be necessary to meet shortfalls and provide a sustainable pattern of development.
- 5.35** As such a further **78 hectares** of land for general employment development is identified in the Local Plan in specific places, to meet the need for employment land between 2016 and 2036.
- 5.36** A full explanation of how the evidence has been used to derive total employment land needs for each town / area is given in a series of technical background papers accompanying this plan. The derivation of the additional 78 hectares is explained below.

### Foci for general employment land provision

- 5.37** It is important to stress that the places where this plan allocates land for future factories, warehouses and offices are the places where a large proportion of the County's population will be expected to find work. It follows that the bulk of this land should be in the places that are most accessible to most of the population - i.e. the **Main Towns of Alnwick, Amble, Ashington, Bedlington, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Blyth, Cramlington, Haltwhistle, Hexham, Morpeth, Ponteland and Prudhoe.**

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29 This is contained in the Northumberland Employment Land Review 2011 (NLP) and its update, as updated and added to in the Northumberland Employment Land and Premises Demand Study (2015).

30 It should be noted that the evidence also identified a significant number of employment areas and individual sites that should not be taken forward, but which were previously allocated / monitored. These sites tended to be poorly located, run-down or with little prospect of development.

31 See Appendix 2 of the 'Employment Land: Strategy Considerations and Assessments of Sites Technical Paper

- 5.38** The **Service Centres**, also have a role in providing suitable sites for more local businesses; but some of these are constrained by heritage or other protections, while others are not on as many public transports routes as nearby Main Towns. Therefore there is a necessity to be more selective in how and whether land is allocated for employment in these towns. In some cases, new or expanding businesses will need to locate in the nearest main town.
- 5.39** Finally, **Lynemouth**, where regeneration is being pursued following the closure of the aluminium smelter, forms an additional key location for general employment land.

### Meeting the shortfall in general employment land - the Green Belt towns

- 5.40** Given the employment role of the Main Towns, it is vital that each of them has a sufficient supply and range of available land for general employment purposes to meet the needs of its own and its likely catchment population for the whole of the plan period, taking full account of patterns of travel to work. Balancing the evidence on demand in each town with the availability of viable and sustainable sites for general employment in the current portfolio, and taking into account what has already been allocated through neighbourhood plans, it is clear that the Main Towns that will see a shortfall within the plan period, unless additional sites are found<sup>32</sup>, are those that are constrained by the Green Belt. It is considered that the strategy of maintaining the role of each main town as a provider of general employment opportunities in an accessible location will not be fulfilled unless new areas of land are found in, or close to these settlements<sup>(32)</sup>.
- 5.41** **Hexham** has been identified as needing 10 to 15 hectares of general employment land over and above the small amount that remains in the town's existing employment areas. This cannot be achieved within the existing Green Belt inset boundary. For this reason, it is considered that exceptional circumstances warrant the deletion of an area of Green Belt to the east of the Egger Plant, at Harwood Meadows, totalling about **10 hectares**. This site has been assessed against other alternatives around the town and has been found to be the most sustainable option. The land will be made suitable for employment use through reclamation, following the gradual extraction of sand and gravel from the site and through an improved access point onto Rotary Way.
- 5.42** **Prudhoe** has been identified as needing up to 10 hectares of general employment land over and above that remaining in the town's existing employment areas. Again, this cannot be achieved within the existing Green Belt inset boundary. For this reason, it is considered that exceptional circumstances warrant the deletion of an area of Green Belt to the west of the former Hammerite plant. This site has been assessed against other alternatives around the town and has been found to be the most achievable sustainable option. The site will only contribute about

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<sup>32</sup> All newly proposed sites have been subject to assessment; this includes a Heritage Significance Assessment - See Appendix 2 of the 'Employment Land: Strategy Considerations and Assessments of Sites Technical Paper'.

about **2.5 hectares** but would be difficult to extend further without harming the Green Belt and for reasons of topography and access. Opportunities will need to be sought to accommodate additional, small scale employment opportunities on unallocated land within the town, as opportunities become available.

**5.43 Ponteland** has been identified as needing additional land for employment uses. An earlier employment land review suggested up to 5 hectares but the most recent evidence document considered demand as potentially being high, not least because of pressure for non employment uses on the centrally located existing employment area and the possible need for businesses to relocate. In addition, the presence of the Airport is creating considerable demand, albeit that much of this will be catered for within the Newcastle administrative area. Opportunities within Ponteland's existing Green Belt inset boundary do not exist. For this reason, it is considered that exceptional circumstances warrant the extension of the Airport Green Belt inset to take in land around the area of partly reclaimed land opposite the Airport entrance at Prestwick Pit. Part of this area is allocated. The remaining land within the new inset area is safeguarded for employment use beyond the plan period. To complement this, and make up the **5.5 hectares** needed, land at nearby Prestwick Park Business Park is also allocated and removed from Green Belt protection.

**5.44 Morpeth** has been identified as needing 15 hectares of general employment land, including the Fairmoor area that was already an allocation in the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan. The requirement will be met through land allocated in the made Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan, plus the area to the south east of the new junction between the A197 and the A1 that has permission for an innovation centre and service area. It is, however, important to ensure that, in drawing the Green Belt inset boundaries, opportunities remain for a continued supply of land to follow the take-up of the allocated land. As such, around **5 hectares** south of the A196, close to the existing Coopies Lane employment area, has been included in the inset and is safeguarded for future employment use.

### Outstanding employment land issues - Non-Green Belt towns

**5.45** For the remaining towns and larger village service centres, based on available evidence, other practical considerations and constraints, it has been concluded that no additional (new) employment land needs to be found over and above what is already part of employment land portfolios, (or allocated in the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan). Aside from countywide quantitative considerations, the reasons for this conclusion can be summarised as follows:

- For South East Northumberland, the close-knit nature of the settlement pattern means that, while there are detailed land-supply issues in certain areas, which may become more marked as the plan period progresses, surpluses in other locations should be able to address the imbalance, with the additional input of reclaimed and recycled land at Lynemouth providing a valuable backstop to the supply;
- For rural areas, other than the Green Belt towns, where shortfalls are being addressed above, the supply is generally sufficient.

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**5.46** In spite of this the following more specific issues are identified:

- There are likely to be places where regeneration and possible targeted redevelopment of existing employment areas could benefit the land supply situation as time progresses. Such places might include the Blyth Business Park area, Double Row in Seaton Delaval and parts of Haltwhistle;
- Some places where, ideally, additional land should be identified are nevertheless too constrained for this to be a practicality. An unmet need has been noted in Rothbury and an expansion of Rothbury's employment area could be supported if deliverable and justified, following further investigation. Solutions in constrained smaller towns could include:
  - allowing smaller sites to come forward more easily within the built-up area (as proposed for Prudhoe);
  - a neighbouring town possibly providing additional land (e.g. the highly constrained village of Corbridge looking to Hexham); or
  - opportunities being maximised for rural conversions to soak up some of the demand.

**5.47** All of the above approaches can be realised by:

- Supporting small scale windfalls close to settlement edges and/or the edges of existing employment zones (although not where Green Belt would be affected);
- A permissive approach to the conversion of rural premises for employment uses;
- An approach to small scale employment uses locating on vacant or infill sites within built-up areas.

**5.47a** Sites allocated for general employment land, and safeguarded for future employment use, are shown on the policies map. These sites are in addition to employment land already allocated in Neighbourhood Plans, which is shown on the policies map for information only.



## Policy ECN 6

### General employment land - allocations and safeguarding (Strategic Policy)

1. In order to support the strategic plan for economic development across Northumberland, general employment areas, comprising industrial estates, business parks and some additional land, are allocated, as shown on the Policies Map. ~~This is in addition to such areas already allocated for this purpose in Neighbourhood Plans.~~
2. It will be recognised that, within established employment areas, certain locations, especially business parks within South East Northumberland, offer the opportunity to add significantly to the range and quality of the County's employment offer, including through functional linkages with the Blyth Estuary Strategic Employment Area defined in Policy ECN 2.
3. The general employment areas allocated in part (1) above will include 78 hectares of land in areas that are additional to the established general employment areas, including 49 hectares at Lynefield Park, regenerating the area of the former Lynemouth aluminium smelter, and additional land allocations to ensure a continued essential supply for towns constrained by the Green Belt, as follows:
  - a. Hexham, Harwood Meadows, around 10 hectares
  - b. Prudhoe, Eltringham, around 2.5 hectares
  - c. Ponteland - Airport inset, Prestwick Park, around 2.5 hectares
  - d. Ponteland - Airport inset, Prestwick Pit, around 3 hectares
4. The range of land uses that will be supported within general employment areas will be either the B-Class employment uses only or a wider range of employment-generating uses, in accordance with Policies ECN 7 and ECN 8 respectively.
5. Land is safeguarded for ~~future employment use within Green Belt inset areas~~ long-term employment needs beyond the period of the Local Plan, as follows, and as shown on the Policies Map:
  - a. Morpeth, South of A196 at Coopies Way, around 4.5 hectares
  - b. Ponteland - Airport inset, Prestwick Pit, around 4 hectares.
6. Where the above allocations involve loss of Green Belt, this will be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of adjoining areas of Green Belt, where applicable and practical sought through developer contributions and implemented in a timely manner.

## Appropriate ranges of employment uses in defined employment areas

**5.48** The nature of many of the County's industrial estates, business parks and other monitored employment areas is such that there is a need to differentiate between:

- Key employment areas that should be limited to the main '**B-Class' employment uses** - essentially, manufacturing, research, warehousing and the category of office that would not require regular access by the public; and
- Employment areas where it would be beneficial to take a more flexible approach to the employment uses to be allowed - referred to as **wider employment-generating uses**. These tend to include areas close to busy town centres and/or in smaller service centres and/or where take-up for B-Class uses has been slow.

**5.49** The wider employment-generating uses are defined as land uses generating permanent on-site employment. Discretion will be used in deciding which employment generating uses would be appropriate in particular circumstances, but as a general rule:

- They may include certain of the D1-Class 'non-residential institution' uses, where the scale or nature of the operation, or lack of the need for regular public access would make a location in a town centre or central to where people live less necessary. Examples might include training facilities of various sorts, creches that serve people working in the employment areas themselves or types of health clinics that provide for specialised needs and are only occasionally visited;
- They may include *sui generis* uses which typically operate from employment sites such as car garages, taxi firms, home recycling centres and trade counter retail operations, as well as some leisure businesses which may not be suited to town centres;
- They would only include any of the A-Class or D2-Class town centre uses where the proposal is small scale and the employment area is centrally located in a main town or service centre; (N.B. Any Main Town Centre Use of a larger scale will not normally be acceptable and, if proposed, will be subject to appropriate sequential and impact testing; A1 retail use can sometimes form an ancillary part of an employment proposal - e.g. a factory shop - which may be acceptable subject to other considerations such as access and parking - see Policy ECN 9);
- They would not include any of the C-Class residential-type uses.

## **Policy ECN 7**

### **Key general employment areas for B-Class uses**

1. Within the key general employment areas, as delineated on the Policies Map, B1, B2 and B8 uses will be supported. Development of non-B-Class employment generating activity on these areas will be supported as exceptions only, if the development:
  - a. Directly supports and is ancillary to the primary functioning of the site as a location for B1, B2, and B8 development; and
  - b. Will not have a detrimental impact on the functioning of existing or future B-Class operators on the site; and
  - c. Ensures that B-Class uses remain the majority activity on site.

## **Policy ECN 8**

### **Areas for wider employment-generating uses**

1. General employment areas, where employment-generating uses wider than the B-Class uses will be supported, are identified on the Policies Map. Within these areas, permission will be granted for uses generating permanent on-site employment, provided that they comply with the definition of wider employment generating uses; and:
  - a. The proposed economic activity is compatible with existing businesses on the site and adjoining land uses; and
  - b. The proposal would not generate a high level of continual public access and/or should not necessarily be located central to where people live.

## Additional flexibility in general employment areas

- 5.50** Even with the flexible approach set out above, there are occasions when it will be appropriate to introduce additional flexibility as to what may or may not be permitted. For example, purpose built premises may have stood vacant over a long period, or dereliction and eyesores could put potential employers off moving into or staying in an area. There may be a need to pump prime the development of employment uses with a non-employment use or that use may serve a strong and sustainable purpose within the employment areas.
- 5.51** The Local Plan proposes to improve the quality of employment in the County and provide better work opportunities for residents. A key part of this is to support, spatially, initiatives to improve skill levels in Northumberland's resident workforce in accordance with the Northumberland Skills Strategy; through for example the development of dedicated technical training centres on employment sites.

### Policy ECN 9

#### Additional flexibility in general employment areas

1. Within areas allocated for general employment use in Policy ECN 6, permission for uses wider than the ranges specified in Policies ECN 7 or ECN 8 may be granted if the proposal meets one or more of the following:
  - a. It is ancillary to and will support the main employment-related use of the area; ~~and/or~~
  - b. It is for part of a larger site or premises and would facilitate the retention of the remainder in the specified employment use range; ~~and/or~~
  - c. It is on part of a larger development site and would facilitate the development of the remainder for employment uses in the specified range, which would otherwise be undeliverable; ~~and/or~~
  - d. It w~~W~~ould bring back into use a building which has stood vacant for at least 12 months, and the reoccupation of which by an employment use is demonstrated to be unlikely; ~~and/or~~
  - e. It w~~W~~ould provide the optimal location for essential infrastructure provision; ~~and/or~~
  - f. It c~~C~~an be demonstrated to deliver significant community and economic benefits that override the need to maintain the site or premises within the specified range of employment uses; ~~and/or~~
  - g. It w~~W~~ould help foster skills development and cannot be provided in an existing educational establishment or as ancillary to an employment use.

### Addressing loss and depletion of employment land

- 5.52** The development of employment land for non-employment uses, such as housing or large scale retail or leisure use, can deplete the supply of land available and make it more challenging to deliver the plan's economic growth objectives. The loss of high quality, well connected sites could be especially detrimental. Conversely anticipated market demand may not materialise in the long term. For some sites it may not be beneficial to continue to protect them unnecessarily.
- 5.53** As such the portfolio of sites will be regularly monitored and reviewed by the Council to assess if they are still likely to attract investment. The vacancy of existing premises within these same employment areas will also form part of this monitoring process. The Policy below therefore sets out criteria which would need to be addressed when development of allocated employment land for entirely non-employment uses is proposed. It focuses on the feasibility of demand across the plan period as well as recent market signals.

#### Policy ECN 10

##### Loss or depletion of employment land

1. Within the areas identified in Policies ECN 6, ECN 7 and ECN 8, and subject to the exceptions set out in part 2 of this policy, development for non-employment generating uses, such as housing, will be supported where robust evidence can demonstrate all of the following:
  - a. That there is no demonstrable market demand that the site will be developed for an employment generating use over the plan period; and
  - b. That sufficient land of a comparable quality and accessibility is available, and deliverable in the local market to provide for identified need; and
  - c. That the development would not result in an unacceptable loss of active businesses and jobs; and
  - d. That the development would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the continuing function of nearby existing businesses and/or the development of available employment land.
2. Development for non-employment generating uses will not be supported, in the following locations:
  - a. any Enterprise Zone; or
  - b. Northumberland Business Park; or
  - c. any other employment area considered key to the delivery of the Council's economic strategy; or
  - d. any employment land area that has been created through a Green Belt deletion.

## Other means of accommodating employment

- 5.54** Apart from land provision, the other important contributors to the economy of Northumberland include business activity occupying small sites and underused buildings around the built-up areas of towns and villages, rural enterprises away from towns, activity at and around visitor destinations, and small businesses in people's homes.

## Micro-businesses - opportunities in residential locations and in homes

- 5.55** Micro-businesses account for a high proportion of the County's work opportunities. Evidence shows that these occur throughout the County's built-up areas but also are spread surprisingly evenly across rural areas. Therefore it is important to support businesses being created within the areas where people live.
- 5.56** Within the built up areas of towns and villages, the Council has sought to avoid wide expanses of housing with no jobs or services, recognising, in line with national planning guidance, that mixed areas can work as long as 'bad neighbour uses' and parking issues can be successfully addressed and avoided. With some towns being constrained such that only limited dedicated employment land can be brought forward, the potential contribution of small, windfall employment sites and premises conversions can be valuable.
- 5.57** More than one third of all businesses in the North East LEP area operate from home, and this may well rise with improving telecommunications . Such businesses are a feature of all parts of Northumberland but their relative significance is magnified in remote rural areas where, cumulatively, they are a lifeline to the local economy. As they are set-up and grow, these businesses may rely on the modest additions such as the conversion of outbuildings or small-scale new buildings within the dwelling curtilage. These will be supported through planning decisions, as far as the scale and the context allow.
- 5.58** In principle the plan also supports the provision of new build 'live-work' units to provide purpose built accommodation for business and residential development within one building.



## Policy ECN 11

### Employment uses in built-up areas and home working

1. Businesses operated from within built-up areas, including residential areas and people's homes, will be supported, subject to highways, access and amenity considerations, by:
  - a. Allowing small-scale windfall employment sites adjoining existing employment areas, provided that they are not allocated for other uses;
  - b. Permitting business proposals seeking to occupy small sites or buildings within residential or other built-up areas, provided that they are not allocated for other uses or are otherwise protected;
  - c. Allowing for the creation of workspace for home-run businesses involving the conversion of part of a dwelling, its outbuildings, or the development of appropriately scaled new buildings within the dwelling curtilage;
  - d. In appropriate locations, either separately or as an element of a larger housing scheme, supporting and permitting buildings designed as 'live-work' units - part living accommodation, part workspace.

## Rural economy

- 5.59** Northumberland's geography is such that only a small proportion of the total County area (in its south-east corner) can be described as 'urban', with the remainder being 'rural'. If the market towns on which the rural County is centred are included, rural Northumberland contains around half of its population. However, once these main market towns and service centres are deducted from the total, it becomes clear that upwards of 50,000 people are distributed very sparsely across hundreds of small villages, hamlets and farmsteads. Analysis also shows that small businesses are widely spread across all areas of the County.
- 5.60** Rural Northumberland is highly significant in terms of how the economy of the County functions and how this affects the well-being of its communities. Evidence suggests <sup>(33)</sup> that the vast majority of new jobs coming forward in Northumberland during the Plan period will be in the types of employment that do not require specific land allocations - i.e. including the types of jobs typically provided in the County's rural areas. Planning for a thriving rural economy therefore demands measures that allow the accommodation of these jobs within rural communities, on farms, in tourist areas and generally across the countryside.

33 The ambitious jobs growth scenario set out in the Housing and economic growth options report (PBA, 2018)

## The importance of Northumberland's rural areas to the regional economy

- 5.61** The contribution of rural Northumberland to the region's wellbeing has been recognised recently in the devolution deal for the North of Tyne area. This newly defined mayoral area is to become a national exemplar for rural growth and stewardship with Northumberland as the focus. In support of this, a comprehensive North of Tyne Rural Productivity Plan is being developed. This will align with the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) for the wider north-east and the Borderlands initiative which links up rural initiatives on either side of the Scottish Border.
- 5.62** The North of Tyne deal proposes a partnership approach with a view to scaling up small rural businesses, and where necessary, removing barriers to this growth. Innovation will be fostered - e.g. looking at how digital technologies can enhance the interconnectedness of rural economies.

### Policy ECN 12

#### A strategy for rural economic growth (Strategic Policy)

1. The growth of the rural economy will be encouraged through:
  - a. Fostering innovation, promoting digital technologies and enhancing the interconnectedness of rural economies; and
  - b. Within constraints, facilitating the formation, growth and up-scaling of businesses in rural locations;
  - c. Safeguarding the rural environment, rural communities and traditional rural businesses upon which the rural economy depends;
  - d. Supporting rural main towns and service centres as the most accessible and suitable hubs for rural economic growth.

- 5.63** The traditional rural occupations do not employ anywhere near the numbers that they used to, although their contribution to the rural economy remains strong. Farm diversification into uses, such as specialist agricultural products, food and drink and leisure activities, are increasingly important for farms to remain viable. The equine industry also makes a significant contribution. However, there is a limit to the scale of these activities that can be absorbed into the landscape and by local communities. Market towns provide the best and most accessible work opportunities within rural Northumberland. However even they are not easily accessible. So keeping the rural economy thriving presents one of the greatest challenges for this plan to address.

- 5.64** Rural areas need to generate adequate wealth to support local services and more sustainable communities - part of the Plan's vision. Encouraging young people to stay in Northumberland is challenging - but especially so when they have grown up in rural areas. This means that the plan must seek to add to the diversity of job opportunities in rural areas for young people to access.
- 5.65** While it is considered that most employment activity should stay in accessible town locations, the plan seeks to ensure that reasonable opportunities are taken to support employment in countryside areas, applying adequate safeguards. The need to cater for economic supply chains in rural areas is also recognised, which can be just as complex as for urban manufacturing or service industries. The creation of rural enterprise hubs will allow clusters of small businesses to locate together with shared facilities, and will be supported, particularly where existing buildings can be used and the locations are accessible. Opportunities to enhance the skills of those living and working in rural areas of the County will be supported.

### Policy ECN 13

#### Meeting rural employment needs (Strategic Policy)

1. The role of rural locations in providing employment opportunities, to meet the needs of those living in such areas is recognised. Therefore, in the countryside, development that will generate employment opportunities, proportionate to the rural location, will be supported where all of the following apply:
  - a. Existing buildings are reused or, where this is not possible, extensions or new buildings that contribute positively to local landscape character and, where applicable, local building traditions;
  - b. The proposal is related as closely as possible to the existing settlement pattern, existing services and accessible places;
  - c. It will not have an adverse impact on the operational aspects of local farming or forestry.
2. Within the parameters of the above criteria, particular support will be given to:
  - a. Developments on farms which would add value to farm produce on-site and provide other supply chain opportunities in the County therefore reducing the distance products need to travel during the production process;
  - b. The further diversification and development of educational facilities where these will help to further enhance Northumberland's rural economy and training opportunities for rural professions, particularly those in relation to the County's further and higher education offer;
  - c. Rural enterprise hubs where a number of small businesses are located in a cluster with shared broadband connection and other essential facilities, with preference given to building conversions to house them.

- d. Small scale, proportionate well related development, necessary for the continued operation in situ of an existing rural business.

### Farm / rural diversification

- 5.66** Farm diversification is important to widen sources of income and sustain agricultural businesses. It is one of the primary ways in which diversification of rural work opportunities can be achieved. Typically farm diversification provides for tourism and leisure activity, but also new office and workshop space, as well as on site manufacturing, and in some cases sale of farm produce.
- 5.67** The policy approach supports diversification schemes and encourages the re-use of redundant farm buildings where possible, and seeks to ensure that new development is accessible and located as close as possible to existing buildings on the farm. However it is important that the main agricultural function of the farm is maintained to ensure farmland remains productive. To support this, new build development should avoid using the best and most versatile agricultural land, given its importance to the productivity of the agricultural sector, and the nature of the development should be complementary and compatible in scale with the continuing farm enterprise.
- 5.68** Some farms or estates in the County have diversified to provide education opportunities and are considered to be of key importance to the County's rural economy, particularly those catering for the higher education sector and it is considered important that the future development of these should be supported.

## Policy ECN 14

### Farm / rural diversification

1. Rural diversification developments will be supported if the proposed use is:
  - a. Directly related to agricultural, horticultural or forestry operations, or other activities, which by their nature would require a rural location; and/or
  - b. For leisure, recreation or tourism activities that require open land in a countryside location; and/or
  - c. A business or employment generating use that complies with Policy ECN13.

2. The scale, nature and detailed location of proposals for rural diversification should not prejudice the long (or short term) operational needs of the host farm or other rural operations;
3. The need for farm diversification will not, on its own, be accepted as a reason for granting permission for a new dwelling in the open countryside, except where it is clearly necessary for the operational needs of the farm in accordance with Policy HOU 8.

### Tourism and visitor development

#### The strategy for tourism

- 5.69** The Northumberland Tourism Destination Management Plan <sup>(34)</sup> sets out a strategy for a sustainable visitor economy, developing Northumberland's attractions and activities. It seeks to bring about a better range of visitor experiences, depressurising areas most likely to experience environmental harm from more visits, by distributing visitors more widely across the County and throughout the seasons. The need for diversification also extends to the range of accommodation available and to the types and quality of jobs available.

#### The range and quality of Northumberland's tourism attractors

- 5.70** Northumberland's key foci of visitors include the coastal, river valley, and upland landscapes, as well as key historic assets such as Hadrian's Wall, castles and the County's historic market towns. It is important that the Local Plan supports heritage led regeneration and sustainable tourism growth to create jobs and economic resilience.
- 5.71** Tourism development differs from other forms of economic development in that attractions often exist in poorly accessible locations, (e.g. with no public transport), meaning that car travel may be the only means of reaching them. Where a new attraction is being created, it should be possible to direct this to an accessible location but such places must also be attractive in their own right, otherwise this can be counterproductive.
- 5.72** It is considered that the visitor sector has the potential to grow right across Northumberland and that the plan can help this happen.
- 5.73** Linear attractions can also contribute to this broadening of the offer. Cycling, ~~and~~ walking and horse riding holidays are an integral part of the outdoor tourism offer and an important reason for visitor loyalty. The County has an extensive ~~public footpath~~ Rights of Way network, which includes public bridleways, restricted byways open to all traffic and footpaths ~~and~~. There are renowned long distance walks like the Hadrian's Wall Path and the Reivers' Way. There is also a lengthy network of

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34 Northumberland Destination Management Plan 2015 -2020, Northumberland Tourism.

high quality cycle routes and 100 miles of purpose built trails. Such holidays can be cross seasonal, help to disperse the benefits of the industry across the County and can be low impact. The plan supports the development of appropriate new and expanded cycle and walking routes to add to Northumberland's network. Facilities that help to support the network of long distance routes, where appropriate, will be strongly supported.

- 5.74** The policy approach must seek to balance the development of visitor facilities throughout Northumberland with the protection of the unique qualities of the County's natural and built environment, which are responsible for attracting many of the tourists in the first place. Development that involves new building must be prioritised in locations that are accessible, have complementary land uses for tourists, can accommodate additional growth without causing significant environmental harm and have strong potential to attract visitors. At the same time, it is acknowledged that, from time to time, a small-scale building or structure may be needed to serve a visitor attraction in a more isolated location - e.g. a visitor centre or toilet block. They may also be needed at locations where regular temporary events occur. Clearly such features would need to be capable of being absorbed into the local landscape as far as possible.

### **Accommodation for visitors**

- 5.75** There is a wide range of types of visitor accommodation in the County including all development falling within Use Class C1 (hotels and guest houses) as well as caravan, chalet and camping parks and facilities for business visitors such as conference and exhibition space.
- 5.76** Hotel accommodation is a Main Town Centre Use and, wherever possible, this should be located within the centres of the County's Main Towns and Service Centres. A sequential approach to this type of accommodation will be applied, in line with the general approach for the development of Main Town Centre Uses.
- 5.77** Other types of visitor accommodation are very often more suited to countryside locations. Small scale permanent accommodation may be needed - e.g. to serve the long-distance walking and cycle routes mentioned above. These can be appropriately located in the countryside through the efficient use of existing buildings. This recognises the value of bringing these buildings back into economic use. Failing this, the redevelopment of previously developed land may be acceptable. On occasion these approaches may not be viable or suitable for the business and so appropriately scaled and designed new buildings will be supported in accessible locations, where the development would improve and/or diversify Northumberland's offer of tourism accommodation. Clearly, such accommodation would need to meet all other landscape and other environmental protection policies and have the ability to blend in with the settlement pattern and local landscape character.
- 5.78** As far as non-permanent accommodation, such as caravans, chalets and campsites, are concerned, the approach taken will very much reflect the appropriate degree of protection that the area of the countryside in which the proposal is being made, with landscape character and visual impact, as well as the effects on local infrastructure and communities, being key considerations.

**The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies.**



## Policy ECN 15

### Tourism and visitor development

1. Northumberland will be promoted and developed as a destination for tourists and visitors, while recognising the need to sustain and conserve the environment and local communities. As far as possible, planning decisions will facilitate the potential for Northumberland to be a destination for:
  - a. heritage and cultural visits;
  - b. cycling and walking holidays;
  - c. landscape and nature based tourism;
  - d. themed events, activity holidays;
  - e. dark sky visits;
  - f. weddings;
  - g. out of season offer; and
  - h. food and drink.
2. This will be achieved through the development of new visitor attractions and facilities, accommodation and the expansion of existing tourism businesses, applying the following principles:
  - a. Main Towns and Service Centres will be prioritised for the development of significant new facilities and accommodation;
  - b. Where hotel development of over 2,500 square metres gross floorspace, proposed outside a defined town centre, meets the tests set out in Policy TCS 4 and can therefore be supported, other Main Town Centre Uses that are truly ancillary to the hotel, will not themselves be subject to the sequential test;
  - c. In rural locations outside the settlement boundaries and/or built-up areas of main towns, service centres or service villages, the development of new build, permanent buildings for holiday accommodation of any sort should be small scale and form part of a recognised village or hamlet;
  - d. In the open countryside, visitor accommodation should, wherever possible, be limited to the reuse of buildings that are structurally sound, or to chalets and caravans in accordance with part (e) below. New permanent buildings for visitor accommodation will only be supported where they would:
    - i. demonstrably improve and diversify the County's tourist offer and/or clearly provide necessary accommodation along an established tourist route; and
    - ii. be located as close as is practicable to existing development.
  - e. New or extensions to existing sites for camping, caravans, and chalets will be supported in accessible locations outside the two AONBs and the World Heritage Site and its buffer zone, provided the development is adequately

screened, taking into account short and long range views, by existing topography or vegetation or new good quality landscaping compatible with the surrounding landscape;

- f. Where there is a proven need to develop buildings, which do not include accommodation but would otherwise serve existing, established visitor or tourist attractions that are located in the open countryside, the reuse of conveniently located, substantial buildings will be preferred.
- g. Tourism related developments that enhance the environment or bring neglected or underused heritage assets back into appropriate economic use will be strongly supported;
- h. In open countryside areas outside the two AONBs and the World Heritage Site and its buffer zone, new tourist development requiring larger buildings, totalling more than 500 square metres gross floorspace, in an open land setting, will be assessed on the potential economic gain weighed against any possible harmful impacts and other plan policies. Comprehensive master planning should accompany such proposals;
- i. Temporary events for visitors will be encouraged at suitably accessible locations by supporting any associated but ancillary structures if these would serve the needs of events for much of the year and meet the criteria in part (f) above.

### Green Belt and the tourism and visitor economy

**5.79** The Northumberland Green Belt is very extensive, stretching up to 30 kilometres from the built-up area of Tyneside and covering in the region of 70,000 hectares in Northumberland alone. While larger settlements within the extent of the Green Belt are inset, meaning that Green Belt restrictions do not apply within these towns and villages, numerous small settlements and groups of buildings are ‘washed over’ by the Green Belt and are subject to the limitations on development imposed by Green Belt policy.

**5.80** The previous sections, dealing with the rural economy and tourism have sought to unlock the economic potential of countryside areas. It is true that most of the main countryside based tourist attractions - e.g. the North Northumberland Coast, medieval castles, Roman Wall, North Pennines, Kielder and (of course) the National Park - lie beyond the Green Belt. But the countryside areas that are the easiest to reach from the conurbation mostly lie within the Green Belt. Day trippers from Tyneside and tourists who chose to base themselves there pass through these areas to reach the destinations beyond.

**5.81** It is considered important in the context of the objectives of this plan to include a planning approach that seeks to capture some of the economic potential of Green Belt countryside, while maintaining fully the Green Belt’s protective role.

**The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies.**

Northumberland Local Plan - Publication Draft (January 2019) showing proposed minor modifications

**5.82** National policy urges councils to plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt. Much of Northumberland's Green Belt is rolling, managed farmland. It includes highly attractive countryside such as estate landscapes, incised river valleys and small woodlands. Nevertheless there is clear scope for landscape and biodiversity enhancements and, hand-in-hand with these, a greater level of countryside access for informal recreation. More formal sport and recreational activities also have a legitimate role in the Green Belt context, especially near to larger settlements.

**5.83** All these types of uses have the potential to stimulate the economy and can be associated with business uses and employment generation, as well as significant visitor dwell-time and spending. While the Green Belt limits the scope for substantial buildings, there are ways in which modest built development, necessary for such businesses to operate successfully, can be realised and provide high quality contributions towards the wider economic and tourism strategies:

- Through limited infilling within an existing (washed-over) group of buildings;
- Through the use of derelict brownfield land;
- Through the conversion of existing buildings; and
- Through buildings that are small and discreet that are demonstrably ancillary to open space uses occupying a large expanse of land.

## Policy ECN 16

### Green Belt and tourism and visitor economy

1. The potential of the Green Belt areas to contribute towards strategic economic and tourism aims will be maximised, while ensuring that there would be no greater impact on the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it, and where possible a lesser impact than the current situation. This will be achieved by:
  - a. Allowing open land uses that may lead to a reduction in operational farmland subject to:
    - i. The ability of the farm to continue to operate; and
    - ii. The proposal resulting in a significant increase in the ability of the public to access the countryside on foot, bicycle or on horseback and/or the creation of a new or enhanced visitor attraction of a type that would be most appropriately located in a countryside setting;
  - b. Allowing new buildings that provide for employment-generating or tourism-related uses, as limited infill within the built up form of settlements that are washed over by Green Belt, subject to any built conservation considerations;
  - c. Allowing for the replacement of a building in employment-generating or tourism-related use, so long as the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
  - d. Allowing employment generating or tourism development to occupy previously developed land (but not where temporary buildings have been sited) so long as the new buildings do not impact the openness of the Green Belt more than the buildings or structures that were previously on the site.
2. Within the above restrictions, proposals will be supported if they:
  - a. Allow an existing business and/or employment to continue or modestly grow in situ;
  - b. Allow for facilities that contribute to education, training and upskilling that is connected to rural sectors including agriculture, horticulture and tourism.

### Military establishments

**5.84** There are a number of defence and military related sites and facilities in Northumberland. These include:

- Albermarle Barracks;
- Ponteland Rifle Range;
- RAF Boulmer (Main site); and
- RAF Boulmer Southern Ops site.

**5.85** There are also numerous radar and communications sites in Northumberland. In addition, areas of Kielder and Wark Forest are used for training purposes. The Otterburn Training Area is located within Northumberland National Park and borders the plan area. These sites and facilities play a role in terms of national defence and military capability and training. The Ministry of Defence is also a major employer in Northumberland.

**5.86** Given the presence of these sites and facilities in Northumberland, it is important to consider them in the Local Plan. There is an ongoing need to safeguard these facilities for defence purposes and to support further development to meet operational requirements at each of these sites in line with Paragraph 95 of the NPPF.

**5.87** It is recognised that the Albermarle Barracks site and Ponteland Rifle Range site are located within the Green Belt. Any proposals at these locations would be considered within the constraints of the Green Belt.

**5.88** There are currently no key sites within Northumberland that have been announced for disposal by the Ministry of Defence. Should any sites become redundant and be proposed for disposal, their redevelopment should be considered through a masterplan approach to ensure this is considered in a holistic way. Given the rural settings of the sites, important considerations would be their accessibility and infrastructure capacity. Consideration will also be given to the suitability of the buildings for retention or re-use and retaining and enhancing areas for wildlife, areas of green space and landscaping measures. Where applicable, development would additionally need to be considered within the constraints of Green Belt policy.

## Policy ECN 17

### Military establishments

1. ~~Subject to national Green Belt policy, p~~Proposals associated with defence and military operations will be supported at existing sites where they would enhance or sustain operational capabilities.
2. Non-military or non-defence related development within or in the areas around a defence or military site will not be supported where it would adversely affect military operations or capability, unless it can be demonstrated that there is no longer a defence or military need for the site.
3. ~~Subject to national Green Belt policy, p~~Proposals for the redevelopment, conversion and re-use of redundant defence sites will be supported, ~~where the proposals would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than existing development and do not intrude into open, undeveloped areas.~~
4. Proposals for both military and defence related development and the redevelopment of redundant defence sites should:
  - a. Be sympathetic to the character of the site and its surrounding area and where possible, retain and enhance areas for wildlife, green space and landscaping; and
  - b. Provide mitigation in terms of any adverse effects on local infrastructure arising from the proposal.
5. A masterplan should be prepared in liaison with the Local Planning Authority where major redevelopment on existing defence sites for military or defence purposes is proposed or where the development of redundant sites for alternative uses is proposed.



## 6. Town Centres and Central Services

### Introduction

- 6.1** Northumberland's town and village centres are key to the functioning of the County's economy. They are not only shopping centres but provide essential community services. They are the focus of significant employment opportunities. In this context, it is important to note that all projections regarding likely new jobs created in the next 15 to 20 years show that the vast majority will be in the types of employment that do not require specific new land allocations - i.e. including the types of jobs typically found in the County's town, village and local centres.
- 6.2** In terms of the Plan's objectives, this means that centres help to achieve the 'Economy and Jobs' objective and engender 'Community Health and Wellbeing'. As accessible locations they help with the 'Climate Change' objective. Also, if the Plan's objective of securing better 'Quality of Place' is to be realised, town centres present a clear focus for that quality.
- 6.3** Northumberland includes town centres where considerable numbers of people rely on the jobs and services that they provide - sometimes from wide rural hinterlands. They cannot simply be retail centres but must also offer a range of essential services, leisure opportunities and, perhaps most importantly of all, jobs and businesses.
- 6.4** These roles sit within the context that these centres are the most long-established parts of the settlements and contain a significant proportion of the County's assets of historic significance - something that can attract additional visitors but which can present constraints on future development opportunities. They have to act as cultural, social and economic centres, catering for many modern-day needs while conserving their historical significance.
- 6.5** The main aims of the Local Plan for town centres are:
- To establish and maintain their relative roles as service centres for residents and visitors;
  - To bolster their roles as community hubs by allowing for a wide range of uses including shopping, other essential and non-essential services, leisure facilities, offices and other workplaces, as well as a residential presence;
  - To make sure that they are not constrained in fulfilling these roles, physically or in policy terms;
  - To ensure that key uses are concentrated to the extent that the centres continue to be vibrant and vital without stifling expansion and innovation; and
  - To provide scope for good transport access including space for public transport, pedestrians, cyclists, wheelchairs and sufficient car parking.

## Retailing

- 6.6** Shopping has traditionally often been thought of as the lynchpin of town centres - the main reason for visiting them. However, Northumberland's town centres have always served a much wider role than just shopping and, due to rapidly changing retail environment, it is more important than ever to plan the County's centres to be diverse with a comprehensive range of essential services and attractions.
- 6.7** Developments and trends which will influence the future planning of town and key village centres are:
- The accelerating growth in **online shopping** and the consequent reduction in footfall on high streets and reduced potential for investment in 'bricks and mortar'.
  - **High street adaptation** of retailing to these new trends with additional services and the growth of niche shops.
  - **Supermarket diversification** - large stores widening their offer to include more durable items, the growth of the 'discounters' in more medium size stores and the emergence of smaller convenience shops on high streets.
  - Increased **popularity of cafes and leisure facilities** so that they become increasingly appropriate for key high street frontages.
  - Risk reduction **investment strategies** by the main retail chains meaning that any closures are likely to affect smaller town centres and any new investment likely to be in regional centres.

## Maintaining a hierarchy of centres

- 6.8** A large part of south and central Northumberland lies within the strong influence of the main regional centres of Newcastle and the Metrocentre. The northern and western extremities of the County are influenced by the more distant regional centres of Edinburgh and Carlisle respectively.
- 6.9** The Local Plan recognises that Northumberland's centres will always be positioned below these strategic hubs in terms of importance and influence. However a key challenge is to avoid the County's centres dropping further behind, as investment is concentrated in regional centres which can already offer a wide-ranging visitor experience. In short, the centres of Northumberland's market towns may need to 'run in order to stay still'.
- 6.10** Evidence helps to define a hierarchy of centres, based mainly on their retail and leisure offer. As this approach relies on quantitative data, it continues to be an appropriate way of defining a hierarchy. Northumberland's main towns, as defined in Policy TCS 1, is split into two tiers as far as the town centre offer is concerned, with the service centres, in effect forming a third tier and more local facilities a fourth:
- **Main towns - larger centres:** Alnwick, Ashington, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Blyth, Cramlington, Morpeth and Hexham all have a good level of retail provision along with wide ranging town centre community facilities. They are hubs for

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public transport and offer a good level of off-street car parking. They can be regarded as pivotal points for community activity, jobs and services for large populations and wide hinterlands.

- **Main town - smaller centres:** Amble, Bedlington and Haltwhistle, Ponteland and Prudhoe have good local retail provision along with a reasonable range of town centre community facilities, serving the towns themselves and all except Bedlington also with modest rural hinterlands. These centres are accessible by public transport being on regular bus routes linking them to larger centres and some of their surrounding settlements.
- **Service Centres:** Allendale, Belford, Bellingham, Corbridge, Haydon Bridge, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Rothbury, Seahouses, Seaton Delaval and Wooler are the settlements that are categorised in the second tier of the main hierarchy. They have a range of mainly essential services and serve hinterlands (some are extensive and rural), so allowing visits to larger centres further afield to be less frequent.
- Below these sit:
  - **Other village centres** providing for the most essential day-to-day local service needs of the population of one or two rural parishes;
  - **Suburban parades of shops and services** serving the same purpose. These are increasingly difficult to define, often being taken over by non-essential services or spread out along radial routes.

**6.11** Policy TCS 1 sets the hierarchy and the levels of protection afforded to centres, in general terms, and seeks to maintain and bolster their positions in this hierarchy relative to other tiers and the regional centres that rank above them. The more detailed approach to protection in relation to the top three tiers in the hierarchy - their vitality and viability - are dealt with in the policies that follow. Where communities are strongly dependent on the continuity of particular local services, these issues are covered as part of the wider approach to community facilities set out in Chapter 14.

### Policy TCS 1

#### Hierarchy of centres (Strategic Policy)

1. A hierarchy of centres is defined as follows:
  - a. Main towns - larger centres: Alnwick, Ashington, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Blyth, Cramlington, Morpeth and Hexham;
  - b. Main town - smaller centres: Amble, Bedlington and Haltwhistle, Ponteland and Prudhoe;
  - c. Service Centres: Allendale, Belford, Bellingham, Corbridge, Haydon Bridge, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Rothbury, Seahouses, Seaton Delaval and Wooler.

- d. Other small parades or clusters of shops in towns and larger villages not part of the centres defined above.
- 2. In assessing development proposals, growth within centres will be supported and encouraged at a scale which helps to maintain and reinforce their roles within the hierarchy, as well as their relationship with regional centres.
- 3. Proposals that seek to replace significant areas of Main Town Centre Uses with other uses will be resisted if it is demonstrable that this would undermine the centre's overall role and position within the hierarchy.

### Defining centres in Main Towns

- 6.12** The Local Plan needs to include clear definitions of Northumberland's town centres if it is to be successful at promoting them as hubs for their communities and as service centres for people living in their catchment areas, as well as for visitors. The centres must be vital and viable, which can best be achieved by directing 'Main Town Centre Uses', such as large shops, leisure centres and hotels, towards certain defined areas while discouraging them elsewhere.
- 6.13** Centres have therefore been carefully defined, based on evidence regarding clusters of activity, as well as past consultations (e.g. those connected with neighbourhood planning). The five smaller town centres have been given a single 'Town Centre Boundary', while the seven larger centres, with larger populations and wider ranges of facilities, have also been given tightly drawn 'Primary Shopping Areas', so as to keep key shopping streets as vibrant as possible.

## Policy TCS 2

### Defining centres in Main Towns (Strategic Policy)

Town Centre and Primary Shopping Area boundaries are defined on the Policies Map. These may be subject to review or updating in Neighbourhood Plans. Main Town Centre Uses should be located within these boundaries, unless there are positive planning reasons to locate them elsewhere that outweigh other policy considerations.

### Establishing the role of Northumberland's centres

- 6.14** The Council has gathered and intermittently updated evidence on people's spending patterns, their shopping and leisure habits and how these factors relate to the performance of Northumberland's town centres. This allows an assessment of the health of the centres and whether or not they are meeting their roles as multi-functional community hubs. Key to this is how they provide for shopping needs. If a centre fails in this, it is essentially failing as a centre.
- 6.15** However, to be fully successful, they must offer a whole array of other accessible services, some essential, some leisure related, as well as being foci for work and business. This is especially true of the type and size of market town that characterises Northumberland. Continual reinvention and adaptation are needed. Planning for centres often has to be more aspirational than the raw growth forecasts suggest.
- 6.16** Evidence shows that a range of planning approaches have helped Northumberland's centres to keep pace with each other and with regional centres:
- The need to retain a **strong retail presence** has been paramount in policy decisions on key frontages and the town centres as a whole;
  - There has been recognition that **non-retail uses**, such as cafes and leisure service uses can contribute to vibrancy on the high street and reduce vacant shop space;
  - The granting of permission for **larger format stores** (often on edge-of-centre sites) has attracted national chains so keeping some spending in the town that may otherwise have leaked elsewhere;
  - Despite competition from national chains, the historic nature of many of Northumberland's town centres has helped protect a range of **local independent retailers** that contributes to the range and interest of the shopping offer;
  - The use of flexible policy approaches to allow **niche markets** (including temporary 'pop-up' shops etc.) to be developed in centres has been considered against the need to keep key essential services and a degree of stability;
  - The encouragement of **residential uses** in town centres, to add a sense of community and security, and fill voids such as above shops, has been considered against the need to keep a strong representation of shops and services and against possible conflicts like noise pollution and parking issues;
  - Initiatives relating to **parking restrictions or pedestrianisation** have been looked at in relation to any negative effects on local businesses.
- 6.17** The roles of Northumberland's town centres will continue to be enhanced by continuing these approaches, as well as adapting to new developments in retailing and other service provision.

## Appropriate enhancements to individual centres

- 6.18** From the above, it is clear that opportunities must be sought to allow centres to expand in scale with the growth in the number of residents and their spending power, increased visitor numbers, innovations in the range and type of services that can be offered and many other factors. A separate background paper <sup>(35)</sup> contains the analysis that takes forward of the shopping and leisure habits of Northumberland residents and visitors, patterns of spending growth and retail trends.
- 6.19** The initial conclusions identify what would be needed, and when, if the solution to maintaining the retail and leisure role of each town is expressed in terms of land needed to accommodate brand new floorspace. The initial conclusions are:
- **Cramlington** and **Ashington** would benefit from additional shopping and leisure-related space in the short-term and may require up to 6 hectares each within the plan period.
  - **Berwick-upon-Tweed** and **Blyth** would benefit from additional retail capacity in the short- to medium-term - particularly for comparison shopping - requiring up to 4 hectares in each of these two towns within the plan period. However, in the case of Berwick-upon-Tweed, with further proposals on the outskirts and little land available in the historic core, solutions other than land allocations will be needed to allow the town centre to remain vibrant and complement the additional floorspace elsewhere in the town.
  - **Morpeth**, **Hexham** and **Alnwick**, i.e. the remaining 'large centres', are reasonably well provided for at present but may have scope for more floorspace in the medium term, (although Morpeth would benefit from further choice of convenience retailing in the fairly short term). Up to 3 hectares may be needed in each of these towns by the end of the plan period, (although less in Alnwick if the scheme that currently has permission proceeds).
  - **Amble**, **Bedlington**, **Haltwhistle**, **Ponteland** and **Prudhoe** - i.e. all of those Main Towns with smaller centres - currently retain relatively small proportions of the total spending potential of their populations. In Haltwhistle and Prudhoe particularly, current shops are few in number but trade well so that these centres would benefit from modest additional shopping choice in either the short- or medium-term but the land needed (by the end of the plan period) to fulfil this would be minimal - certainly less than a hectare in all cases. Again, proposals that do come forward in these smaller towns tend to be away from their older central areas, meaning that, while spending will be drawn back into the town as a whole, innovative approaches will be required to keep the centres themselves vibrant.
- 6.20** The background analysis also assesses the influence of each of these factors on the ability of (or the need for) each centre to expand to the extent that the initial conclusions suggested. Ashington offers the greatest scope, followed in equal

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35 Technical Background Paper - Policy Approach to Northumberland's Twelve Main Town Centres, December 2018.



second place by Blyth and Cramlington, then Bedlington and Prudhoe. The two centres least equipped to accommodate significant extra floorspace are Alnwick and Hexham.

**6.21** The Background Paper sets out detailed conclusions for each centre for the plan period, and these are summarised in Table 6.1 and reflected in Policy TCS 3.

**Table 6.1 Summary of findings and proposed approach for each centre**

<b>Ashington</b>	<p>A robust approach to delivering scope for additional retail, large scale leisure, bus station and other relevant town centre uses - achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considering an area in the north east quadrant of the Town Centre for these purposes;</li> <li>• Encouraging renewal of some existing frontages along Station Road and Woodhorn Road.</li> </ul>
<b>Cramlington</b>	<p>A robust approach to delivering scope for additional retail, large scale leisure and other relevant town centre uses - achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considering an area in the south of Manor Walks and Forum Way for these purposes;</li> <li>• Allowing for further intensification within the existing centre.</li> </ul>
<b>Blyth</b>	<p>A robust approach to bringing any future additions to its offer into the town centre - achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considering an area to the north and east of Keel Row for these purposes, which will include existing uses such as the bus station, which would be retained / replaced within the site;</li> <li>• Encouraging renewal within frontages and blocks surrounding the Market Square, Bowes Street and Regent Street.</li> </ul>
<b>Berwick-upon-Tweed</b>	<p>A strong approach to ensure that any significant future additions to floorspace are as close as possible to the town centre - achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A criteria-based approach to allow for small scale opportunities for enhancement of the Conservation Area through partial redevelopment that would deliver some additional retail space with large floor-plates;</li> <li>• Examining any development options that could achieve larger floorplates in locations within 300m of the edge of the Primary Shopping Area, subject to appropriate impact testing</li> </ul>
<b>Morpeth</b>	<p>Recognition that scope exists for some additional retail and leisure floorspace but that, given the widely drawn Primary Shopping Area and Town Centre boundaries, these could be accommodated without the need for particular areas to be outlined - also achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A criteria-based approach to allow for small scale opportunities for enhancement of the Conservation Area through partial</li> </ul>

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	redevelopment that would deliver some additional retail space with large floor-plates.
<b>Alnwick</b>	<p>No urgency for more significant additions to floorspace. No land allocations required. Nevertheless, from a qualitative point of view, there would be benefits if any additional floorspace were within the existing centre - achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A criteria-based approach to allow for small scale opportunities for enhancement of the Conservation Area through partial redevelopment that would deliver some additional retail space with large floor-plates.</li> </ul>
<b>Hexham</b>	<p>No urgency for more significant additions to floorspace. No land allocations required. Nevertheless, from a qualitative point of view, there would be benefits if any additional floorspace were within the existing centre - achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A criteria-based approach to allow for small scale opportunities for enhancement of the Conservation Area through partial redevelopment that would deliver some additional retail space with large floor-plates.</li> </ul>
<b>Smaller Centres</b>	<p>A positive approach is needed in order to facilitate modern retail floorspace on a modest scale which may help counteract leaking expenditure - achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considering areas for new town centre development to the rear of the north side of Front Street, Prudhoe, north of Front Street, Bedlington, at Merton Road, Ponteland, north west of Queen Street, Amble and south of the B6322, Haltwhistle;</li> <li>• Encouraging renewal of some existing frontages along Front Street, Prudhoe;</li> <li>• A criteria-based approach to allow for small scale opportunities for enhancement of the conservation areas through partial redevelopment that would deliver some additional retail space with large floor-plates in Amble, Bedlington and Haltwhistle.</li> </ul>

**6.22** Offices are a key element in the mix of uses found in town centres. It is particularly important that offices which rely on frequent public access, such as banks and professional services, should have a town centre location. However all offices have high employment densities: they therefore not only benefit from a central, accessible position but their employees can significantly increase footfall and spending within the centre. It is difficult to secure stand-alone privately funded office schemes in most of Northumberland for reasons of viability. Therefore they should be encouraged as part of mixed use schemes.

## Policy TCS 3

### Maintaining and enhancing the role of centres (Strategic Policy)

1. Northumberland's town and village centres will be supported and promoted, through planning decisions, in their role as:
  - a. Community and service hubs;
  - b. Vital and viable centres for shopping, business, culture and leisure; and
  - c. Places to live, work and visit.
2. This will be achieved in main towns by identifying opportunities and supporting proposals for developments which are physically and functionally integrated with and add choice to the existing retail offer in the Primary Shopping Area and the leisure and other central service offer of the wider Town Centre - specifically:
  - a. Within or, where opportunities are lacking and sequential and impact testing allow, immediately abutting Town Centre boundaries, promoting the development of schemes involving a mix of appropriate Main Town Centre Uses, allowing an element of residential as part of any mixed use scheme. This will include:
    - i. Blyth Town Centre, especially considering opportunities to the north and east of Keel Row, including a replacement bus station, should the existing bus station be displaced;
    - ii. Ashington Town Centre, to the north-east of the town centre, including the possibility of a new bus station somewhere within the overall area;
    - iii. Cramlington Town Centre, especially the opportunities offered by vacant buildings to the south of Manor Walks;
    - iv. Bedlington, to the rear of the north side of Front Street within the constraints of the Conservation Area;
    - v. Prudhoe, to the rear of the north side of Front Street;
    - vi. Haltwhistle, to the south of the B6322, area including the existing service station;
    - vii. Ponteland, in the vicinity of Merton Road;
    - viii. Amble, including land north west of Queen Street.
  - b. Encouraging and supporting schemes for the renewal of blocks and frontages, especially where this will result in more modern shopping, leisure or office floorspace, offering larger floorplates, provided that this will not alter the historic layout or harm the character or historic significance of the town centre concerned. This will include consideration of such opportunities in:
    - i. Blyth Town Centre, areas around the Market Place, Regent Street and Bowes Street;

- ii. Ashington Town Centre, along parts of Station Road and Woodhorn Road;
    - iii. Prudhoe Town Centre, along parts of Front Street.
  - c. Further intensification of uses within Manor Walks, Cramlington
  - d. Within the constraints of built conservation policies, allowing for small scale opportunities for enhancement of town centre offer including, if possible, the introduction of larger floor-plates, in the defined centres of Alnwick, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Morpeth, Hexham, Bedlington, Amble and Haltwhistle.
3. Within Service Centres, and in other villages where there are clusters of services, new provision should be within a scale appropriate to meeting the shopping, leisure or other service requirements of residents living in those settlements and their catchments;
  4. All development of additional Main Town Centre Uses will be considered positively if it will deliver social, economic and/or environmental benefits for the centre concerned, but it must be in scale with the size and function of the centre, taking into account the overall size of the settlement and its catchment and planned growth of that settlement over the plan period.
  5. Schemes that will facilitate the continuation of established town centre businesses *in situ* or elsewhere within the defined town centres will be supported.
  6. The location of purpose-built offices in defined Town Centres and their inclusion as part of mixed use schemes will be encouraged and supported.
  7. Town Centres will be promoted as places to live and work through the encouragement of a mix of residential and office use on upper floors on main shopping streets and other appropriate locations, especially if this leads to the reoccupation of disused premises and provided it would not, individually or cumulatively, lead to an unacceptable reduction in vitality and viability or limit the operation of an existing established 'Main Town Centre' service or business.
  8. In suburban parts of towns, the loss of the last convenience shop in a parade of shops will be resisted.
  9. In smaller settlements and where there are clusters of shops and services, the loss of essential local services will be resisted in accordance with Policy INF 3.

## Significant proposals outside centres

**6.23** In respect of Main Town Centres, the approach set out above promotes their role within the defined boundaries, as well as outlining some areas for possible expansion which may stretch beyond the current boundary lines. Any detailed proposals above certain 'threshold' sizes falling beyond the defined centres, including within any expansion areas that stretch beyond the current boundaries, will need to be assessed, first to ensure that no more central a site is available and, if not, to assess their likely impact on the vitality and viability of the centre. This allows the option of not going ahead with, or refusing the development if the impact is not acceptable. The thresholds used are appropriate for Northumberland and are based on the overall scale of the County's centres and their vulnerability to out-of-centre development.

**6.23a** Where impact testing is required, it should assess the net and (where relevant) cumulative impact of the proposal on the vitality and viability of any centre from which the proposal may derive its spending or its users. Whether such impact is acceptable will depend on a combination of factors including the existing health of the centre and how this will affect its ability to withstand impacts from competing development within the defined centre, any reduction in local consumer choice, any increase in vacant or dead frontages and/or any loss or delay to planned investment.

### Policy TCS 4

#### Proposals outside centres

1. Where proposals for main town centre retail or leisure uses come forward on sites outside defined town centre boundaries, and they are of a scale that would be inappropriate in a less accessible location, they will be subject, first to proportionate and appropriate sequential testing and then, if a suitable more central site cannot be identified, to impact testing, as follows:
  - a. Proposals for more than 1000 square metres gross retail floorspace,
    - i. In Larger Town Centres, those beyond Primary Shopping Area boundaries; or
    - ii. In Smaller Town Centres, those beyond Town Centre boundaries
  - b. Proposals for leisure-related buildings of 2500 square metres gross floorspace, not linked with wider open space activities, that are beyond defined Town Centre boundaries.
2. Where the above testing demonstrates that the Main Town Centre Use can only be accommodated in an edge- or out-of-centre location, priority should be given to accessible sites well connected to the town centre or (failing that) connected

to other existing services, and, wherever possible, be well related to residential areas.

3. Development of Main Town Centre Uses that are away from defined centres, below the thresholds in part 1 of this Policy, and in the built-up areas of towns and villages, will not be subject to the above testing, but should:
  - a. Wherever possible, contribute to the range and choice of services offered in the local area; and
  - b. Be accessible and well related to existing services.

### Keeping high streets vibrant

- 6.24** Local leisure-time services, such as restaurants, bars and fitness clubs, are often interspersed with shops, banks and other financial institutions within Northumberland's Primary Shopping Areas and wider Commercial or Larger Village Centres. This integration has been vital to the success of these centres in terms of daytime activity, the evening economy and in catering for visitors. Some centres clearly have scope to increase these types of local provision.
- 6.25** The blossoming of cafes, restaurants, speciality health-related outlets and a whole array of other services and leisure uses, it has led to a more diverse town centre shopping experience.
- 6.26** There remains a need to retain a strong element of retail on the busiest parts of centres - high streets, malls, market places and squares, which are identified and monitored through surveys 'health checks' that look at footfall and other key indicators.
- 6.27** Within these locations the approach, traditionally used, of seeking to maximise the percentage of certain 'Key Shopping Frontages' that are occupied by vibrant uses will continue with retail as the key driver. However, it will be given the flexibility necessary to reflect the wider purpose of town centres by allowing for other types of uses that also add to the vitality of the high street. This should help to minimise vacancies and maintain or increase footfall and average 'dwell time' (the total length of visits to the centre). Some Neighbourhood Plans have developed their own approaches on retail presence on their high streets, based on local evidence.
- 6.28** Other ways in which High Streets can be improved, enhanced and kept as vibrant foci for town centres include:
- Improvements to the **public realm**, through maintaining and enhancing areas for markets and events, initiatives such as pedestrianisation, seating, local information and ancillary facilities such as public toilets, having clear regard to the needs of people with protected characteristics, such as disability; and
  - Clear guidance on the design of **shop fronts**, especially where the streets concerned are an important part of the historic environment or the local character of the town or village centre; and

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- Making sure **ease of access** - on foot, by public transport and via parking facilities are as good as possible for visitors to the heart of a centre, including adapting centres for new access needs such as short-stay 'click-and-collect'.

## Policy TCS 5

### Keeping high streets vibrant

1. Within defined Town Centres, the Council will seek to maintain and enhance vitality and viability through geographically specific policy approaches.
2. Key Shopping Frontages are defined on the Policies Map for the seven Main town larger centres. Within these frontages, the Council will seek to maximise the active frontage through supporting and encouraging Use Class A1 retail uses and to a lesser extent Use Class A3 restaurants and cafes and, on a limited basis, other uses, subject to:
  - a. Not supporting changes of use from Use Class A1, if this would take the length of the ground floor frontage in this Use Class to below 50% of the length of the Key Shopping Frontage;
  - b. Not supporting changes of use that would take the length of the ground floor frontage in Use Class A1 plus Use Class A3 to below 75% of the length of the Key Shopping Frontage;
  - c. Not supporting Use Class A5, hot food takeaways on Key Shopping Frontages except in exceptional circumstances;
  - d. Supporting uses other than those in Use Classes A1, A3 and A5, up to a cumulative total of 25% of the total length of the ground floor frontage of the Key Shopping Frontage, especially where it can be demonstrated that this would result in an increase in the active street frontage;
  - e. Only allowing a variation beyond the percentages in (a) to (d) above where the unit concerned has been vacant for more than a year and the overall vacancy level of the Key Shopping Frontage exceeds 10% of the units that have a ground floor frontage.
3. Improvements in the public realm of centres will be designed to encourage people to visit the centre more and remain there longer, through measures such as pedestrianisation, seating, landscaping, complementary services and controlling shop front design; these aspects should:
  - a. Adhere to the design policies elsewhere in the Plan and any design guidance that forms part of the Northumberland Design Guide;
  - b. Cater for the needs of people with disabilities; and
  - c. Comply with the requirements of Policy QOP 3 Public Realm Design Principles.
4. Proposals will ensure that there is no loss of public spaces in central, accessible locations that have the capacity to host markets or other events and activities appropriate to town centres.
5. Within the constraints of residential amenity, businesses that are likely to contribute to the evening economy and remain open late will be encouraged and supported to the extent that they would add to the vitality of streets but,

those on Key Shopping Frontages, should not detract through being closed and shuttered during the day.

6. Proposals will ensure that public transport stopping areas, car and cycle parking, short stay drop-off and collection points, and pedestrian and cycle routes into and around town centres are fit for purpose to serve the access requirements of their main areas of activity.

### Hot food takeaways

- 6.29** Hot food takeaways are now a familiar feature of town centres and other shopping centres and are regarded by many as an essential service. They can proliferate and cluster in town centres or among shops that line main routes in and out of towns. This can change the character of these locations through indiscriminate parking and other disturbances such as noise and smells late at night. As such, when clustered together, they can detract from the role of centres as vibrant shopping and service centres.
- 6.30** In recent years, they have been associated with encouraging unhealthy eating, especially among children. As such there are strong and supportable reasons for excluding them from the immediate surroundings of schools. In addition, there are strong reasons to limit their numbers where there is already a proliferation of takeaways or where there are higher than average numbers of younger children already falling into the overweight categories.
- 6.31** Finally there has been a tendency for takeaways to occupy shop units in local parades and even in villages, which may only have a very limited retail presence. Therefore where the last A1 unit in such a parade or the final shop or public house in a village are proposed as a takeaway it is reasonable to resist this change.

## Policy TCS 6

### Hot food takeaways

1. New Use Class A5 hot food takeaways will be supported where all of the following apply:
  - a. They are not within a Main Town or, otherwise, within an electoral division where either:
    - i. More than 35.3 percent of Year 6 pupils are classified as overweight or obese<sup>(36)</sup>; or
    - ii. The number of approved A5 hot food takeaway establishments per 1000 resident population equals or exceeds the Northumberland total in March 2018 based on the Land and Property Gazetteer, that is 0.69 per 1000 resident population;
  - b. They are over 400 metres walk from any entrance gate of any existing or proposed school or college with students under the age of 18 years;
  - c. They will not create or add to a cluster of three or more adjacent Use Class A5 hot food takeaways within a 100 metre radius of any given point;
  - d. They will not be replacing the last convenience shop or public house in a village or the last convenience shop in a parade of shops that serve a residential area;
  - e. They would not create safety hazards for pedestrians or other users of the public highway;
  - f. They will not have an adverse effect on the living conditions of any nearby residents from noise or disturbance or litter or odours or that any such disturbance can be suitably mitigated.

36 This is the proportion of children who were overnight or obese in Northumberland in 2016/17.

## 7. Housing

### Introduction

- 7.1** The vision for housing is based on the principle that having a decent home is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of everyone living in Northumberland. The Plan objectives include extending housing choice across Northumberland by delivering homes for existing and future communities and to support the Northumberland economy, alongside providing well-designed and affordable homes to meet the diverse needs of an ageing population.
- 7.2** With some 152,219 dwellings<sup>(37)</sup> and other communal residential accommodation at the plan period baseline in 2016, over 90% of the County's housing that will be here in 20 years already exists. It is therefore crucial that the quality of this existing housing stock is maintained, and adapted and improved where necessary, to ensure those dwellings continue to meet the changing future needs of the County's residents, particularly as there is the need to cater for an increasing proportion of older people.
- 7.3** There is nevertheless an identified need to increase the supply of housing across the County to meet projected population and household growth in Northumberland, alongside supporting local economic growth. The Council is committed to meeting the diverse housing needs of Northumberland's existing and new residents, by providing a choice of decent and affordable homes, including specialist accommodation with support. To achieve well-balanced, sustainable and attractive neighbourhoods where people want to live, work and prosper, the Local Plan needs to ensure that new homes are developed in the right places, at the right times and of the right scale and type for the right occupants, while respecting and protecting this beautiful County.
- 7.4** The strategic approach to housing provision is underpinned by the Government's NPPF requirement to positively seek opportunities to meet the identified needs for housing, significantly boosting the supply of housing to help support wider opportunities for economic growth while enabling sufficient flexibility to quickly adapt to changes in circumstances that may occur.

### Making the best use of the existing housing stock

- 7.5** Northumberland's housing market does not generally suffer from the problems associated with low demand and abandonment that some other parts of North East England have seen, with all Council-owned and the majority of private sector dwellings now satisfying the Government's Decent Homes Standard. However, pockets of low demand and long-term empty dwellings (i.e. vacant for more than six months) are nevertheless evident within some parts of the County. The Council will encourage and continue to actively support and implement initiatives to revitalise the existing residential areas and enable many of these long-term empty homes to be brought back into use<sup>(38)</sup>.

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37 Source: Census 2011 plus net additional completions 2011-2016.

38 Including through the use of Homes England grant funding and by making use of Section 106 affordable housing contributions.

- 7.6** Northumberland has a relatively high proportion of vacant dwellings, with 9,509 recorded as at the Census 2011 (including over 2,300 long-term empty homes), representing a 6.4% vacancy rate (compared to the England average of 2.6%). The housing market requires a small proportion of vacant dwellings (typically about 3%) to enable property turnover for the market to function efficiently, but there has been a significant increase from the 3.5% proportion recorded in the previous Census 2001. This is considered to be largely as a result of the rapidly increasing numbers of second and holiday homes without a usual permanent resident in the County. The prevalence of second homes and holiday lets is most stark along the attractive North Northumberland coast, and is specifically addressed in Policy HOU 10.

## **Policy HOU 1**

### **Making the best use of existing buildings (Strategic Policy)**

1. Sustainable, high quality and attractive residential communities will be created and promoted by:
  - a. Supporting and enabling interventions to improve and renovate the County's existing housing stock, while enhancing the surrounding residential environment;
  - b. Encouraging and facilitating appropriate renovations to bring long-term empty homes back into use, particularly in the private-rented housing sector within Blyth and Ashington;
  - c. Supporting the conversion and change of use to residential use of other suitable redundant premises, including the renovation of under-used space above shops and the provision of live/work units for rural and agricultural workers' housing. Proposals for change of use to residential use should take account of any impacts on the continued operation of surrounding businesses and any need to retain sufficient premises for business and commercial uses; and
  - d. Considering options, in consultation with local communities, for demolition and redevelopment schemes in areas of low demand or where the existing housing stock does not meet, and is not capable of meeting local housing needs.



### Planning for growth and meeting housing needs over the plan period

- 7.7** The Local Plan should meet the objectively assessed development needs for projected growth insofar as it is reasonable to do so. The housing requirement planned for is then determined having taken account of any cross-boundary Duty to Cooperate agreements to help provide for a proportion of neighbouring local authorities' needs, as well as any physical and environmental constraints that cumulatively might reasonably restrict the ability of the area from meeting its needs in full.
- 7.8** The Government has introduced a standardised approach for robustly establishing each local authority's minimum 'Local Housing Need', based upon the latest official household projections with an adjustment made to account for local affordability. The standardised formula suggests that Northumberland currently has an annual average 'Local Housing Need' of +717 per annum for the initial 10-year period from 2018 to 2028<sup>(39)</sup>, which when applied to the whole plan period gives a minimum need for 14,330 net additional dwellings between 2016 and 2036. The standardised approach establishes the baseline of 'Local Housing Need' and the starting point for determining the plan's housing requirement.

### Meeting the needs of people living in communal accommodation

- 7.9** The minimum Local Housing Need figure only considers the projected growth in household population. The Census 2011 recorded 5,437 people not residing in households but living in communal and institutional forms of accommodation in the County, with the majority of these living in medical and care establishments. Official projections<sup>(40)</sup> suggest that this figure currently stands at about 6,000 people and that the non-household population in the County will increase further by around +2,500 people over the plan period up to in the region of 8,000 to 8,500 people by 2036. Given the projected increase in the County's elderly population, this trend-based growth is wholly based on a projected increase in the numbers of elderly people over 75 years of age residing in institutional settings.
- 7.10** The Council's latest assessments<sup>(41)</sup> identify no immediate need for new care home accommodation, and that there is sufficient capacity through vacancies and permitted schemes to meet future needs. The Council's strategic approach to housing for older people is to enable more residents to live independently in their own homes and communities through providing support, the adaptation of existing dwellings and the building of new flexible homes.

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39 Source: Derived from the official 2014-based household projections (released 2016) used to inform the economic and housing growth options for the Northumberland Local Plan. The official sub-national population and household projections are updated every two years, and the house price to earnings ratios published annually, such that this baseline minimum 'local housing need' figure will regularly change. Government consultation guidance proposes disregarding the latest 2016-based household projections for the purposes of calculating Local Housing Need (which would otherwise suggest a minimum average +558 per annum or circa 11,468 net additional dwellings over the plan period), and to continue using the previous 2014-based projections instead for the time-being.

40 Source: 2014-based and 2016-based sub-national population and household projections.

41 Source: Market Position Statement for Care and Support in Northumberland and Extra Care and Supported Housing Strategy.

- 7.11** Therefore, housing for much of the projected non-household population will be provided through the delivery of more independent living and supported housing options as part of existing commitments, new housing allocations and other delivery methods<sup>(42)</sup>. However, the Council will keep the need for communal accommodation under review as models and patterns of care provision for older people continue to evolve, informed by revised needs assessments.

### Minimum housing requirements

- 7.12** National guidance indicates that it is justifiable to identify housing need above the figure identified by the standard methodology. It indicates that circumstances where an uplift for additional growth above historic trends will be appropriate include, but are not limited to, where growth strategies and funding are in place to promote and facilitate growth, and where strategic level infrastructure improvements are planned. Recognising the Council's economic ambitions, identified through Northumberland's contribution to delivering the objectives of the North East SEP, the North of Tyne Devolution Deal and the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, together with recently completed, committed and proposed infrastructure improvements, it is considered appropriate to consider a housing need figure in excess of that presented by the standard methodology.
- 7.13** The NPPF requires local plans to be prepared positively and to be aspirational, while also being realistic and deliverable. For the overall 20-year plan period, it is therefore considered that the level of housing growth should match the Council's economic ambitions, and therefore a minimum **17,700 net additional dwellings** at an average 885 per annum is required over the plan period<sup>(43)</sup>.
- 7.14** Working closely with neighbouring authorities through the Duty to Cooperate, the Council will continue to ensure that planned housing growth across the wider region is complementary and strategically co-ordinated. Northumberland County Council has not considered it necessary to ask for any of its neighbouring authorities to help provide for any of the County's identified needs.
- 7.15** While a proportion of Northumberland's overall housing need falls within the protected Northumberland National Park (an independent local planning authority), given their limited needs and the low level of new housebuilding, the Northumberland Local Plan does not make any specific reduction to take into account housebuilding within the National Park.

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42 The Council's Extra Care and Supported Housing Strategy sets out a range of delivery methods including working in partnership with a range of organisations and the use of Council land.

43 This level of growth reflects the Ambitious jobs-led growth scenario in the Council's Housing and economic growth options findings report (PBA, June 2018).

## Policy HOU 2

### Provision of new residential development (Strategic Policy)

1. The delivery of new open market and affordable dwellings in a range of tenures, types and sizes will be supported where it is consistent with:
  - a. The spatial strategy for Northumberland;
  - b. Meeting the objectively assessed housing needs and housing priorities as identified through an up-to-date assessment; and
  - c. Making the best and most efficient use of land and buildings, encouraging higher densities in the most accessible locations, and ~~prioritising~~ the redevelopment of suitable previously-developed 'brownfield' sites wherever possible and viable to do so; ~~d. The implementation of necessary enabling transport and utilities infrastructure; and e. The provision of new community facilities where needed and commensurate with the scale of the development.~~
2. The housing requirement for Northumberland over the plan period 2016-2036 is for at least 17,700 Use Class C3 net additional dwellings, at an annual average 885 dwellings per annum.

### Distribution of housing requirements

- 7.16** The indicative distribution of the dwelling requirements across the County is informed by the spatial strategy. The Plan also seeks to ensure the future sustainability and viability of communities, and improve choice to meet the needs and aspirations of all existing and future residents. The approach therefore takes account of the role of Main Towns and Service Centres, and the presence of key local services and facilities in smaller settlements.
- 7.17** While planning to meet future needs, the distribution of new allocations in this Local Plan is also informed by the scale of commitments in each area. Account is also taken of environmental constraints and designations (including the Green Belt) that may restrict the ability of some areas to fully meet their needs and thus necessitate a slightly higher provision in neighbouring areas.<sup>(44)</sup>
- 7.18** The indicative distribution of housing needs across Northumberland is set out in Table 7.1. The housing numbers presented refer to the indicative requirement for the Local Plan's Delivery Areas and the parishes within which the County's Main Towns and Service Centres are located. Indicative numbers are also presented for the rest of each Delivery Area. ~~However, t~~There is an expectation that the majority of development will be focused upon the larger settlement(s) within the parish, or group of parishes (i.e. the Main Towns, Service Centres and then Service Villages).

44 Further explanation is provided in the supporting Housing Distribution technical paper.

**Table 7.1 Indicative distribution of housing requirements, 2016 to 2036**

Location	Number of dwellings indicative requirement 2016 to 2036	Average number of dwellings per annum <sup>(1)</sup>
<b>South East Delivery Area</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>450</b>
Amble Parish	540	27
Ashington Parish	1,600	80
East and West Bedlington Parishes (includes Bedlington and Bedlington Station)	840	42
Blyth Parish	1,800	90
Cramlington Parish	2,500	125
Choppington Parish (includes Guidepost, Stakeford and Choppington)	340	17
Newbiggin-by-the-Sea Parish	360	18
Seaton Valley Parish (includes Seaton Delaval/Holywell, New Hartley, Seaton Sluice/Old Hartley and Seghill)	540	27
Rest of South East	480	24
<b>Central Delivery Area</b>	<b>4,450</b>	<b>223</b>
Hexham Parish	530	27
Morpeth <sup>(2)</sup>	1,700	85
Ponteland Parish	530	27
Prudhoe Parish	600	30
Corbridge Parish	200	10
Rest of Central	890	45
<b>North Delivery Area</b>	<b>3,390</b>	<b>170</b>
Alnwick <sup>(3)</sup>	950	48
Berwick-upon-Tweed and Ord Parishes	800	40
Belford Parish	120	6
Rothbury <sup>(4)</sup>	140	7
North Sunderland Parish (includes Seahouses)	110	6
Wooler Parish	170	9
Rest of North	1,100	55

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<b>West Delivery Area</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>43</b>
Haltwhistle Parish	230	12
Allendale Parish	100	5
Bellingham Parish	140	7
Haydon Bridge Parish	160	8
Rest of West	230	12
<b>Northumberland <sup>(5)</sup></b>	<b>17,700</b>	<b>885</b>

1. Numbers may not add up due to rounding
2. ~~Includes~~Covers the Morpeth Neighbourhood Area, ~~covering~~comprising the parishes of Morpeth, Hebron, Hepscott, Mitford and Pegswood.
3. ~~Includes~~Covers the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Area ~~covering~~comprising the parishes of Alnwick and Denwick.
4. ~~Includes~~Covers the parishes of Rothbury, Carlington, Whitton and Tosson
5. The Rest of South East, Rest of Central, Rest of North and the Rest of West areas comprise the remaining parishes in each Delivery Area that are not listed in this table or in table notes 2, 3 and 4.

**7.19** Informed by this distribution, the housing requirements for currently designated neighbourhood plan areas are set out in Policy HOU 3<sup>(45)</sup>. In accordance with the NPPF, where a parish or group of parishes are subsequently designated as a neighbourhood area, the Council will provide a similarly-calculated indicative housing figure.

45 Note that where neighbourhood plans have applied different plan period base and end dates to that of this Local Plan, their cited housing requirements will differ from those set out in Policy HOU 3.

## Policy HOU 3

### Housing requirements for neighbourhood plan areas (Strategic Policy)

Designated Neighbourhood Plan areas should provide for the following **indicative** minimum housing requirements to help meet Northumberland's overall housing requirements set out in Policy HOU 2:

Neighbourhood Area	Neighbourhood Plan status (as at December 2018)	Minimum housing requirement 2016 to 2036
<b>South East Delivery Area</b>		
Choppington	Designated	340
Cramlington	Pre-Submission	2,500
Ellington and Linton	Designated	125
Newbiggin-by-the-Sea	Designated	360
Seaton Valley	Designated	540
West Bedlington	Designated	560
<b>Central Delivery Area</b>		
Acomb	Examination	45
Corbridge	Designated	200
Hexham	Pre-Submission	530
Longhorsley	Made (2018)	40
Morpeth	Made (2016)	1,700
Ponteland	Made (2017)	530
Stannington	Made (2018)	60
Thirston	Designated	0
<b>North Delivery Area</b>		
Acklington	Designated	0
Adderstone with Lucker	Designated	0
Alnwick and Denwick	Made (2017)	950
Belford	Designated	120

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Berwick-upon-Tweed	Designated	680
Ellingham	Designated	0
Embleton	Designated	30
Lesbury	Designated	45
Longhoughton	Designated	88
Lowick	Designated	25
Mid-Coquetdale	Designated (formally suspended)	140
Norham and Islandshire	Designated	150
North Northumberland Coastal Area	Made (2018)	110
Tillside	Designated	0
Wooler	Designated	170
<b>West Delivery Area</b>		
Allendale	Made (2015)	100
Haydon Bridge	Designated	160
Tarset and Greystead	Withdrawn (2017)	0
Whittington	Made (2018)	0

### Delivering the housing requirements

#### Housing completions and existing commitments

**7.20** Northumberland saw 2,907 new homes created during 2016-18, the first two years of the plan period<sup>(46)</sup>. In addition, 14,287 new homes remain to be built on already permitted development sites including many sites currently under construction, while a further 6,001 units could arise from other applications currently minded to approve.<sup>(47)</sup> Analysis of delivery rates and the likelihood of permissions lapsing before implementation have informed the Council's housing land supply calculations and the housing trajectories at Appendix B, and indicate that there is a reasonably high degree of confidence that the majority of permitted housing applications will come forward and be delivered<sup>(48)</sup>

46 Source: Details can be found in the Council's Net Additional Homes report.

47 Source: Details of planning permissions and applications minded to approve can be found in the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) report.

48 Evidence from recent years suggests that circa 5% of dwellings with planning permission have lapsed. See the SHLAA for more details.

**7.21** While Table 7.2 shows that the overall number of completions and outstanding commitments<sup>(49)</sup> exceeds the minimum housing requirement for the plan period, a number of the County's Main Towns, Service Centres and Service Villages have little development committed, particularly in the more rural north and west of the County. Net additional dwellings are therefore required to meet the future needs of these communities and help to balance the County's housing market. A limited number of housing allocations are therefore proposed. Given that the majority of housing already committed is general needs housing, an increased emphasis is required through this additional housing to meet the needs of an ageing population.

**Table 7.2 Distribution of housing requirements and commitments in Northumberland**

Delivery Area	Minimum housing requirement 2016 to 2036	Completed dwellings 2016 to 2018	Permitted dwellings outstanding to be built (as at 31 March 2018)	Dwellings subsequently permitted (1 April 2018 to 30 September 2018)	Minded to approve applications (at 30 September 2018)	Total completions + commitments (at 30 September 2018)	Minimum residual dwellings requirement 2018 to 2036 (at 30 September 2018)
South East	9,000	1,338	6,532	8	3,494	11,372	-2,372
Central	4,450	942	3,539	1,087	2,069 <sup>(1)</sup>	7,637	-3,187
North	3,390	517	2,643	66	428	3,654	-264
West	860	110	394	18	10	532	+328
<b>N'land</b>	<b>17,700</b>	<b>2,907</b>	<b>13,108</b>	<b>1,179</b>	<b>6,001</b>	<b>23,195</b>	<b>-5,495</b>

1. Comprises two 'minded to approve' applications proposing development in the Green Belt on the edges of Hexham and Ponteland.

## Housing development site allocations

**7.22** There are a number of locations where it is necessary to make housing allocations to support the spatial strategy and re-balance the County's housing market. Policy HOU 4 sets out the housing development site allocations (five or more dwellings indicative capacity) necessary to deliver the strategic housing priorities and residual needs of the County. These housing site allocations are in addition to currently permitted and minded to approve sites, and also provide for some flexibility in ensuring that the County's overall requirements are delivered should any permissions lapse or minded to approve applications not gain final consent. They are also additional to site allocations within 'made' Neighbourhood Plans, which Neighbourhood Plan housing site allocations are set out for information in Appendix A.

49 Includes dwellings completed during 2016-18, dwellings yet to be built which have planning permission and dwellings on applications 'minded to approve'.

- 7.23** The selection of sites was informed by the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), which includes sites on the Brownfield Land Register. The SHLAA considers the suitability, availability and potential achievability and viability of sites for possible future housing development, together with their indicative dwellings capacity and details regarding their likely deliverability. Potentially developable sites, located in settlements where it is considered necessary to make housing allocations to meet residual needs, have been appraised further to identify which are the most appropriate for allocation in this Plan.<sup>(50)</sup>

## Policy HOU 4

### Housing development site allocations (Strategic Policy)

1. In accordance with the spatial strategy, the following sites, as shown on the Policies Map, are allocated for residential development, to help meet Northumberland's residual housing requirements over the plan period to 2036:
  - a. South East Delivery Area [approximately 309 - 374 net additional homes]:

	Site allocation	Site area (hectares)	Indicative dwelling number
i	Land at Crofton Mill, Plessey Road, Blyth	1.46	45 - 50
ii	Land at Sandringham Drive / Windsor Drive, Blyth	1.13	30 - 35
iii	Land at Lyndon Walk, Blyth	0.43	10
iv	Former Moorside First School, Woodhorn Road, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea	2.40	66
v	Land north-west of Spital House Farm, North Seaton Road, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea	1.60	20 - 35
vi	Site adjacent to Arts Centre, Woodhorn Road, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea	0.26	13
vii	Former Whytrig Community Middle School, Western Avenue, Seaton Delaval	1.28	35 - 45
viii	Former Brickworks, Pitt Lane, Seghill	0.87	20
ix	Land north-east of Park Road (south-east of Bridge Road), Lynemouth	4.48	70 - 100

- b. Central Delivery Area [approximately 208 - 264 net additional homes]:

<sup>50</sup> A summary of these site appraisals is set out in the Housing Site Allocations Selection and Appraisal technical paper.

	Site allocation	Site area (hectares)	Indicative dwelling number
i	Former Workhouse and Hospital land, Dean Road, Hexham	1.15	80 - 85
ii	Burn Lane Bus Depot and land to rear, Tyne Green Road / Chareway Lane, Hexham	1.81	45 - 55
iii	Telephone Exchange, Gaprigg, Hexham	0.51	18 - 25
iv	Former Police Houses, Fairfield, Tynedale Terrace, Hexham	1.07	15 - 20
v	Prospect House, Hallgate, Hexham	0.18	10 - 18
vi	Land west of Station Road, Hexham	0.42	10 - 15
vii	Graves Yard (behind Army Reserve Centre), Temperley Place, Hexham	0.18	5 - 8
viii	Priestpottle County Buildings, Maiden's Walk, Hexham	0.16	5 - 8
ix	Land west of West Road Cemetery, West Road, Prudhoe	1.48	20 - 30

c. North Delivery Area [approximately 295 - 405 net additional homes]:

	Site allocation	Site area (hectares)	Indicative dwelling number
i	Land at Robert's Lodge, east of Etal Road, Eildon View and south of Cemetery Lane, Tweedmouth	6.89	100 - 150
ii	Former JT Dove and Coal Yard east of Northumberland Road and west of Billendean Road, Tweedmouth	3.00	60 - 80
iii	Berwick Seaview Caravan and Motorhome Site, Billendean Road, Tweedmouth	2.65	30 - 40
iv	Land adjacent to former Kwik Save, Walkergate, Berwick-upon-Tweed	0.11	10
v	Land east of Broad Road, North Sunderland / Seahouses	5.14	80 - 100
vi	The Glebe Field, north of West Street, Norham	1.60	15 - 25

d. West Delivery Area [approximately 333 - 433 net additional homes]:

	Site Allocation	Site area (hectares)	Indicative dwelling number
i	Land to south-west of Park Road, Haltwhistle	7.89	120 - 150
ii	Land at Greystonedale Park Road, Haltwhistle	0.90	30 - 35
iii	Land west of Hougill, Tyne View Road, Haltwhistle	0.16	5 - 6

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iv	Former Bellingham Auction Mart, B6320, Bellingham	1.72	50 - 65
v	Land at Demesne Farm, Boat Road, Bellingham	1.77	35 - 40
vi	Land west of Langley Gardens and north of Ratcliffe Road, Haydon Bridge	2.20	35 - 50
vii	Land at Station Road, Haydon Bridge	0.64	15 - 20
viii	Land east of Lonkley Terrace, Allendale Town	0.55	8 - 16
ix	Land at Splitty Lane, Catton	0.60	5 - 8
x	Land west of Smithy, A696, Otterburn	0.97	15 - 20
xi	Land south of Westmor, A696, Otterburn	0.61	10 - 15
xii	West Woodburn Filling Station, A68, West Woodburn	0.26	5 - 8

### 2. Proposals for housing development on these sites should:

- a. Be consistent with any relevant site development briefs and masterplans to ensure comprehensive cohesive development and avoid incremental piecemeal development;
- b. Avoid the development of housing on any parts of the site within Flood Risk Zones 2 or 3, in accordance with the Sequential and Exception Tests for vulnerable uses (unless satisfactory mitigation is built into the scheme);
- c. Reflect the identified housing needs and market considerations as identified in the most up-to-date Strategic Housing Market Assessment or local housing needs assessment, including the requirement to provide integrated affordable housing; and
- d. Have regard to the provision and timing of the infrastructure enhancements and services necessary to support them, both individually and cumulatively, while minimising and appropriately mitigating any adverse impacts on existing transport and utilities networks.

**7.24** Through the high level of completions and outstanding commitments across the County, together with the allocations made in the plan, the Council will meet the housing requirements for the plan period set out in Policy HOU 2. This is demonstrated in the housing trajectories at Appendix B. To help plan, monitor and manage delivery against the Plan's strategic objectives and ensure an appropriate supply of housing land in the right locations, a 5-year housing land supply for the County as a whole will be maintained, bringing forward achievable allocated sites from later in the plan period should it be necessary to speed up delivery. In addition

to the commitments and allocations set out above, in many locations the SHLAA identifies other developable sites which may have potential to come forward during the plan period, enhancing the flexibility in the housing market<sup>(51)</sup>.

- 7.25** To promote the development of a good mix of sites, the Government has an expectation that the development plan and brownfield register should accommodate at least 10% of the overall housing requirement on small and medium-sized sites no larger than 1.0 hectares. Given the high number of completions over the past two years since the start of the plan period and the significant number of extant planning permissions in place, it is unrealistic and impractical for Northumberland's limited residual allocation requirement to meet this expectation<sup>(52)</sup>. Furthermore, the Plan does not allocate numerous potential smaller sites of less than 5 units indicative capacity (broadly comparable to the 0.25 hectare threshold for sites to be included in the Brownfield Land Register), these being instead treated as 'windfall' sites should they come forward.
- 7.26** Analysis of housing completions in the County over the past five years nevertheless reveals an annual average delivery rate on sites of 1.0 hectare or less of about 320 dwellings per annum, representing about 27% of total net completions over that period. Monitoring data also shows that approximately 11% of net additional dwelling completions over the past 5-10 years have come from changes of use and conversions. The strategic policy objective for bringing long-term empty homes back into use will support the supply of small and medium-sized sites.

## Housing types and mix

- 7.27** Delivering a mix of high quality housing to meet people's needs and aspirations, including affordable homes and specialist needs housing, is essential for re-balancing Northumberland's housing market and enhancing the sustainability of communities. The ongoing needs of the County's increasingly elderly proportion of the population should be met while also recognising that attracting high quality businesses to locate in Northumberland will require an adequate supply of good quality, medium density family housing, as well as 'executive' housing (although some of this need will be provided for by the effect of older people downsizing to smaller homes). New housing constructed in the County (both market and affordable housing) will meet predominant needs, as informed by the latest analysis of current supply and likely

51 Subject to the outcomes of the Council's schools reviews, any proposed school closure sites (such as in Hexham) may provide additional or alternative options for housing development to help meet the identified needs in those areas.

52 The small and medium-sized site allocations in Policy HOU 4 (which provide for about 17% of the 1,145-1,466 dwellings allocated), together with those allocated in neighbourhood plans (see Appendix A), would deliver about 2% of Northumberland's overall 17,700 housing requirement on sites of 1.0 hectare or less.



future demands.<sup>(53)</sup> This applies to homes provided through all forms of development opportunities, whether on allocated, unallocated or unanticipated 'windfall' sites, through new build housing or by way of conversions and changes of use.

- 7.28** The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) indicates that, the majority of need is expected to be for 2-bedroom and 3-bedroom properties, together with some 1-bedroom homes. There is a small need for larger dwellings of 4-or-more bedrooms. In terms of dwelling types, need is split equally between houses for families upsizing and first-time buyers/movers, and bungalows or level-access accommodation for older people downsizing, together with flats. Analysis of aspirations and expectations in the SHMA however suggests a greater need for 1 and 2-bedroom bungalows and level-access flats/apartments, further emphasising the need to meet the needs of an ageing population.

### Self-build and custom-build housing

- 7.29** Interest in self-build and custom-build housing is strong in Northumberland<sup>(54)</sup>, with most developments of one or two homes likely to be such one-off customised projects, particularly in and around the County's more rural settlements. The self-build sector plays an important part in enabling high standard (quality and efficiency), innovative, sustainable and environmentally-friendly housing that is aligned to individual needs and aspirations, while also sometimes being more affordable than buying new housing on the open market.
- 7.30** Permitted housing development sites currently include circa 120 plots being set-aside for potential self/custom-build housing projects. Independent self/custom-build plot-finder websites also reveal additional opportunities for self/custom-build, on-site and plots not explicitly identified for self or custom build through the planning system.

### Community-led housing

- 7.31** Northumberland has a particularly strong and well-developed community-led housing network, forming part of the wider independent North East Community-Led Housing Development Network coalition of community organisations, public sector bodies, housing associations and academic institutions. Community-led housing in its various forms helps to diversify the housing market and increase choice, while making a valuable contribution to the delivery of genuinely and permanent affordable homes not readily delivered by the market, including on Rural Exception Sites. It also supports urban and rural regeneration, the return of empty properties to use, and helps to strengthen and sustain local economies, with the opportunity to lever in financial resources not otherwise available to other housing providers. Community-led schemes empower local communities and give social housing tenants a stronger voice, helping them to become more self-reliant and resilient, while reducing community opposition to development.

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53 The Northumberland Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update Report (Arc4, 2018) analyses the current supply and demand for different housing types.

54 More than 270 individual people or couples/households plus six community groups have registered on the Council's Self-Build and Custom-Build Register as having an interest in self-building or commissioning the custom-building of their own homes in Northumberland and seeking serviced plots.

- 7.32** To help provide for the Northumberland's affordable housing needs, we will support community-led housing schemes and the provision of serviced building plots below market value on larger development sites for self-build and custom-build housing, and intermediate shared ownership models in which the shell of a property is built by a Registered Provider for the self-builder to finish off.

## Policy HOU 5

### Housing types and mix

1. A range of good quality, energy-efficient homes, including affordable homes, will be provided to deliver a more balanced mix of tenures and housing types and sizes, alongside supported specialist housing for older and vulnerable people. Development proposals will be assessed according to how well they contribute to meeting meet the needs and aspirations of those living in and seeking to move to Northumberland, as identified in the most up-to-date Strategic Housing Market Assessment or a local housing needs assessment.
2. Community-led housing, including individual and group self-build and custom-housebuilding, will be supported and facilitated, particularly where they will contribute to meeting local housing needs. In addition to stand-alone serviced and unserviced plots, Commercial housebuilders will be encouraged to set-aside dedicated serviced plots for self-build and custom-build homes where appropriate within 'major' housing development sites.

### Delivering affordable housing

- 7.33** Supporting the delivery of affordable homes is a priority for the Council. Affordable housing comprises affordable homes for rent, starter homes, discounted market sales housing, and other affordable routes to home ownership. A full definition of affordable housing is set out in the NPPF and the glossary to this plan.
- 7.34** The latest official ONS affordability analysis from 2017 indicates that the ratio of lower quartile house prices to lower quartile earnings is more than 5.00 in Northumberland<sup>(55)</sup>. This countywide figure however disguises the fact that in parts of the County the affordability situation is more acute. Therefore, compared to mortgage lenders' typical 4 x household salary eligibility criteria, many households are realistically only able to consider renting as a choice of tenure at present, while modern decent homes are generally beyond the reach of the average first-time buyer.

55 The lower quartile house price is £105,000, compared to a lower quartile salary of £20,265 per annum (ONS, 2018).

- 7.35** The latest SHMA identifies a net affordable housing need over the 5 year period 2017-22 of 151 dwellings per annum, which is equivalent to 17% of the County's overall 885 per annum housing requirement.<sup>(56)</sup>
- 7.36** As well as need, the viability of delivering affordable housing is considered when setting local plan targets. Market developments in some areas of the County may not be able to viably deliver 17% affordable housing, while higher rates will be achievable in higher value areas. Taking into account the evidenced differences in development viability in different parts of the County, Policy HOU 6 applies a balanced value area-based approach to achieve the overall need<sup>(57)</sup>. Where a site falls across more than one viability value area, a proportionate level of affordable housing will be required.
- 7.37** The NPPF also indicates that local authorities should not seek contributions towards affordable housing from developments that are not 'major' developments<sup>(58)</sup>, but allows exceptions to this in designated rural areas, where a lower threshold can be applied if considered appropriate. Given the rural nature of much of Northumberland, small development sites make a valuable contribution to the delivery of market housing, and affordable housing. To enhance the delivery of affordable housing along the Northumberland coast where there are significant affordability issues, developments of 5 units or more within the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) will be expected to make an affordable housing contribution.
- 7.38** The Government's expectation (subject to certain exceptions set out in the NPPF) is that at least 10% of homes on 'major' housing developments will be available for affordable home ownership as part of the overall affordable housing contribution from the site. Given the Council's success in bringing forward discounted market value homes for sale, it is anticipated that this will continue to be the primary form of affordable home ownership in Northumberland in the coming years, particularly in lower value parts of the County. Recognising this while still meeting the need for rented affordable housing, the SHMA recommends an equal 50:50 split split between affordable homes to rent and affordable home ownership products. Policy HOU 6 therefore applies the value-area-based approach in seeking to achieve this balanced overall outcome while enabling the viable delivery of appropriate affordable housing products.
- 7.39** The SHMA also identifies that, when taking into account aspirations and expectations, the majority of Northumberland's future need is for smaller one and two-bedroom affordable properties, although there is still a need for some three and four-bedroom

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56 This figure takes into account affordable homes forecast to come forward on planning permissions over a 5 year period. If these commitments are excluded, the imbalance is 374 per annum equating to a 42% of the County's requirement.

57 The policy value areas, as shown on the Policies Map, set out the affordable housing requirements for different parts of the county, to meet the identified countywide affordable housing need. They are defined by Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) and are illustrative of the viability of delivering affordable housing. They do not, therefore, necessarily reflect the level of affordable housing need in those areas.

58 The NPPF defines 'major' development for housing as where 10-or-more homes would be provided, or the site area is 0.5 hectares-or-more.

family homes. The types and tenures of affordable housing to be provided on any specific development proposal will ultimately be determined on a case-by-case basis, informed by an understanding of the level of need and viability.

- 7.40** In providing affordable housing, the presumption and preference is that it is delivered on the application site itself in order to help meet local needs and promote social inclusion as part of a mixed and balanced community, unless off-site provision and/or a financial contribution is clearly justified. On larger development sites, developers will be expected to 'pepper pot' the on-site affordable housing element of the scheme throughout the development wherever possible (subject to their viable management by an approved affordable housing provider), rather than concentrating them all in a cluster. The affordable housing provision should therefore be designed to be integrated into the overall development, both in terms of their built form and external appearance, such that the affordable homes are indistinguishable from those intended for sale. Less desirable positions within a site should not be used for locating a particular tenure.
- 7.41** Where a Section 106 financial contribution towards alternative off-site affordable housing provision is clearly justified and considered acceptable in lieu of on-site provision, the Council's commuted sum protocol will be used to determine the level of contribution expected. The expectation will generally be that the commuted sums received will be spent in the area within which the development that has given rise to the contribution has taken place, following the sequential approach set out in Policy HOU 6 which takes account of local needs and Council priorities. Given that affordable housing contributions from comparatively low density schemes (particularly for 'executive' style or high value homes built on large plots) are usually delivered off-site, it is recognised that a purely target-based affordable housing approach can have an inequitable effect, and therefore the in-lieu financial contribution expected will be determined in relation to the expected value of the development rather than the number of units per se. Further guidance on affordable housing provision and associated financial contributions will be set out in a forthcoming supplementary planning document (SPD).
- 7.42** Where affordable housing for rent, or discount market sales housing is provided, or where public grant funding is provided in other affordable routes to home ownership, the Council will seek to ensure that homes are made available at a cost that makes them accessible to local people, with legal agreements being put in place to ensure the properties remain affordable in perpetuity. To ensure long-term availability, affordable housing for rent should be provided through an approved Registered Provider<sup>(59)</sup> and thus be viable for them to provide and manage.
- 7.43** The Council will monitor the delivery of new housing, including affordable homes, and periodically review housing needs through updates of the SHMA and local housing needs assessments. If delivery fails to meet the identified ongoing needs, mechanisms to increase the delivery of affordable housing will be triggered in accordance with the Plan's Monitoring and Implementation Framework.

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59 Except where it is included as part of a build to rent scheme.

## Policy HOU 6

### Affordable housing provision (Strategic Policy)

1. To deliver affordable homes for sale or rent to meet the identified needs of those not otherwise met by the market, all 'major' development proposals of 10-or-more units or 0.5 hectares or more (or proposals for five units or more in the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), will be expected to provide on-site affordable housing (or make an equivalent financial contribution towards off-site provision) as follows in accordance with the housing viability value areas shown on the Policies Map:
  - a. within low value areas - 10% affordable;
  - b. within medium value areas - 15% affordable;
  - c. within high value areas - 25% affordable; or
  - d. within the highest value areas - 30% affordable.
2. The tenures and dwelling types of the on-site affordable homes will be negotiable within reason on a site-by-site basis to ensure ~~genuine~~ affordability and to reflect local housing needs, as evidenced by the most up-to-date Strategic Housing Market Assessment or local housing needs assessment, and taking into account local market conditions, the structure of the local housing market and interest from potential Registered Providers. The affordable provision will be expected to reflect the following ~~general~~indicative tenure split (while ensuring at least 10% of the total number of homes on the site are for affordable home ownership products, unless NPPF exceptions apply) in accordance with the housing viability value areas shown on the Policies Map:
  - a. within low value areas - 100% affordable home ownership;
  - b. within medium value areas - 33% affordable homes to rent and 67% affordable home ownership;
  - c. within high value areas - 60% affordable homes to rent and 40% affordable home ownership; or
  - d. within the highest value areas - 67% affordable homes to rent and 33% affordable home ownership.
3. The affordable housing provision and/or contribution will be secured by a Section 106 planning obligation agreement. For affordable housing for rent, discount market sales housing, or where public grant funding is provided towards other affordable routes to home ownership, the Section 106 agreement will ensure that the on-site provision remains affordable in perpetuity.
4. Where alternative off-site provision and/or a financial contribution in lieu of on-site affordable housing provision is clearly justified through negotiation with the Council, this will be calculated in accordance with the Council's most up-to-date commuted sums protocol. The following sequential approach will then be applied to determine where ~~the any off-site provision of~~ affordable housing contribution should be most appropriately spent and delivered to help meet the County's needs:



- a. In the settlement (or grouping of Parishes or Wards which make up the settlement) where the contribution arises; In an adjoining Parish or Ward;
- b. Elsewhere in the relevant housing market sub-area where the contribution arises (as identified in ~~the~~ the most up-to-date Strategic Housing Market Assessment);
- c. Elsewhere in the Delivery Area where the contribution arises; or
- d. To cross-subsidise affordable housing provision where priorities are identified throughout the County. ~~5. Progress on the delivery of affordable housing will be monitored annually through the plan, monitor and manage approach, and the overall levels of affordable housing need will be reviewed periodically through updates to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. If delivery fails to meet the identified need, mechanisms to increase the delivery of affordable housing will be triggered in accordance with the Monitoring and Implementation Framework.~~

## Exception sites

- 7.44** To help first-time buyers and renters to get onto the housing ladder, the NPPF requires local planning authorities to support the development of land which is not otherwise allocated, adjacent to existing settlements, for housing to provide wholly for entry-level homes offering one or more types of affordable housing, unless the need for such homes is already met within the local authority area. The latest SHMA identifies a particular need for smaller affordable properties with one and two bedrooms. The Plan supports the development of Entry-level Exception Sites of no larger than 1.0 hectare or where the development would not exceed 5% of the size of the existing settlement where this need is not being delivered locally, through existing commitments or proposed allocations. In accordance with the NPPF, Entry-level Exception Sites will not be permitted within the Green Belt, Northumberland's AONBs, or where they would compromise protected environmental designations.
- 7.45** Rural Exception Sites seek to help address pressing affordable housing needs of rural communities by enabling the release for development of small sites that would not normally be used for housing. In the context of the NPPF's definition of major development, small sites are considered to be less than 0.5 hectares in size or comprise less than 10 dwellings. Such sites are specifically for the purposes of providing affordable housing in perpetuity for households who are either current local residents or have an existing family or employment connection (e.g. essential local workers) to the particular area. Permitted development rights will be removed to ensure that the properties remain affordable. Some market homes may be allowed on Rural Exception Sites where it is clearly shown to be essential to support and facilitate the delivery of the predominant affordable element. Where it is proposed to include market housing on a rural exception site, the number of market homes will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Any market homes element will be



restricted to occupation as a principal residence only (i.e. not for use as second or holiday homes) in order to support the overall sustainability of the community and the viability of local services.

### Policy HOU 7

#### Exception sites

1. The development of Entry-level Exception Sites for first-time buyers or renters will be supported on sites not allocated for housing adjacent to an existing settlement where:
  - a. There is an evidenced need for affordable entry-level homes that is not already being met in the parish in which the development is located, or neighbouring parishes, and the proposal wholly comprises one-or-more types of affordable housing secured through a Section 106 agreement;
  - b. The proposal is consistent with the Plan's spatial strategy for sustainable development and is well-related to local services and facilities;
  - c. The site is no larger than 1.0 hectare or does not exceed 5% of the size of the existing settlement; and
  - d. The site is not within the Green Belt or an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and does not compromise any protected environmental designations.
2. The development of small-scale Rural Exception Sites that would not normally be used for housing within, adjacent to or well-related to an existing settlement will be supported, where:
  - a. The local need for affordable housing is clearly justified and evidenced in an up-to-date housing needs study as being necessary to meet local community needs for households who are either current local residents or have an existing family or employment connection to the particular area in which the development is proposed to take place;
  - b. The affordable housing is secured in perpetuity through a Section 106 agreement;
  - c. The development is well-related to local services and facilities, including those outside the settlement where the development is proposed to be located; and
  - d. The development is in scale and keeping with the form, character and landscape setting of the settlement in which it takes place and does not unjustifiably adversely impact on the natural, built and historic environment.
3. Self-build, custom-build and community-led housing projects will be supported as Rural Exception Sites if they meet the requirements of criterion 2.
4. The inclusion of a proportion of market housing within a Rural Exception Site housing scheme will only be supported where:
  - a. The development is predominantly for affordable housing;

- b. The provision of the market housing element will be for permanent occupation as a principal residence only; and
- c. The Council considers the provision of market housing helps to facilitate the delivery of the affordable housing.

## Housing in the open countryside

**7.46** In accordance with the spatial strategy and NPPF, new housing development in the countryside will not generally be supported, unless there is an essential need for a rural worker to live at or near their primary place of work in the countryside in order to support operational needs, or it falls within permitted development rights for converting existing farmstead buildings into up to five dwellings<sup>(60)</sup>.

**7.47** The redevelopment or extension of existing buildings in the countryside for residential use, particularly where buildings are disused, can ensure that buildings of character can be retained in or brought back into effective use. Such developments will be supported subject to a number of policy criteria. Proposals for the residential redevelopment of barns and other agricultural farmstead buildings should also take into consideration relevant up-to-date guidance<sup>(61)</sup>. Where necessary, residential permitted development rights may be removed in the interests of protecting the visual amenity of the countryside.

## Policy HOU 8

### Residential development in the open countryside

1. Within the open countryside, the conversion and change of use of non-residential buildings, the re-use of redundant or disused buildings to residential use, and the extension or adaptation of existing dwellings, will be supported where:
  - a. The existing building or structure is of permanent and substantial construction, is in keeping with and makes a positive contribution to the character and setting of the area and/or is of architectural or historic merit, and is capable of conversion and appropriate enhancement without complete or substantial rebuilding, disproportionate extension or unsympathetic alterations;
  - b. Any extension or other householder development is within the curtilage of the existing property and is incidental and subordinate to the new or existing

60 Class Q permitted development rights currently provide for the conversion without planning permission of agricultural buildings into up to three 'larger homes' (with a combined floorspace of no more than 465 square metres), or up to five 'smaller homes' (each of less than 100 square metres), or a mix of both (with no more than five homes including no more than three 'larger homes'), as long as the extent of any external structural works does not become a more substantial 'rebuild' rather than a 'conversion'.

61 Including Historic England's Guidance on Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings or subsequent guidance.

- dwelling(s) in size and massing, uses appropriate materials and would not have an adverse impact on the open character of the area; and
- c. The development would not result in the unjustified loss of a valued community service or facility, and the applicant has clearly demonstrated that it cannot be viably redeveloped for an employment-generating or tourism use, or otherwise that the proposed residential conversion is subordinate to and a necessary part of the primary business or community use or facilitates necessary homeworking.
2. Proposals for the demolition of existing residential buildings and re-building of new dwellings within the open countryside will only be supported where the replacement dwelling(s) is of no substantially greater built footprint and built on the same part of the site curtilage, and would have no greater physical and visual impact than the existing building(s), such that the openness and rural character of the area is maintained and unharmed. Where the existing building currently detracts from the rural character of the area, that adverse impact should be acceptably improved by the proposed residential development.
  3. Proposals for new rural workers' dwellings in the open countryside will only be supported where the applicant is able to prove that:
    - a. There is a clearly established existing functional need for a specialist full-time worker or one who is primarily employed in agriculture to live on the landholding, and that labour requirement does not relate to part-time employment;
    - b. The agricultural business is financially sound and viable with a clear prospect of remaining so, the activity and landholding units concerned having been established for at least three years and been profitable for at least one of those last three years; and
    - c. The functional need could not be fulfilled by any existing dwelling on the landholding unit or any other existing accommodation in the immediate area, which is suitable (including by means of refurbishment or appropriate extension) and potentially available for occupation by the workers concerned.

### Residential development management

- 7.48** To ensure that any adverse impacts of new residential development are minimised, the Plan sets out criteria against which applications which include housing will be assessed. These criteria seek to ensure residential development contributes to a sense of place, functions well, and is of a high quality of design. Additionally, criteria set out policy expectations relating to the extension and/or external adaptation of existing dwellings.
- 7.49** These policy requirements specifically for residential developments set out in Policy HOU 9 are in addition to other relevant design requirements set out in the Plan. More detailed supporting guidance will be set out in the Northumberland Design Guide SPD.

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## Policy HOU 9

### Residential development management

1. Residential developments will be supported where they:
  - a. Contribute to a sense of place, which supports community identity and pride;
  - b. Provide, where appropriate, multi-functional spaces that support different recreational and social activities, and consider opportunities for community management and stewardship to support long term management of neighbourhoods and community facilities;
  - c. Provide functional space and facilities for refuse and recycling storage which is appropriate for the development. The location and design of facilities should provide opportunities to screen or reduce their visual prominence, not impact upon amenity, health or security;
  - d. Are constructed to a high quality of design ~~and comply, in accordance with~~ design guidance for new housing and ~~housing~~ extensions set out within the Northumberland Design Guide; and
  - e. Perform positively against 'Build for Life 12' principles, or its successor.
2. Householder proposals for the extension and/or external adaptation of existing dwellings will only be supported where the enhancement:
  - a. Is well-related and subordinate in size and massing to the ~~existing~~original dwelling, and in combination with the ~~existing~~original dwelling forms a visually indivisible single dwelling as a whole;
  - b. Does not have a significant adverse impact on the amenity of adjoining properties in terms of structural proximity and unacceptable loss of daylight/sunlight, privacy and visual outlook;
  - c. Respects and complements the style and character of the ~~existing~~original dwelling and its setting in terms of its design and use of materials; and
  - d. Retains reasonable garden/yard space and satisfactory off-road parking space for the dwelling.

### Second and holiday homes

- 7.50** Northumberland is a popular location for people to establish second and holiday homes due to its attractive rural environment and beautiful coastline. The Census 2011 recorded 8,876 people from elsewhere in the County as having a second home in Northumberland, 707 of which were for work purposes. However, concentrations of holiday accommodation that are only occupied for relatively short periods of the year have become particularly evident in certain locations, such as along the north Northumberland coast, and to a lesser degree accessible upland areas.
- 7.51** The Census 2011 identified that, across the County, 6.4% of household spaces had no usual residents. In a number of coastal parishes, the proportion exceeded 40%, with Beadnell in excess of 50%. While the latest Census does not distinguish between vacant properties and second/holiday homes, the previous 2001 Census did make this distinction, and confirms that second and holiday homes make up a large proportion of the dwellings in parts of the County. The proliferation of second and holiday homes along the north Northumberland coast in particular is further evidenced through Council Tax and Business Rates data.<sup>(62)</sup>
- 7.52** While providing some economic benefits, the lack of permanent occupation of such properties is having an adverse impact on the social fabric of affected communities as a result of diminished support and demand for local facilities and schools. Consequently, some settlements have begun to lose their sense of community with some services only operating at certain times of the year. During peak holiday seasons however, some services struggle to meet the needs of visitors as well as the permanent population. Additionally, the demand for holiday accommodation in these locations, coupled with rising house prices and a limited supply and turnover of homes, has made many smaller properties unaffordable to the local population.
- 7.53** To help sustain the vitality of communities, in parishes where 20% or more of household spaces are identified in the latest Census as having no usual (i.e. permanent) residents, a principal residency restriction will be applied to all new market dwellings, which will be secured through a Section 106 agreement.

#### Policy HOU 10

##### Second and holiday homes

Within Parishes identified in the most up-to-date Census as having 20% or more household spaces with no usual (i.e. permanent) residents, new market dwellings will only be supported where first and future occupation is restricted in perpetuity to ensure that each new dwelling is occupied only as a 'principal residence'. This restriction will be secured through a Section 106 agreement.

62 The Council's Second and Holiday Homes Technical Paper (June 2018) considers Census, Council Tax and Business Rates data.

## Optional technical standards

- 7.54** The Council seeks to ensure that all homes are accessible and flexible enough to meet the needs of current and future occupiers. National guidance allows local planning authorities, where justified by local needs and subject to viability testing, to adopt through Local Plan policy the Government's optional technical standards for housing. These relate to enhanced adaptability and accessibility, water efficiency and internal space standards (the Nationally Described Space Standard), and where adopted require new housing to be constructed so as to exceed the minimum standards required by Building Regulations.
- 7.55** While initiatives to maximise water efficiency and use natural resources prudently are supported, it is not considered that there is sufficient justification to require new homes to meet the tighter water supply efficiency standard. Due to the presence of Kielder reservoir, Northumberland is identified by the Environment Agency to be an area of predominantly low water stress.<sup>(63)</sup>
- 7.56** In terms of internal space standards, analysis of planning applications since 2011 suggests that, with a few exceptions, the average dwelling sizes of new housing built in Northumberland generally satisfy the Nationally Described Space Standard (NDSS)<sup>(64)</sup>. ~~However, while~~ there are deficiencies in some areas for some types of housing <sup>(65)</sup>, the degree of deficiency is not considered to be to an extent that would justify requiring imposition of the NDSS through policy.
- 7.57** The projected demographic profile of Northumberland, together with up to date evidence<sup>(66)</sup> and the desire to enable older and vulnerable people to live actively and independently in their own homes for longer, indicates that a policy intervention with regards to adaptability and accessibility standards could reasonably be justified. However, once the Council's other policy priorities are taken into account for ensuring affordable housing and gaining sufficient planning contributions towards necessary infrastructure enhancements, on balance it is considered that requiring these more costly higher standards would adversely impact on the viability and thus deliverability of housing development.
- 7.58** The Council nevertheless encourages developers to provide good quality homes with sufficient useable and adaptable internal space to meet residents' changing needs over their lifetimes, thereby reducing the need for specialist accommodation. It is particularly important to ensure that affordable homes for rent provide sufficient

63 See paragraphs 11.17 and 11.18 of the Water Environment Chapter.

64 ~~In particular, it is evident that new homes in the south east of the County have tended to be somewhat smaller, such that they would not meet the recommended standards for single-storey 1-bedroom, two-storey 2 and 3-bedroom and three-storey 3-bedroom dwellings.~~

65 In particular, it is evident that new homes in the south east of the County have tended to be somewhat smaller, such that they would not meet the recommended standards for single-storey 1-bedroom, two-storey 2 and 3-bedroom and three-storey 3-bedroom dwellings

66 Strategic Housing Market Assessment Partial Update (2018) and the Market Position Statement for Care and Support in Northumberland (2018).



internal space in order for them to be attractive and acceptable to Registered Providers, so as to minimise the possibility of there being no end-user and the new homes consequently being lost from the affordable rented market, and sold as discounted market value housing instead.

### Homes for older and vulnerable people

- 7.59** The Council recognises that most people who are able to do so prefer to remain living well in their own homes within inclusive communities for as long as possible, with or without support, while others require specialist accommodation to meet their specific needs on either a temporary or longer-term basis. The Council wants to ensure the provision of better housing choices for older people and vulnerable groups, whatever their requirements, including homes that are adaptable to residents' needs over their lifetime and set within accessible 'lifetime neighbourhoods' that are well-designed places suitable for all people regardless of their age or disability.
- 7.60** The needs of older people are diverse; some still have jobs or are still actively seeking work, while others have retired from work and can reorganise their lives around family responsibilities, leisure, non-vocational education and voluntary work. For some, their lives are substantially affected by long-term illness or disability and they may require additional care or specialist accommodation. Given the projected significant increase in the County's elderly population, both from ageing and inward migration, it is anticipated that there will be significant growth in the number of older people in need of care and specialised support.
- 7.61** The Council will appropriately provide for the needs of various vulnerable groups of people, such as those with complex learning needs and physical disabilities, dementia and other chronic age-related conditions, autism and enduring mental health issues. It is expected that there will be an increase in the numbers of adults aged 18-64 with multiple and complex needs requiring care and support over the plan period. In addition, offenders and those with substance misuse disorders needing rehabilitation, and people fleeing domestic abuse or other conflicts who have become homeless for a combination of these reasons (including asylum seekers and refugees) need to be accommodated.

### Supported housing

- 7.62** The Council aims to reduce the number of people living with dementia or autism, in hospital beds and residential care, and maximise opportunities for independent living in the community with appropriate homecare support. A mix of specialist (independent) supported housing solutions providing on-site care and support where appropriate is therefore encouraged for all client groups, tailored to the community's needs whether in urban or rural locations. While there will be some demand for care home accommodation, no new provision is specifically sought in the Plan, as there are around 300 bed-space vacancies in the County's current 115 care homes plus a large new care home under construction.
- 7.63** New dwelling provision should take account of the needs and demands of older households. Through the provision of one and two-bedroom level-access flats and bungalows there will be more opportunities to down-size, thereby releasing larger

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family homes onto the market to in turn help meet demand for this type of property. Additional self-contained units for independent supported living, including wardened sheltered and 'extra care' accommodation that may have some shared communal facilities are also required.

- 7.64** The preference is for new housing designed for older people to be located centrally in Main Towns and Service Centres where they are accessible to local shops, community facilities and public transport, thereby supporting the local economy and integrated into and complementing the surrounding community.
- 7.65** The latest evidence<sup>(67)</sup> indicates that the priority needs and opportunities for delivering supported housing are for:
- 'Extra care' or specialised supported housing for older adults aged over 65 years in Berwick-upon-Tweed, Rothbury, Bellingham, Hexham, Morpeth and Cramlington, as well as for specialised supported housing in Blyth and Ponteland; and
  - Independent supported living schemes for adults aged 18 to 64 years in the north of the County.
- 7.66** Some of the sites allocated in Policy HOU 4 have the potential to help provide for some of these supported housing needs.

### **Homelessness, refugees and asylum seekers**

- 7.67** The Council has a duty to ensure that suitable accommodation is available for applicants eligible for assistance, who are unintentionally homeless, and fall within a specified priority need group. The Council's Homelessness Strategy aims to ensure provision for all household types.
- 7.68** Northumberland County Council currently provides dedicated units to accommodate homeless people in Cramlington, Ashington, Hexham, Alnwick and Berwick-upon-Tweed, while independent providers manage hostels in Hexham and Blyth. A number of bedspaces are also provided in supported housing projects in Blyth and Prudhoe, and supported accommodation for young persons in Blyth and Berwick-upon-Tweed. Further bedspaces have been commissioned in supported hostel and dispersed accommodation countywide. Where there are gaps in provision identified, the Council will support the provision of suitable accommodation, including hostels and other houses of multiple occupation.
- 7.69** The Council also has a legal duty to support refugees and asylum seekers and assist them in finding suitable accommodation. A number of dwellings have been procured for families expected to be received, with additional properties likely to be required in the future. The Council will support the provision of housing to meet the needs of refugees and asylum seekers.

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67 Source: Extra Care and Supported Housing Strategy and Market Position Statement for Care and Support in Northumberland.

## Policy HOU 11

### Homes for older and vulnerable people (Strategic Policy)

1. Housing and other residential accommodation which meets the changing needs of older people and vulnerable needs groups and which supports residents' desires to live securely and independently in their own homes and communities over their lifetimes will be delivered wherever possible, by:
  - a. Supporting the adaptation of existing homes and the provision of new adaptable homes, including bungalows, level-access flats and sheltered 'extra care' accommodation, located in accessible and sustainable central locations well-served by local health, leisure, education and transport facilities;
  - b. Supporting and facilitating the provision of integrated sheltered residential retirement and 'extra care' accommodation with support for older people and vulnerable adults as part of creating balanced and sustainable communities to meet identified priority needs in Main Towns and Service Centres;
  - c. Supporting and enabling the provision of Use Class C2 residential care and nursing home accommodation options for those older and vulnerable people with physical disabilities and other needs who are unable to live independently, where justified by a specialist housing needs assessment;
  - d. Facilitating the creation of 'lifetime neighbourhoods' and 'retirement villages' that are well-designed to be accessible for everyone, located centrally within larger settlements close to local services and community facilities. Such development should support the principles of 'active ageing', minimise their institutional character and incorporate the delivery of integrated tiered support; and
  - e. Requiring planning applications to demonstrate in their supporting Design and Access Statement that development proposals meet the space and accessibility needs of older and vulnerable people, as well as supporting the principles of 'active ageing'.
2. Accommodation to meet the needs of those who are made homeless, refugees and asylum seekers will be supported where an evidenced need for such accommodation is identified.

## Gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople

- 7.70** Gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople communities are distinct groups with their own culture and traditions. The Council has a duty under the Human Rights Act 1998 and national planning policy to facilitate the traditional and nomadic way of life for ethnic gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople, while respecting the interests of the settled community, including promoting social inclusion and ensuring that they have fair and equal access to accommodation that meets their needs. National policy aims to increase significantly the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations, while local authorities are required to provide for a five-year supply of suitable, realistic and deliverable gypsy and traveller residential caravan pitches together with identifying broad locations to meet the community's needs for future years.
- 7.71** The Council currently owns and manages two gypsy and traveller sites providing 39 pitches, at Hartford Bridge near Bedlington and at Lyneburn Cottages/Shore Road near Lynemouth. Additionally, there is an 18-pitch privately-owned and managed site in Berwick-upon-Tweed plus a couple of small family-owned sites in the north and south east of the County. The Council regularly records mainly small, short-lived incidences of unauthorised encampments, concentrated mainly towards the south east of the County, but while there are currently no formal authorised transit sites or stopping places, the travelling community's stopover needs are frequently satisfied through informal arrangements negotiated with local farmers and other landowners.
- 7.72** Taking into account projected household formation rate statistics, the need to accommodate demand from those wishing to move out of bricks-and-mortar housing, the likelihood of pitches becoming vacant through general turnover and the potential for unauthorised encampments, our most recent Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) (2018 Update) suggests that there is no immediate need for additional permanent pitches to be provided. However, these projections and other factors suggest a likely need for up to eight additional gypsy and traveller caravan pitches in Northumberland by the end of the plan period, seven in the south east, and one in the north. This situation will be kept under review to inform whether these pitches need to be allocated at the next Plan review.
- 7.73** The GTAA also identifies a likely need for transit accommodation provision of four to eight pitches to address the remaining unauthorised encampments issue. One solution would be to provide up to two small sites in South East Northumberland to accommodate this provision. However, the Council is currently trialling a 'negotiated stopping places' model, as advocated by the travelling community nationally, to help facilitate increased provision to meet this largely seasonal, semi-permanent transit demand, informed by an initial site search within the priority Ashington/Bedlington/Blyth/Cramlington area. The outcome of this ongoing trial will, together with the most up to date evidence, determine whether or not there is a need to formally allocate a permanent site for transit use when this Local Plan is next reviewed. The GTAA additionally indicates a continued need to provide semi-formal (emergency) stopover arrangements, including on the summer east-west

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Appleby Horse Fair route. It is considered that the 'negotiated stopping places model' is the most appropriate solution for addressing this issue, subject to further discussions with Durham County Council on a potential joint approach.

- 7.74** For the **travelling showpeople community** actively involved in travelling to work at fairgrounds and events, the privately-owned and managed Showmen's Guild yard at Bomarsund near Stakeford in South East Northumberland currently provides 30 plots for caravans and the storage of equipment related to their businesses. The updated Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment identified a likely need to provide additional travelling showpeople plots over the plan period to take account of projected household formation within this community. This may lead to the travelling showpeople community seeking to add plots and/or further extend their yard. As far as possible, the Council will be supportive of such proposals as it is considered that scope exists without the need to allocate new land for this purpose.
- 7.75** As a first principle in the determination of applications for new gypsy and traveller and travelling showpeople facilities, consideration will be given to any existing sites in the County, while support will be given to the development of long-term sustainable sites in appropriate locations which should help to reduce the potential for unauthorised encampments. The criteria set out in Policy HOU 12 are considered to be essential for the provision of satisfactory sites, while recognising that individual plots and sites for travelling showpeople should also have regard to the layout principles advised by the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain.

### Policy HOU 12

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

1. To facilitate the way of life of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities within the context of Northumberland's environment, economy and its settled communities, the Council will make provision for the necessary sites and yards, and additional pitches and plots over the plan period to meet the needs identified by the most up-to-date Northumberland Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment.
2. Provision will be sought in the Ashington, Bedlington, Blyth and Cramlington area of South East Northumberland to meet the following currently identified needs:
  - a. Between four to eight gypsy and traveller pitches on permanent transit sites, should less formal arrangements not fully address the unauthorised encampment issue; and
  - b. If justified by forecast household growth and demand following further review, up to eight permanent pitches to meet medium to longer-term accommodation needs to be accommodated either within existing permanent gypsy and traveller sites or on an appropriate new gypsy and traveller site.

3. The provision of additional plots to meet the needs of travelling showpeople will be supported within or by the appropriate expansion of the existing Showmen's Guild yard at Bomarsund.
4. The following criteria will be taken into consideration when determining proposals for new or extended sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, and in determining planning applications:
  - a. The site is well related to local services and facilities, including jobs, shops, schools, medical facilities and public transport;
  - b. The site will be well screened and landscaped and not cause unacceptable harm to ecosystems or the character and appearance of the surrounding area, including avoiding any unacceptable impact on water bodies, water quality, biodiversity and/or heritage assets;
  - c. The site will have safe vehicular access from the highway and adequate parking provision and turning areas as well as space for storage of equipment;
  - d. The proposal will not result in disturbance or loss of amenity to any neighbouring residential properties, settled communities or places of visitor accommodation; and
  - e. The internal amenity of the site will be secured through the provision of essential infrastructure and on-site facilities, including water supply, sewerage, and waste removal/recycling, work areas and play areas.



### 8. Quality of Place

- 8.1** Design is an integral aspect of sustainable development and is therefore fundamental to the successful delivery of the Local Plan. The NPPF attaches great importance to achieving high quality, inclusive design through the planning process and recognises that design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals.<sup>(68)</sup>
- 8.2** The Council recognises that new development which responds to the principles of good design has the potential to maintain, enhance and enrich existing environments, in addition to creating vibrant new places. Good quality design will help deliver against a number of objectives of the Local Plan, particularly in relation to Quality of Place.
- 8.3** Northumberland is rich in ~~natural beauty and built~~ heritage and natural beauty. It is important that the character of Northumberland, the essence of what makes it unique and distinctive, is not only conserved but enhanced and enriched by new development. Innovative design which reflects changing architectural styles and construction techniques can make a valuable contribution towards this objective. Appropriate consideration should be given by developers, designers and assessors to the reality that the buildings and places created now will become part of Northumberland's heritage and legacy in the future.

### Design

- 8.4** Delivering high quality design is not only about creating an aesthetically pleasing built environment. The social, environmental and economic benefits of good design are well documented. A well-designed building or place can contribute to the economic vitality of a community and reduce operating and maintenance costs. General wellbeing of individuals and communities can also be enhanced by high quality inclusive spaces and buildings which encourage healthier lifestyles, welcome diversity and improve general amenity. Incorporating natural features within the design of developments, allows daily exposure to nature with its health benefits and addresses health inequalities. In terms of the environment, good design can contribute towards lessening and mitigating the effects of climate change, promoting efficient use of finite natural resources and enhancing the natural environment.
- 8.5** Buildings and spaces should therefore function properly, both individually but also to create integrated places and local areas. Incremental additions or changes to Northumberland through new development must be designed to respond to the existing and anticipated physical, social, economic and environmental context, both locally and in terms the wider perspective.
- 8.6** Policy QOP1 sets out design principles which must underpin the design of any new proposed development in Northumberland. The design principles seek to ensure that development contributes positively to the people, places and natural environment that define Northumberland.

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68 National Planning Policy Framework, July 2018, paragraph 128.

- 8.7** A supplementary planning document, the Northumberland Design Guide, will be prepared which will include more guidance on the requirements of the design principles and other design-related policies within the Local Plan<sup>(69)</sup>. The design policies and the Northumberland Design Guide will together set out local design expectations for the County.

## Policy QOP 1

### Design principles (Strategic Policy)

1. In determining planning applications, design will be assessed against the following design principles, in accordance with the Northumberland Design Guide.
2. Proposals will be supported where design:
  - a. Makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness and contributes to a positive relationship between built and natural features, including landform and topography;
  - b. Creates or contributes to a strong sense of place and integrates the built form of the development with the site overall, and the wider local area;
  - c. Incorporates high quality aesthetics, materials and detailing;
  - d. Respects and enhances the natural, developed and built-historic environment, including heritage, environmental and ecological assets, and any significant views or landscape setting;
  - e. Ensures that buildings and spaces are functional and adaptable for future uses;
  - f. Facilitates an inclusive, comfortable, user-friendly and legible environment;
  - g. Supports health and wellbeing and enhances quality of life;
  - h. Supports positive social interaction and a safe and secure environment, including measures where relevant to reduce the risk of crime and the fear of crime;
  - i. Protects generalthe amenity of people affected by the development and provides a high standard of amenity for existing and future users of the development;
  - j. Incorporates, where possible, green infrastructure and opportunities to support wildlife, and contributes to net environmental gains, including for biodiversity;
  - k. Makes provision for efficient use of resources;
  - l. Responds to the climatic conditions of the location and avoids creation of adverse local climatic conditions;

<sup>69</sup> A Northumberland Design Guide scoping document has been prepared and is available to view and comment on alongside this document.

- m. Mitigates climate change, and is adaptable to a changing climate; and
  - n. Ensures the longevity of the buildings and spaces, and secures the social, economic and environmental benefits over the lifetime of the development.
3. Great weight will be given to proposals which demonstrate outstanding or innovative design, in accordance with the Northumberland Design Guide.

### Amenity

- 8.8** Amenity is not comprehensively defined in any planning legislation or national planning policy but the term is commonly used to refer to the quality or character of an area and elements that contribute towards the enjoyment of an area. In terms of managing development, amenity is related to how people experience a place, building or space and how this is impacted upon by the type and design of new development. Development can affect the amenity of the people that come into contact with it, whether they use the development itself, adjacent buildings and spaces or the wider local area.
- 8.9** The way in which development impacts upon amenity may be related to the uses and character of land and how they relate to each other. For example, a new industrial development will potentially have a different impact on amenity if it is located next to a residential area rather than another industrial use. Similarly, a large poster-boarding may have a different impact on amenity in a small historical centre than a large commercial urban centre. The design of a development proposal, including aspects such as its massing, materials, landscaping, fenestration and the incorporation of green infrastructure, can have a significant impact on amenity generally, and affect how acceptable it may be to neighbouring land uses.
- 8.10** Features or conditions that could be considered to be of amenity value will be specific to the details of each individual proposal. They may include but are not necessarily limited to:
- character and visual quality
  - existing land use or features, including amenity space and vegetation
  - privacy
  - outlook
  - air, sound, light and temperature conditions
  - tranquility or freedom from disturbance
  - freedom from unpleasant or harmful gases and substances.
- 8.11** The Plan seeks to deliver high quality development and support the health and wellbeing of the residents, workforce and visitors of Northumberland. Therefore, Policy QOP 2 seeks to ensure that new development has a positive impact on amenity. The assessment of amenity against Policy QOP 2 should be proportionate and considered in the context of how buildings, spaces and places are used and their setting. For example, overlooking will be more likely to have an unacceptable adverse impact on a dwelling or a school than a public amenity green space, where

the surveillance provided by overlooking helps with a sense of safety for users. Where the policy refers to 'habitable' areas, this should be interpreted as places that are regularly or continually occupied by people.

## Policy QOP 2

### Good design and amenity

1. Development will be required to provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users of the development itself and preserve the amenity of those living in, working in or visiting the local area.
2. Development which would result in unacceptable adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses, in terms of both individual and cumulative impacts, will not be supported.
3. In order to provide a high standard of amenity and minimise any adverse impacts on amenity, development proposals will need to ensure that:
  - a. The physical presence and design of the development preserves the character of the area and does not have a visually obtrusive or overbearing impact on neighbouring uses;
  - b. Trees, other green and blue infrastructure and soft landscaping of amenity value are retained and are introduced where they would enhance amenity of the development;
  - c. The appropriate levels of privacy, according to the use of buildings and spaces, are incorporated into the design of the new development and are preserved in existing neighbouring development;
  - d. Outlook from the development or resulting from the development, particularly in relation to principle viewpoints in habitable rooms or spaces, is not oppressive and design of the development responds to opportunities to deliver the best outcomes for outlook;
  - e. Air, temperature, sound and light conditions of habitable areas within the development, or resulting from the development, are of a good standard; and
  - f. Neighbouring uses are compatible and that there are no unacceptable adverse impacts from noise, disturbances, odour, gases, other emissions and any other harmful effects, resulting from either the development or from neighbouring uses on the development.
4. Developments will be required to relate positively to their locality, having regard to:
  - a. Building heights;
  - b. The form, scale and massing, prevailing around the site;
  - c. The framework of routes and spaces connecting locally and more widely;
  - d. The pattern of any neighbouring or local regular plot and building widths, and where appropriate, follow existing building lines;
  - e. the need to provide active frontages to the public realm; and
  - f. distinctive local architectural styles, detailing and materials.

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### Design of the public realm

- 8.12** The public realm is the network of streets, spaces, buildings and structures that the public have access to. Public areas enable people to move between places, provide the setting for civic life and facilitate social activities and recreation. As the public realm is shared by different people and may be used for different purposes, it is important that public places are designed to be flexible, functional for all, easy to understand and promote positive social interaction.
- 8.13** Policy QOP 3 sets out the requirements for new development that incorporates public buildings and spaces.

#### Policy QOP 3

##### Public realm design principles

1. In addition to the overarching design principles set out in Policy QOP 1, the design of the public realm will be expected to:
  - a. Create diverse, vibrant buildings and spaces which contribute to supporting a range of public activity;
  - b. ~~Comply with the~~**Deliver high** accessible and inclusive public realm standards ~~set out in~~ **accordance with** the Northumberland Design Guide;
  - c. Be clearly defined from private spaces;
  - d. Have a clear hierarchy of routes and spaces, ~~be~~**which are** faced by active frontages and maximise natural surveillance;
  - e. Prioritise pedestrian and cycle movement and facilitate access to public transport wherever possible;
  - f. Avoid dominance of vehicles and ensure that parking, where included, is sensitively integrated;
  - g. Maximise urban greening, including the use of street trees and other vegetation as appropriate;
  - h. Respond to opportunities to incorporate public art; and
  - i. Incorporate appropriate street furniture, lighting and surface materials.

### Landscaping and trees

- 8.14** The way in which development changes the exterior environment can have a significant impact on amenity, health, wellbeing, ecology and the natural environment. To ensure the delivery of well-designed places which preserve and enhance the exterior environment, the way in which development proposals respond to existing exterior areas and features of a site, and the design of exterior spaces that will form part of the development site need to be considered.

- 8.15** Sites may include valuable characteristics and features, which could be sensitively integrated into the design of development, or may have little existing value and can be enhanced by landscaping. Where exterior spaces will form part of a new development, well-designed landscaping can create valuable spaces and features that can deliver benefits for people, wildlife and the environment.
- 8.16** Policy QOP 4 seeks to ensure that high quality exterior environments are achieved through an appropriate approach to the existing characteristics of a site, well-designed landscaping and the protection and enhancement of trees and other green and blue infrastructure.

## Trees

- 8.17** Trees and other vegetation are important elements of Green Infrastructure. They make a valuable contribution towards the environment, benefiting amenity, health, wellbeing, wildlife and climate, in addition to improving resilience to adverse weather conditions and regulating micro-climates. The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 places a duty on planning authorities to ensure that adequate provision is made for the preservation or planting of trees in response to development proposals. The Act further allows authorities to make Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) to protect trees 'in the interests of amenity' and provides separate protection powers for trees in Conservation Areas.
- 8.18** The NPPF recognises the importance of trees, seeks net environmental gain from development and prevents the loss of any ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees except in wholly exceptional circumstances<sup>(70)</sup>. The Council will seek to ensure that new development doesn't result in the net loss of any trees and will seek to maximise appropriate tree cover in new development. The Council will also protect trees in accordance with its statutory powers, through the use of TPOs, planning conditions and the management of Conservation Areas.
- 8.19** All trees are considered to provide benefits. Therefore, wherever possible trees should be retained as part of development, or where this is not possible, replacement planting should be provided. Large and mature trees are considered to deliver increased benefits and particular care is needed in terms providing adequate space to secure their future survival and maintenance. Where there are trees on or adjacent a development site, tree surveys should be undertaken, and advice from arboriculturalists sought, and practice guidance considered<sup>(71)</sup>.

70 The Government's 25 year Plan to improve the Environment (2018) and its Tree Health Resilience Strategy (2018) set out why it is important to preserve and plant trees and make a commitment to improve the extent, connectivity, diversity and condition of trees.

71 British Standard BS5837:2012 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction' provides good practice guidance in terms of how to identify and manage trees as part of the design and construction process.



## Policy QOP 4

### Landscaping and trees

1. Where relevant, new development will be expected to incorporate well-designed landscaping and respond appropriately to any existing landscape features.
2. Development proposals should ensure that:
  - a. Landscaping design is of a high quality, in accordance with the principles set out in Policy QOP 1;
  - b. Existing features which contribute towards the character of the area, or amenity, are retained wherever possible and sympathetically incorporated into the overall design of the scheme;
  - c. Any hard or soft landscaping is appropriate, functional and well-integrated into the design of the development;
  - d. Trees, and other spaces and features that provide green and blue infrastructure, are preserved, enhanced and introduced into the landscaping scheme wherever possible;
  - e. There is no loss of existing trees which are valuable in terms of amenity, biodiversity or the landscape;
  - f. Any tree lost is replaced on-site or at a suitable location in the local area;
  - g. Any protected vegetation, including trees within Conservation Areas, trees with Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), protected habitats and important hedgerows, are preserved in accordance with the relevant national legislation, policy and guidance;
  - h. Planting schemes are compatible and appropriate to the site and its use; species that may damage other vegetation or wildlife should be avoided; and
  - i. There will be no unacceptable damage to vegetation which is to be retained as part of the landscaping scheme during construction; and
  - j. Provision is made for the long term maintenance of new landscaped areas.
3. The Council will protect trees and woodlands which are of a high amenity value through TPOs and planning conditions where appropriate. Where the loss of a protected tree is granted permission, replacement compensatory planting will be required.
4. Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees will not be permitted unless wholly exceptional reasons exist to justify any loss or deterioration and a suitable compensatory strategy has been proposed.

## Sustainable design and construction

- 8.20** The sustainable design and construction of new development has an important role to play in terms of ensuring prudent use of natural resources and responding proactively to climate change. Consideration of how to minimise demand on resources, such as energy and water, as part of the design process is important for reducing running costs and improving efficiency. Improving the sustainability of building construction and use, and supporting small scale renewable and low carbon energy generation provides an opportunity to deliver the objectives of addressing climate change and managing natural resources.
- 8.21** Whilst Building Regulations address technical standards in buildings, the Local Plan seeks to ensure that development is environmentally sustainable and as such applications will need to demonstrate that considerations set out in Policy QOP 5 have guided the design process. This includes consideration of opportunities to incorporate passive design measures, for example the potential for solar gain and natural ventilation through the siting, orientation and layout of a development. Other key considerations include the potential to connect to or incorporate district energy systems, renewable energy, water recycling and waste reduction.

### Policy QOP 5

#### Sustainable design and construction

1. In order to minimise resource use, mitigate climate change, and ensure development proposals are adaptable to a changing climate, proposals will be supported where they, in accordance with the Northumberland Design Guide:
  - a. Incorporate passive design measures which respond to existing and anticipated climatic conditions and improve the efficiency of heating, cooling, ventilation and lighting;
  - b. Demonstrate that opportunities to incorporate locally sourced, recycled and energy efficient building materials have been considered;
  - c. Demonstrate that opportunities to include small-scale renewable and low carbon energy generation have been considered;
  - d. Connect to an existing or approved district energy scheme where feasible and viable and in the case of major development proposals consider opportunities to incorporate a district energy network;
  - e. Demonstrate that opportunities to include water efficiency measures such as the use of water recycling systems have been considered;
  - f. Incorporate measures to reduce waste generated during construction, including the recovery of materials on-site, and ensuring there is appropriate provision for recyclable and non-recyclable waste;

- g. Minimise vulnerability to flooding through use of materials, green and blue infrastructure and other design features as appropriate; and
  - h. Are flexible to allow for future modification, refurbishment and retrofitting.
- 2. The use of appropriate accreditation schemes to demonstrate high levels of sustainability will be encouraged and supported. Great weight will be given where high levels of sustainability are demonstrated, in line with the Northumberland Design Guide.

### Delivering well-designed places

- 8.22** The design process should grow from a robust analysis of both the immediate context and the wider locality. How a design evolves and the way in which the designer has responded to the key considerations set out in local design requirements should be demonstrated within a Design and Access Statement as part of a planning application. Clarification of the design process, using drawings, models and written description, is vital to the assessment of a development proposal as it demonstrates how key design principles have been considered. Although Design and Access statements are not a requirement of all planning applications, the local design requirements set out in the Local Plan and the Northumberland Design Guide, should inform the design process of all developments and should be embodied in the final proposal. Where applicable, locally-specific design requirements in a neighbourhood plan should also inform the design process, while local character assessments should be considered.
- 8.23** The Council will encourage the use of design processes and tools which can be valuable in improving the quality of a development proposal. In particular, the use of master planning, design briefs, frameworks and codes, and design review will be supported. Early discussions and consultation in relation to the design of any proposed development will be regarded as extremely valuable to achieving the best possible design outcomes and will be encouraged.

## Policy QOP 6

### Delivering well-designed places

1. Proposals are expected to meet the local design expectations set out in design policies within the Plan, the Northumberland Design Guide, and any other adopted design guidance.
2. Proposals are expected to respond to any character assessments that form part of or support the Plan.
3. Where a Design and Access Statement is required as part of a planning application, there must be a clear and proportionate demonstration of:
  - a. How relevant design policies, the Northumberland Design Guide, character assessments and any other design guidance supporting the Plan, have been integral to the design development process;

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- b. A robust analysis of the context and character of the site and the local area, in addition to the functional requirements of the intended use;
  - c. The design concept and the evolution of the design development through drawings or models, including explanatory text as appropriate; and
  - d. Where relevant, how consultation with communities and other relevant stakeholders has informed the design.
- 4. Sites forming part of a larger area of development, which are anticipated to be delivered within related timescales, will require a comprehensive masterplan to demonstrate a coordinated design response.
  - 5. Early design discussions, design review and design coding will be supported, facilitated and recommended by the Council where appropriate.
  - 6. Proposals which would materially diminish the standard of design in an already approved scheme will not be supported.

## 9. Connectivity and Movement

### Introduction

- 9.1** The Local Plan seeks to create a sustainable pattern of development which will result in a reduction in the need to travel, with the majority of development focused in the most sustainable locations. Living closer to jobs, education, services and amenities and making the most of communication technologies can lead to more sustainable travel, reduced carbon emissions and more sustainable and enduring communities in the long term.
- 9.2** The alignment of improvements to transport and connectivity with development and economic growth supported by investment in infrastructure is a key objective of the plan. Removing the need for motorised travel and improving the design and implementation of accessible transport systems supports positive health and wellbeing. Creating public spaces that are open and accessible, green spaces/routes and designing our systems to improve accessibility all play a role in what people do and encourage active travel.
- 9.3** The critical importance of ensuring connectivity is fully recognised. The Local Plan seeks to maintain and support a local transport system and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) connections that are resilient and responsive to changing needs. There are a number of emerging technologies that have the potential to become mainstream and the Local Plan should enable such enhancements to come forward.
- 9.4** Northumberland is the most sparsely populated county in England; there are challenges of connecting remote rural communities, and sometimes unavoidable reliance upon car based travel. Northumberland is interdependent with neighbouring areas, including the city regional economies of both Tyne and Wear and Edinburgh. These factors present specific issues for ensuring the mobility of knowledge, people, goods and services. Effective connections across boundaries will remain crucial to the County's success.

### Regional and local transport strategies, plans and policies

- 9.5** The Local Plan is one of a range of strategies and plans that address connectivity and access matters. Regional and Local Transport Bodies and Strategies include:
- **Transport for the North** - A sub-national statutory body with a strategic investment framework;
  - **North East Local Enterprise Partnership** - Have produced a Strategic Economic Plan for the North East which sets out the strategic ambitions for the region;
  - **North of Tyne Combined Authority** - The emerging North of Tyne Combined Authority will report through a joint transport committee (with the North East Combined Authority (NECA)) having responsibility for strategic transport in the region and covers the local authority areas of Northumberland, Newcastle and

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North Tyneside. It's transport role will be critical in supporting a growing economy;

- **Local Transport Plan** and accompanying Implementation Plan produced by Northumberland County Council sets out the priorities; and
- **Northumberland Economic Strategy** produced by Northumberland County Council and accompanying delivery framework.

**9.6** The strategic context of these plans has been addressed through the development of Northumberland's Local Plan and key policies developed which address:

- Sustainable connections within and beyond development;
- Core Strategic and Local Road Network connections;
- [Parking within development](#)
- Safeguarding existing and future rail infrastructure;
- the Airport; and
- Ports and Harbours.

### Promoting sustainable connections

**9.7** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) highlights that the Local Plan should support a range of transport modes with priority given to walking, cycling and public transport and consideration of access for people with disabilities.

**9.8** The environmental impact of transport choices affects public health. Poor air quality, early mortality and climate change are less obvious impacts and the focus of policy is often on economic growth and safety. Patterns of development that locate jobs, housing and recreation in close proximity increase the potential for walking, cycling and public transport and associated improvements to air quality.

**9.9** Well designed and safe access routes encourage walking. Streets and public spaces play an important part as areas for social interaction. Within the hierarchy of sustainable modes, pedestrians are a priority and developing links and facilities into the existing networks is a key consideration for all development through the plan period. There is a need to protect and enhance networks for everyday walking, cycling and horse riding but also the recreational networks that form an important component of the visitor and tourism economy.

**9.10** Northumberland has an extensive public rights of way network along with more informal routes. This network provides access for walking, cycling and horse riding. Cycling infrastructure includes cycle routes which are not public rights of way. The Council will look to protect and enhance the coverage, standards and safety of these networks in accordance with the Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

**9.11** Through the development of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP), the Council will work with partners to create and develop the strategic cycling network across the County. Cycle hubs to support tourism and leisure use will be positively supported. Cycle parking will be required at key destinations, rail stations and at [new](#) developments to facilitate sustainable choices.

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- 9.12** Northumberland currently hosts car club facilities across the County. Electric vehicle charging is available at a variety of locations across the County.
- 9.13** Opportunities to maximise connectivity by bus inevitably vary between urban and rural areas. The timetabling and funding of public transport services, use of public rights of way and the cycle route network lie outside the scope of the planning system, however the Local Plan provides a positive planning policy framework for the improvement of facilities and networks. Developments should provide accessibility to public transport and, in more rural areas, where this may not be economically viable, then more flexible services / community transport should be considered.
- 9.14** Behavioural change by enabling people to make smarter choices to walk, cycle or use public transport more for journeys to work, home, school and leisure destinations, especially in the towns within the County, is a priority for the Council ~~will work towards~~. The important link between health and wellbeing and transport should be recognised and considered from a development site to a strategic level.
- 9.15** Travel information, road safety and demand management measures also play a vital part alongside traditional infrastructure improvements to support sustainable modes. The Council will support the introduction of these measures.

### Promoting sustainable connections commitments

To promote sustainable connections, the Council will work collaboratively to:

1. Reduce the need to travel;
2. Support a range of transport modes with priority given to walking, cycling and public transport; and
3. Support a local transport system and network that is resilient and responsive to changing needs.

The Council will support the development of car clubs and Electric Vehicle charging facilities in the County in partnership with other organisations, service providers and developers.

The Council recognises the need to support the provision and management of appropriate levels of public car parking, particularly to serve town centres. The Council will continue to work with landowners and partners to support the best use of parking space within town centres and will work to improve and enhance those areas through development opportunities as they arise.

## Policy TRA 1

### Promoting sustainable connections (Strategic Policy)

1. The Council will support development that:
  - a. Promotes a spatial distribution which creates accessible development, reduces the need to travel by car, and maximises the use of sustainable modes of transport;
  - b. Promotes good design principles in respect of the permeability, connectivity and legibility of buildings and public spaces; and inclusive access;
  - c. Promotes sustainable transport choices, including supporting, providing and connecting to networks for walking, cycling and public transport; and infrastructure that supports the use of low and ultra low emission vehicles;
  - d. Ensures delivery of cycle parking and supporting infrastructure;
  - e. Protects, enhances and supports public rights of way;
  - f. Supports the delivery of reliable, safe and efficient transport networks, in partnership with other organisations, service providers and developers;
  - g. Requires development to be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra low emission vehicles in safe, accessible, convenient locations; and
  - h. Requires development proposals which generate significant amounts of movements to be supported by ~~a~~ ~~t~~Transport ~~a~~Assessments/~~t~~Transport ~~s~~Statements, and ~~t~~Travel ~~p~~Plans, and where appropriate, delivery/servicing plans.

### Connections with Northumberland's transport network

- 9.16** A comprehensive system of local highways is essential for connecting Northumberland's communities, residents, services and jobs. To ensure a network suitable for the plan period and beyond is developed, the Local Plan seeks to prioritise the opportunities for non-car trips and a reduction in carbon emissions, however, it has to be recognised that there will still be a need to facilitate motorised transport journeys, including as a result of new development.
- 9.17** The Council will require Travel Plans and School Travel Plans to manage uses with significant associated trip generation.<sup>(72)</sup>

72 These circumstances will be set out in the Council's planning application validation checklist.

### Connections with Northumberland's transport network commitments

The Council will work with adjacent authorities on the promotion of sustainable transport measures and focus on main travel corridors to support development within and beyond the region.

### Policy TRA 2

#### The effects of development on the transport network

1. All developments affecting the transport network will be required to:
  - a. Provide effective and safe access and egress to the existing transport network;
  - b. Include appropriate measures to mitigate and manage any adverse impacts on the transport network including any contribution to cumulative impacts;
  - c. Minimise conflict between different modes of transport, including measures for network, traffic and parking management;
  - d. Facilitate the safe use of the network, including suitable crossing points, footways and dedicated provision for cyclists and equestrian users where necessary;
  - e. Suitably accommodate the delivery of goods and supplies, access for maintenance and refuse collection; and
  - f. Minimise any adverse impact on communities and the environment, including noise and air quality.
2. Travel Plans and School Travel plans will be required, where appropriate, to guide the determination of impact, shape proposals and provide an appropriate design with accompanying mitigation and contributions as required to the benefit of the scheme and the wider area.

## Connections with Northumberland's road network

**9.18** The table below identifies Northumberland's core road network and the highway authorities responsible for these roads.

**Table 9.1 Core road network in Northumberland**

Strategic Road Network (Trunk Roads) (Managed by Highways England)	National Primary Routes <u>and Major Road Network</u> (Managed by Northumberland County Council)
A1(T) A19(T) A69(T)	A68 A189  <u>A193 (part)</u>  <u>A197 (part)</u>  <u>A695</u> A696 A697  <u>A698 (part)</u>  <u>A1061</u> A1068 (part)  <u>A1147 (part)</u>  <u>A6079 (part)</u>  <u>B1337 (part)</u>  <u>B1329</u>  <u>C403 (part)</u>  <u>C415 (part)</u>

**9.19** Northumberland's core road network plays an important economic role in facilitating the movement of people and freight across Northumberland whilst providing connections to the neighbouring authorities and the wider region. It is therefore critical that the network is fit for purpose.

**9.20** Future improvements to the Strategic Road ~~n~~Network currently include 13 miles of upgrade to dual ~~the~~ carriageway linking Morpeth and Alnwick bypasses with the dual carriageway near Ellingham. This will create a continuous, high-quality dual carriageway from Newcastle to Ellingham enabling greater access to and from Northumberland. Also confirmed are proposals for enhancing the performance and

**The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies.**

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safety of the A1 to the north of Ellingham, with measures including climbing lanes, enhanced junctions and improved crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. The longer-term vision is to upgrade the full route to Expressway Standard.

**9.21** The Council will continue to work with Highways England on the further assessment, development and implementation of these schemes, and to determine the necessary phasing of the improvements and how these will coincide with the delivery and phasing of the Plan's developments. The work has helped to identify appropriate means and mitigation to address the impacts of development including:

- A19/A189 Moor Farm roundabout; and A19/Dudley Lane junctions;
- A1/A19 Seaton Burn interchange and A19/Fisher Lane junction;
- A1/A19 southbound merge at Seaton Burn.

**9.22** Highways England, through their Road Investment Strategy, will identify measures along those corridors of the [Strategic Road Network](#). In addition to this the Council will need to explore the opportunities related to the emerging DfT [and Transport for the North](#) Major Road Networks which covers the road network with sub regional significance including access to the County's main ports.

**9.23** The Countywide Transport Assessment<sup>(73)</sup> has assessed key parts of the local highway network, and has identified where future development may give rise to issues on the local network. Similarly to the analysis of the core road network, it has helped to identify appropriate means of mitigation to address the impacts of development both individually (for potential significant scale future developments) and cumulatively<sup>(74)</sup>. This includes opportunities for removing non-essential traffic from the highway network, shifting to more sustainable modes, physical measures to address movement and capacity constraints, including effective traffic management and signage.

**9.24a** It is recognised that safeguarded routes for local road improvement schemes cross areas in private ownership, and may impact upon activities in these locations. In some instances, the construction of new roads may necessitate the relocation and the provision of new buildings and facilities. The future delivery and design of the safeguarded routes will take into account the requirements of all road users.

**9.24** A review of the need for new schemes in the form of settlement bypasses or link roads has been undertaken. A number of schemes identified by the former District Councils have been re-appraised to consider their appropriateness, feasibility and deliverability. Strategic Regional and Local Transport policies combined with the need to prioritise infrastructure investment result in a number of County priorities. Land required for improvements beyond the highway boundary will form the basis of safeguarded land policies.

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73 Northumberland Local Plan Transport Assessment Report, November 2018

74 [Northumberland Local Plan Transport Assessment Mitigation Report, January 2019](#)

**9.25** A Strategic Outline Business Case<sup>(75)</sup> has been completed for the proposed Blyth Relief Road and has demonstrated a strong business case for 3 potential route alignments:

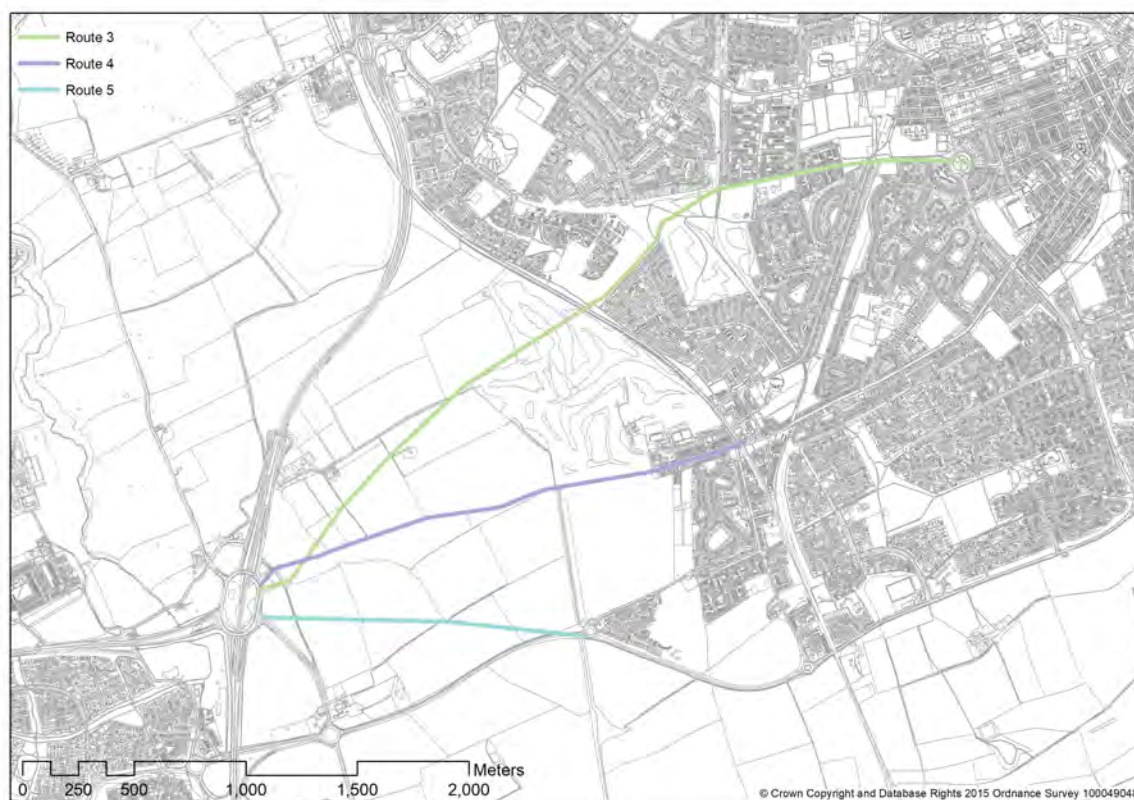
- Route 3 - A new link road from Princess Louise Road to the existing A192 / A189 "Three Horseshoes" interchange;
- Route 4 - A new link road from Plessey Road to the existing A192 / A189 "Three Horseshoes" interchange; and
- Route 5 - Dualling of the existing A1061 Laverock Hall route.

**9.26** The potential route alignments are identified in Figure 9.1. A public consultation exercise ~~will be~~ was held in early 2019 to obtain feedback from Blyth residents and other key stakeholders with a view to identifying a preferred route for detailed design and bid for future funding opportunities.

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75 Blyth Relief Road Outline Business Case, December 2017.



**Figure 9.1 Blyth Relief Road - Potential route alignments (illustrative diagram)**

- 9.27** As the local economy develops, new freight movement patterns may emerge including that of abnormal loads, which the Local Core Road networks must be flexible enough to accommodate. The Council will work with partners in the region, including freight management groups, throughout the plan period.
- 9.28** Strengthening links to neighbouring authorities beyond the North East region, Scotland and Cumbria, including access to freight facilities is important to support economic development in the north. Drivers making long-distance journeys need access to safe and secure parking facilities, with suitable catering and sanitation provision.
- 9.29** The Countywide Transport Assessment<sup>(76)</sup> has helped to appraise the individual and cumulative impacts of development on the Local Road network. The work has informed the Northumberland Infrastructure Delivery Plan and its prioritisation of infrastructure investments, including in the Core Road network.

#### **Connections with Northumberland's road network commitments**

The Council will work with partners in the region, including freight management groups, throughout the plan period.

76 Northumberland Local Plan Transport Assessment Report, November 2018.

## Policy TRA 3

### Improving Northumberland's core road network

1. In assessing development proposals, support will be given to the maintenance and improvement of Northumberland's core road network by:
  - a. The creation of additional capacity and improvement measures on the Strategic Road network, including for:
    - i. Improvements to the A19/A189 Moor Farm and A19/Dudley Lane junction;
    - ii. Improvements to the A1/A19 Seaton Burn interchange and A19/Fisher Lane junction; and
    - iii. Any improvement measures emanating from Highways England's Road Investment Strategies and other strategic assessment of the highway network.
  - b. Supporting and identifying acceptable lines and areas of improvements through the plan period including for the:
    - i. Full dualling of the A1 through Northumberland and improved local links/junctions to the A1; and
    - ii. Full dualling of the A69 through Northumberland and improved local links/junctions to the A69.
  - c. Working collaboratively with stakeholders, including Highways England, the North East Local Enterprise Partnership, North East Combined Authority and the North of Tyne Combined Authority to deliver continued improvements to the core road network;
  - d. Influencing the management, movement and routing of road freight to best effect, while minimising adverse impacts on the environment and communities.
2. Land will be safeguarded at the following locations to support Strategic Road Network improvements:
  - a. A19/A189 Moor Farm and A19/Dudley Lane junction;
  - b. A1/A19 Seaton Burn interchange and A19/Fisher Lane junction;
  - c. A69/ B6531, west of Hexham.
3. In assessing development proposals, support will be given to the maintenance and improvement of Northumberland's Local Road Network. Land will be safeguarded in the following locations to support the progression of the following Local Road Network Improvement schemes:
  - a. Ponteland Bypass;
  - b. Newbiggin/Ashington Link;

- c. Blyth Relief Road;
  - d. Stobhill Loansdean Link, Morpeth;
  - e. East-West Link, Cramlington; and
  - f. Lancastrian Road, Cramlington.
4. Support will be given through to development and creation of freight and logistics and lorry parking including:
  - a. Extension to Purdy Lodge, Adderstone; and
  - b. As part of improvement schemes along the A1 and A69.

### Car parking

**9.30** National planning policy allows local planning authorities to set local parking standards for residential and non-residential development. Car parking needs to be considered as an important part of any scheme. National planning policy requires that car parking provision is at an appropriate level, in safe, accessible and convenient locations, taking account of:

- The accessibility of the development;
- The type, mix and use of development;
- The availability of and opportunities for public transport;
- Local car ownership levels; and
- The need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.

**9.31** The need for adequate car parking to serve all development must be an integral element of the design process. It is expected that opportunities will be taken at an early stage in the design process to limit any adverse visual or other impacts arising from the need to provide adequate parking space to serve developments.

**9.32** Where planning for car parking to serve residential development, it is recognised that car ownership varies most directly in relation to dwelling size. This is reflected in the Council's parking standards for residential development which require variable provision based on the number of bedrooms in the dwelling.

**9.33** Policy TRA 4 sets out the Council's expectations for off-street car parking in new development and requires adherence to parking standards set out at Appendix D, or other standards which may be created through policies in made neighbourhood plans, unless it can be demonstrated that an alternative level of provision, or no provision, is more appropriate. In relation to non-residential development, the standards are not expressed as either a maximum or a minimum. Instead, they provide an indication of the appropriate level of parking for different uses. With regard to residential development, parking requirements are expressed as the minimum level that would normally be required.

**The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies.**

## Policy TRA 4

### Parking provision in new development

1. An appropriate amount of off-street vehicle parking sufficient to serve new development shall be made available in safe, accessible and convenient locations prior to the development, as a whole or in part, being brought into use. Vehicle parking shall be provided in accordance with the parking standards set out in Appendix D of the Local Plan, or other such local standards set out in made neighbourhood plans which will be given priority in determining the appropriate amount of parking required.
2. In exceptional circumstances, where provision is not made in accordance with the relevant standards, it must be demonstrated how the amount of parking proposed to serve the development has had regard to:
  - a. The scale, type, mix and use of the development;
  - b. The proximity and accessibility of the development to services and facilities reasonably required by users or occupiers of the development;
  - c. The availability of and opportunities for access to and from the development by public transport, walking and cycling;
  - d. The potential for road safety and environmental problems as a result of increased parking demand in the area; and
  - e. The extent and nature of any parking restrictions in force on highways in the area.

### Safeguarding existing and future potential rail infrastructure

- 9.34** Rail lines can have major positive benefits for the local economy and the environment. As well as reducing transport-related emissions, railway lines can also provide wildlife corridors and valuable habitats for plants and wildlife. Across Northumberland there are a number of rail routes providing both local and longer distance services for passengers and / or freight. Many of the local services are operating at capacity during peak periods with continuing increasing demands for travel. Existing rail services between Newcastle and Carlisle and Newcastle and Edinburgh serve a number of settlements in Northumberland. The Council also recognises the benefits of rail services to the most remote communities.
- 9.35** The road network in Northumberland crosses the rail network at grade in many locations. These level crossings present opportunities for conflict between trains, motor vehicles and people. Public safety at level crossings is a legitimate planning consideration and for this reason, Network Rail are a statutory consultee on any planning applications in close proximity to their network and on development that has the potential to impact on safety at level crossings. Policy TRA 5 seeks to resist the creation of new level crossings, thereby limiting the opportunity for additional

points of conflict to be created on the road and rail networks; and seeks to ensure the impact of development on level crossings is addressed in dealing with relevant planning applications.

- 9.36** The South East Northumberland corridor from the Seaton Valley to Ashington currently does not have rail passenger services. A key priority of the Council is the reintroduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line (formerly known as the Ashington, Blyth, Tyne Line). This will help facilitate development growth across the South East Delivery Area. The line has significant potential to improve links between the towns, encourage access to employment opportunities, and incentivise employers to locate in South East Northumberland, in addition to its current freight transport role. Significant steps have been made in taking long held aspirations for the line forward. This includes progressing plans through a Network Rail Governance for Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) study and assembling funding bid packages. Various options are currently being appraised, including station location, service frequency and considering the infrastructure that would be required to support the development and operation of the line. This includes any infrastructure requirements at level crossings to ensure safe operation of the rail network and minimise delay on the surrounding road network. Depending on the outcome of this work, some development may be required within the Green Belt. Subject to the on-going appraisal work and development needs identified, the Council may need to prepare a Development Plan Document to deal specifically with the Northumberland Line.
- 9.37** A further opportunity may be available in the long term, to link Ponteland to the Tyne and Wear Metro system. A dismantled railway alignment<sup>(77)</sup> suggests a possibility for extension of the existing Metro network beyond its existing terminus at Newcastle Airport. Such potential would need to be subject to further investigation.
- 9.38** In addition, there is potential for the reopening of other lines and stations across Northumberland, for example:
- The South Tynedale Railway which has potential to link the North Pennines AONB and South Tynedale with the national railway network at Haltwhistle;
  - The Aln Valley Railway, which would not only provide a new visitor attraction but would also open a transport corridor between Alnwick and the East Coast Main Line at Alnmouth;
  - The potential reopening of Belford Station on the East Coast Main Line and Gilsland Station on the Tyne Valley Line.
- 9.39** In order to maximise opportunities for the movement of goods, minerals and waste by rail there is a need to safeguard existing rail freight interchanges in Northumberland. Identified potential sites includes an additional rail facility near West Sleekburn for the transport of waste. Existing freight facilities at the former

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77 As identified in the Nexus Metro Strategy 2030 Background Information and the North East Combined Authority document "The combined future of Metro and Local Rail in the North East" Background Document.



Rio Tinto Alcan aluminium smelter are also a valuable asset. Some rail freight facilities are privately owned and/or operated. There is a need to ensure that the infrastructure is safeguarded for future use.

### **Rail transport and safeguarding facilities commitments**

The Northumberland Line - A key priority of the Council is to secure the future reintroduction of passenger rail services on the existing line between Benton Junction and Woodhorn ('The Northumberland Line'), provided that any significant adverse impact on the environment and communities can be mitigated.

Rail Transport and Facilities - The Council will work with rail and public transport operators and local communities to maintain and develop existing rail services and connections including along the East Coast Main Line and promote the development of public transport interchanges at key locations along the main East Coast Main Line, Tyne Valley rail line and the Northumberland Line.

## **Policy TRA 5**

### **Rail transport and safeguarding facilities**

1. Development which would prejudice the retention of rail transport facilities will not be supported unless the benefits of the development outweigh the importance of the retention of the facilities.

### **The Northumberland Line**

2. Development which would prevent the reintroduction of passenger rail services on the Northumberland Line along with associated stations, facilities and access to them from adjacent highways, and continued rail freight use of the Northumberland Line, its associated branch lines (including the branch line from Bedlington to Morpeth via Choppington, the Butterwell line north of Ashington and the line from Woodhorn to Newbiggin-by-the-Sea) and supporting infrastructure will not be supported.
3. Site for stations have been identified and land will be safeguarded at the following locations:
  - a. Woodhorn
  - b. Ashington
  - c. Bedlington Station
  - d. Blyth Bebside
  - e. South Newsham
  - f. Seaton Delaval
  - g. Seghill (future phase)

**The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies.**

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### Local rail services

4. Development which would prevent the reintroduction of passenger rail services on the following lines will not be supported:
  - a. South Tynedale Railway linking the North Pennines AONB and South Tynedale with the Tyne Valley Line at Haltwhistle;
  - b. Aln Valley Railway linking Alnwick with Alnmouth; and
  - c. Former railway track bed between Newcastle Airport Metro Station and Ponteland.
5. The route and alignment of disused railway lines, together with land identified for potential stations will be safeguarded. Development which would prejudice their future use for passenger and freight transport will not be supported unless the benefits of the development outweigh the importance of the retention of the facilities for future use. The Council will support proposals for the use of such routes for walking and cycling, where it will safeguard them for future rail use.
6. Development which would prevent the reintroduction of the following stations will not be supported:
  - a. Gilsland, on the Tyne Valley Line; and
  - b. Belford, on the East Coast Main Line.

### Freight rail services

7. Existing rail freight facilities will be safeguarded and the principle of improvement to infrastructure will be support at the following locations:
  - a. Battleship Wharf, Port of Blyth;
  - b. Former Rio Tinto Alcan facilities:
    - i. Aluminium Smelting Plant Lynefield Park; and
    - ii. Lynemouth Power Station;
  - c. Alumina handling facilities, Port of Blyth; and
  - d. Tweedmouth Goods Yard.
8. In accordance with Policy MIN 5, infrastructure associated with the transport of minerals will also be safeguarded.

### Rail transport and facilities

9. Support will be given to proposals to improve the flow of passengers and freight by rail, including:

- a. Land will be safeguarded at the following locations for improvements to station parking: Alnmouth, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Cramlington, Morpeth and Prudhoe.
  - b. Improvements to car and cycle parking provision at stations;
  - c. Improvements to station facilities provided that they would not result in an unacceptable impact on the environment and communities.
  - d. Improvements to the frequency and quality of passenger rail services stopping at Northumberland stations;
10. Development which would prejudice the retention of these facilities will not be supported unless the benefits of the development outweigh the importance of the retention of the facilities.
  11. Proposals for the creation of new level crossings on the rail network will not be supported. Proposals which jeopardise public safety at level crossings will not be supported. Measures to improve public safety at level crossings will be supported. Improvement, alteration or closure of level crossings, or appropriate contributions towards the implementation of such works, may be secured through the grant of planning permission for development where it can be demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, that those works are directly related to the impact that development may have on the level crossing and they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

### Newcastle International Airport

- 9.40** Newcastle International Airport is an important economic driver for investment and jobs in the North East, including Northumberland, and an international gateway for business and tourism, as well as freight. Part of the northern side of the operational area of the Airport is within Northumberland and the Development Plan has long protected around 25 hectares within the County - partly developed and partly still open land - for airport uses. This will be taken forward in this Local Plan.
- 9.41** Improving links to Newcastle Airport and strategic connectivity supports the Airport, economic growth and UK competitiveness, whilst multimodal connections support businesses and customers. Primary road access to the Airport is via the A696 which is the responsibility of Highways England. Previous assessment work undertaken in relation to the Airport's current access from the A696 has identified fragility in the junction's ability to accommodate growth at the Airport in addition to other competing demands, some of which are over and above sites allocated within this Plan. In order to safeguard the capacity of the junction, any development not allocated within this Plan seeking planning permission will need to demonstrate that they do not adversely impact upon the growth aspirations of the Airport in respect to capacity at the A696 access roundabout and to the satisfaction of Highways England.
- 9.42** The continued protection of the land around the northern site of the Airport is in line with the options for airport development identified in the Airport Master Plan and the Newcastle Gateshead Local Plan.

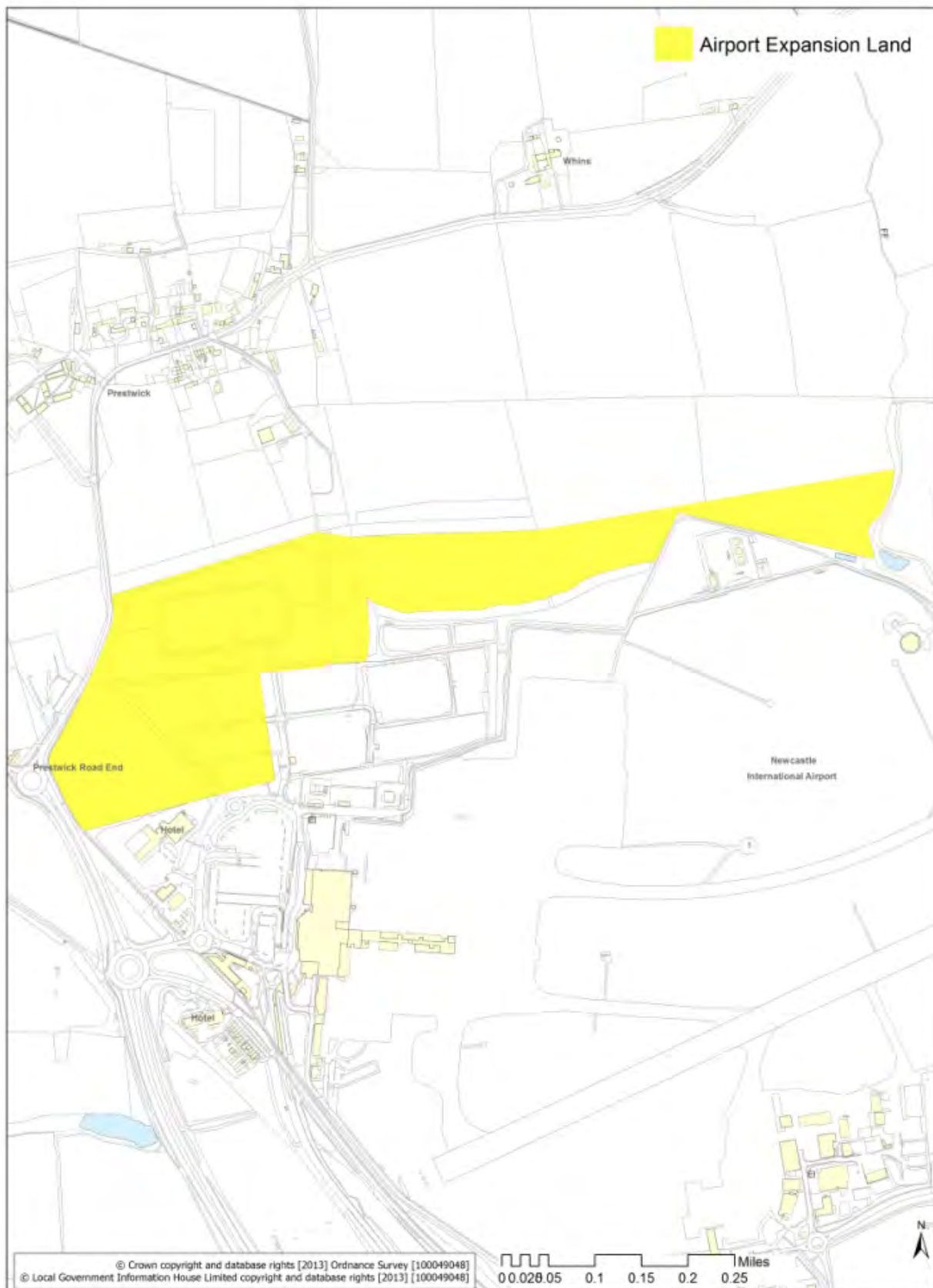
#### Newcastle International Airport commitments

The Council will continue to work with Newcastle International Airport operators and Newcastle City Council regarding airport-related development.

### Policy TRA 6

#### Newcastle International Airport

1. In assessing development proposals, the Council will support the sustainable development of Newcastle International Airport, applying the Airport Master Plan in its present or future iterations.
2. The important contribution of land within Northumberland to the functioning and growth of the Airport will be recognised through the allocation, for airport related uses, of around 25 hectares of land north of the County boundary. This land will accommodate possible growth for passenger or freight facilities and activities supplementary to the airport's operation, including necessary car parking expansion.

**Figure 9.2 Newcastle Airport - Expansion Land**

**The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies.**

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### Aerodrome safeguarding

- 9.43** Aerodrome safeguarding is the process used to ensure the safety of aircraft while taking off and landing, or in flying in the vicinity of aerodromes. Aerodrome Safeguarding Areas are defined around particular civil aerodromes which are identified by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) as important to the national air transport system. <sup>(78)</sup> Parts of the Aerodrome Safeguarding Areas for Newcastle International Airport (NIA) and Carlisle Lake District Airport fall within Northumberland, and are shown on the policies map. Safeguarding authorities are statutory consultees for planning applications which could impact on the safe operation of aerodromes.
- 9.44** The purpose of Aerodrome Safeguarding Areas is to ensure the safe operation and development of airports. Development is not necessarily prohibited within Aerodrome Safeguarding Areas; however, the Council must consult the relevant airport operator on planning applications for certain development types within them. If the Council proposes to grant planning permission contrary to the advice of the relevant airport operator, the Secretary of State may call the application in for determination.
- 9.45** The types of development which trigger the requirement for consultation with the relevant airport operator have the potential to affect the safe operation of aerodromes. This can be due to effects on navigational systems, pilot safety, or an increased risk of aircraft bird strikes.
- 9.46** Broadly, the Aerodrome Safeguarding Areas contain two distinct areas. The inner safeguarding area, which extends approximately 13 to 15 kilometres in all directions from the runway, in which a range of development types will trigger the consultation requirement as set out in Policy TRA 7. There are also areas of high ground beyond 13 kilometres where there is the potential for navigation systems to be impacted by transient and permanent tall structures. There is an outer safeguarding area, which extends 30 kilometres in all directions from the runway centreline, in which development proposals involving the erection of one or more wind turbines trigger the requirement for consultation. The extent of the inner and outer zone of both Aerodrome Safeguarding Areas are shown on the Policies Map.
- 9.47** It is strongly recommended that pre-application advice is sought directly from the airport operator for all development proposals that would trigger the need for consultation at the planning application stage.

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78 Officially safeguarded aerodromes are identified in the **t**own and **e**Country **p**lanning (**s**afeguarded aerodromes, technical sites and military storage areas) **d**irection 2002

## Policy TRA 7

### Aerodrome Safeguarding Areas

1. All development proposals falling within the Carlisle Lake District Airport Aerodrome Safeguarding Area inner zone will be subject to consultation with the airport operator.
2. Development proposals falling within the Newcastle International Airport Aerodrome Safeguarding Area inner zone which include, or may include, the following will be subject to consultation with Newcastle International Airport:
  - a. all buildings, structures, erections and works exceeding the height threshold specified on the Policies Map;
  - b. development using highly reflective materials such as glazed roofs or photovoltaic cells;
  - c. landscaping schemes, the development of open water, and building design which could encourage wildlife habitats and may lead to increased risk of an aircraft encountering a bird strike;
  - d. lighting which has the potential to cause distraction or glare for pilots, or could imitate airfield lighting; or
  - e. induced turbulence from buildings, through heat emissions etc.
3. Development proposals involving wind turbines falling within the defined Aerodrome Safeguarding Areas outer zones as shown on the Policies Map will be subject to consultation with the relevant airport operator.
4. Development proposals requiring consultation with the relevant airport operator will be supported where it can be demonstrated that they will not have an unacceptable impact on the safe operation on the aerodrome.

### Ports, harbours and beach launch facilities

**9.48** Although ports are subject to a separate national policy statement, the Local Plan is required to take account of their role within the County. There are 11 ports, harbours and beach launches in Northumberland.

#### Ports

**9.49** The Port of Blyth is the main functioning port in Northumberland, capable of handling large freight vessels. It is significant in the context of proposals to promote strategic economic uses around the Blyth Estuary, including in respect of renewable and offshore industries, for which the Port has already established its reputation. Handling up to 2 million tonnes of cargo per annum with particular expertise in the energy, project cargo, container, dry bulk and break bulk sectors. High quality warehousing is also available for shipping and non shipping uses. The Port of Blyth is planning for further expansion in its capacity over the coming years. Development that



supports the Port including opportunities at Blyth Estuary, Ashwood Business Park and Lynefield Park will be supported as set out in the Economic Development Chapter.

**9.50** The port of Berwick-upon-Tweed is an important small commercial port supporting the wider area and it is capable of handling larger freight vessels and has an important role in increasing exports and catering to the visitor economy.

**9.51** It is expected that both ports will continue to play a key role in the County's economy including in facilitating the sustainable transport of freight.

### Harbour and beach launch facilities

**9.52** Much of Northumberland's coastline, estuaries and inshore waters carry international, national and local designations, acknowledging the importance of their landscapes, rivers and seas and the biodiversity which they support. Further detail is provided in the Environment chapter. The development of port, harbour and beach launch facilities takes place within, and must therefore be sensitive to, these and other relevant designations. These areas including designated and non-designated heritage assets will be conserved and enhanced with development proposals.

**9.53** Developers should liaise with the Marine Management Organisation and Natural England where appropriate, and will have regard to the requirements of the Marine Policy Statement.

#### Ports, harbours and beach launch facilities commitments

The Council will continue to work with Harbour Commissions, Trust Ports, the Marine Management Organisation and other statutory bodies to ensure that the development of port, harbour and beach launch facilities takes account of the sensitivity of the marine environment and related shoreline environmental issues.

### Policy TRA 8

#### Ports, harbours and beach launch facilities (Strategic Policy)

##### Ports

1. Development proposals will be supported that provide for:
  - a. The expansion of port facilities to allow growth in sustainable sea based freight movement;
  - b. The development at Ports of Blyth, Berwick, Amble;
  - c. Connections to the industries they serve; and
  - d. New Freight movement patterns and suitable vehicular routes.

### Harbour and beach launch facilities

2. Development proposals will be supported that provide for:
  - a. The development of harbour and beach launch facilities to maintain and sustainably grow the fishing industry; and
  - b. Appropriate leisure and tourism developments, provided that they will not adversely impact on the functioning of commercial port and harbour activities, including the fishing industry.

### Environmental considerations

3. Development of port, harbour and beach launch facilities will be planned and implemented, taking full account of the interaction between communities, the local economy and the environment. This will include careful consideration of:
  - a. The statutory purposes and sensitivity of, and potential impacts on the Northumberland Coast AONB, North Northumberland Heritage Coast, SPAs, SACs, Ramsar sites, SSSIs, National Nature Reserves, and local designations; and
  - b. Where the port ~~of~~ or harbour itself is of historic significance, the effects of the development on that significance.
4. Development proposals for such facilities will be required to demonstrate that:
  - a. The development would not result in a net loss of inter-tidal or sub-tidal habitat;
  - b. The development would not impact on bird migration, fish migration or cetaceans;
  - c. There will be no adverse impact on water quality during construction and during the operation of such facilities;
  - d. Any harm to, or loss of significance of historic port areas will meet the relevant criteria in Policy ENV7; and
  - e. There will be no increase in flood risk.

### Digital connectivity

- 9.54** The Council supports the extension and enhancement of electronic communications infrastructure across the County, provided that it will not have significant adverse impacts on the environment or local communities which would otherwise outweigh its social and economic benefits.

### Planning for high quality communications infrastructure

- 9.55** High quality communications infrastructure provides a host of social, economic and environmental benefits to residents and businesses throughout Northumberland. It is becoming increasingly essential for business, communities and individuals alike.
- 9.56** The government is clear that local authorities should not impose a ban on new telecommunications development in certain areas, nor should they insist on minimum distances between new telecommunications development and existing development. Whilst perceived health concerns can be a material planning consideration, the government has advised<sup>(79)</sup> that the planning system is not the appropriate place for prescribing health safeguards. For this reason, Policy ICT 1 does not deal with health concerns, nor does it introduce health safeguards which differ from those guidelines<sup>(80)</sup> set out by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP).
- 9.57** Providing digital connectivity across the County, including supporting projects such as iNorthumberland will increase the competitiveness of Northumberland businesses and provide opportunities for home-working, as well as helping to facilitate a better work-life balance. Electronic communications infrastructure which is up-to-date and fit for purpose is essential to meet the changing needs of business and individual users. It will be needed to support the economic growth of the County and, as online social networking becomes an accepted part of everyday life, will also play an increasingly important role in supporting communities, facilitating community cohesion and reducing the need to travel. There is still, however, a need to ensure that any potential adverse impacts of such infrastructure on the environment and local communities are minimised.
- 9.58** Policy ICT 1 establishes criteria to be used in the determination of proposals to provide infrastructure for wireless telecommunications and for the extension and enhancement of the broadband network across Northumberland including public and private wireless broadband networks for the high speed transmission of data, telecommunications masts and other apparatus for mobile phone operators, and communications technology needed to serve particular business sectors. Wireless telecommunications infrastructure includes: the cellular network (3G, 4G and 5G); fixed wireless (such as microwave); low power Internet of Things (IoT) technologies; and WiFi, as well as future technologies.

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79 Paragraph 116, National Planning Policy Framework (2018)

80 <https://www.icnirp.org>

- 9.59** Criteria set out in Policy ICT 1 should be applied in the assessment of development proposals in conjunction with appropriate policies elsewhere in the Local Plan when considering the impact of development.

## Policy ICT 1

### Planning for high quality communications infrastructure

1. Infrastructure delivering wireless telecommunications and the enhancement and extension of broadband infrastructure will be encouraged. Where it can be demonstrated that it is not feasible to share existing structures, buildings, sites, masts or other structures, new apparatus will be supported provided that the following criteria are met:
  - a. The siting and appearance of the proposed apparatus, infrastructure and any associated structures and access routes are located and designed to minimise their impact on the accessibility and visual amenity, character and appearance of the surrounding area;
  - b. Where apparatus, infrastructure and any associated structures are located on a building, they should be sited and designed to minimise their impact on the external appearance of the host building; and
  - c. The proposal is certified to be in conformity with the latest national guidelines on radiation exposure.

### New development and infrastructure alignment

- 9.60** The ability to access information and services through wireless and broadband facilities is an important part of modern life. Digital connectivity can add to the overall sustainability of a development proposal. The ability for occupiers, visitors and residents in new development to connect to a digital network is an important material planning consideration in this context.
- 9.61** Ensuring the facilitation of access to broadband services through the integration of infrastructure in new development as well as during the construction of new roads and other transport corridors is therefore important to Northumberland's communities, visitors and the economy. The Council will prioritise full fibre connections to existing and new developments as these connections will, in almost all cases, provide the optimum solution.
- 9.62** The construction of new roads and other transport corridors provides opportunities to deliver infrastructure, such as ducting for broadband and telecommunications, to support and help facilitate the delivery of those services. Policy ICT 2 seeks to

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ensure that opportunities to align infrastructure provision are not missed in the interest of securing efficient and timely provision of services. Such an approach will help to improve the viability of the delivery of high quality communications infrastructure.

### **Policy ICT 2**

#### **New developments and infrastructure alignment**

1. Support will be given to developments which include full fibre broadband connections. All new dwellings and business premises should be provided with the infrastructure necessary to allow the development to be served by high quality communications infrastructure, providing access to services from a range of suppliers.
2. Priority will be given to full fibre broadband connections as these connections will, in almost all cases, provide the optimum solution.
3. Developers will be required to demonstrate that they have investigated means by which broadband and telecommunications infrastructure can be provided during the design of infrastructure projects.

## 10. Environment

### Introduction

- 10.1** Northumberland's environment is distinctive and valued; it is a significant asset. The sweeping landscapes and seascapes, important wildlife habitats, iconic landmarks and characteristic towns and villages within the County are hugely valued, not just by local inhabitants, but also by the many visitors from across the region and beyond.
- 10.2** The natural environment of Northumberland is distinguished by a unique pattern of geology, natural landforms, river systems and soils. While these strongly influence the landscape and wildlife, much of what is valued can be attributed to human influence. Many of the most attractive landscapes and much of the wildlife reflect the turbulent social and economic history, agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining, manufacturing, commerce, the building and expansion of communities and, most recently, tourism.
- 10.3** The County's rich cultural heritage has left a diverse legacy of well-preserved archaeological sites, buildings and other assets. In terms of the built environment, many of the County's main historic landmarks, as well as the distinctive character of traditional market towns, villages, hamlets and farmsteads have their origin in the ancient, mediaeval and pre-industrial history. The more recent past has also created distinctive buildings, structures and townscapes, which continue to evolve.
- 10.4** The biodiversity elements of the landscape and the architectural and historic fabric which they support can be fragile and require protection. One of the Strategic Objectives of the Local Plan seeks to conserve and enhance Northumberland's distinctive environment. This will have wider benefits to the community, through positive effects on physical and mental health, and for the local economy, through continuing to attract visitors and investment to the County.
- 10.5** The conservation and enhancement of Northumberland's environment requires an ecosystem approach which looks beyond designated sites and protected species to consider natural systems as a whole and fully recognise the value of Natural Capital (the stock of minerals, soils, air, water and species that exist around us) in terms of the ecosystem services that it provides. Ecosystem services are the things that nature does for us such as pollination of crops, storage of carbon in wood and peat, the regulation of flooding in wetlands and the health and wellbeing benefits that people derive from contact with nature. The ecosystem approach, adopted within the Local Plan, aims to integrate plan-making and development management into the management of natural systems across wide areas. This will, in turn, contribute to informing the levels of protection to be given to sites and species.



### Environment commitments

In the context of the ecosystem approach, and recognising the health, social and economic benefits derived from the enjoyment of Northumberland's rich natural, historic and built environment, the Council will work with relevant lead authorities, land and property owners, local communities and groups, developers, adjoining local planning authorities and Local Nature Partnerships to:

- Identify opportunities for appropriate environmental enhancements, including:
  - i. Habitat improvement, restoration and creation;
  - ii. Enhancement of landscape quality in accordance with valued characteristics; and
  - iii. Restoring, enhancing and, where appropriate, bringing into viable use heritage assets.
- Gather, record and update evidence to advance understanding of the significance of Northumberland's natural and historic environment and heritage assets; and
- Identify opportunities to make information on assets widely accessible and promote the enjoyment of the physical and cultural components of these assets.

### Designated areas

**10.6** The County contains large numbers of designated areas both in terms of the natural and historic environment. The main designations are shown in Table 10.1.

Designations vary in importance from having international recognition through to local designations. It is important to bear in mind that the position of an asset in the hierarchy does not always give the full picture on its importance. For example, ancient woodlands are often not covered by a statutory designation but are nevertheless irreplaceable; likewise many heritage assets of archaeological interest are not designated but are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments.

**10.7** Indirect impacts on designated sites can be as significant as direct effects. This would include a marked increase in the numbers of people residing close to or visiting the vicinity of key designated areas or assets.

**10.8** There is a particular approach that must be applied when looking at impacts on the historic environment:

- The potential scale of loss or harm caused by development, must be measured against the significance of the assets affected. The total loss or substantial harm to assets of the highest significance should be wholly exceptional. In other cases substantial harm or loss should be resisted unless outweighed by

substantial public benefit<sup>(81)</sup>. The incremental loss of designated assets, will be guarded against.

- In order to decide what would constitute a substantial public benefit, consideration will be given to the degree to which the proposal would benefit the public at large, in terms of their community their local economy and/or their local environment, rather than just being a private benefit. Public benefits may include heritage benefits such as securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation - e.g. where an alteration to it is the only means of bringing the property into use and removing risks to it.

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81 In the case of designated heritage assets, Government policy is very clear at NPPF paragraphs 195 and 196 - i.e. that substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset should be wholly exceptional and only granted if substantial public benefits outweigh the substantial harm or loss. If this cannot be achieved, all of the following must apply: (a) The nature of the heritage asset would prevent all reasonable uses of the site; and (b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself could be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that would enable its conservation; and (c) a funded solution could not be secured; and (d) the harm or loss would be outweighed by bringing the site back into use. Where a development proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset, this harm would need to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

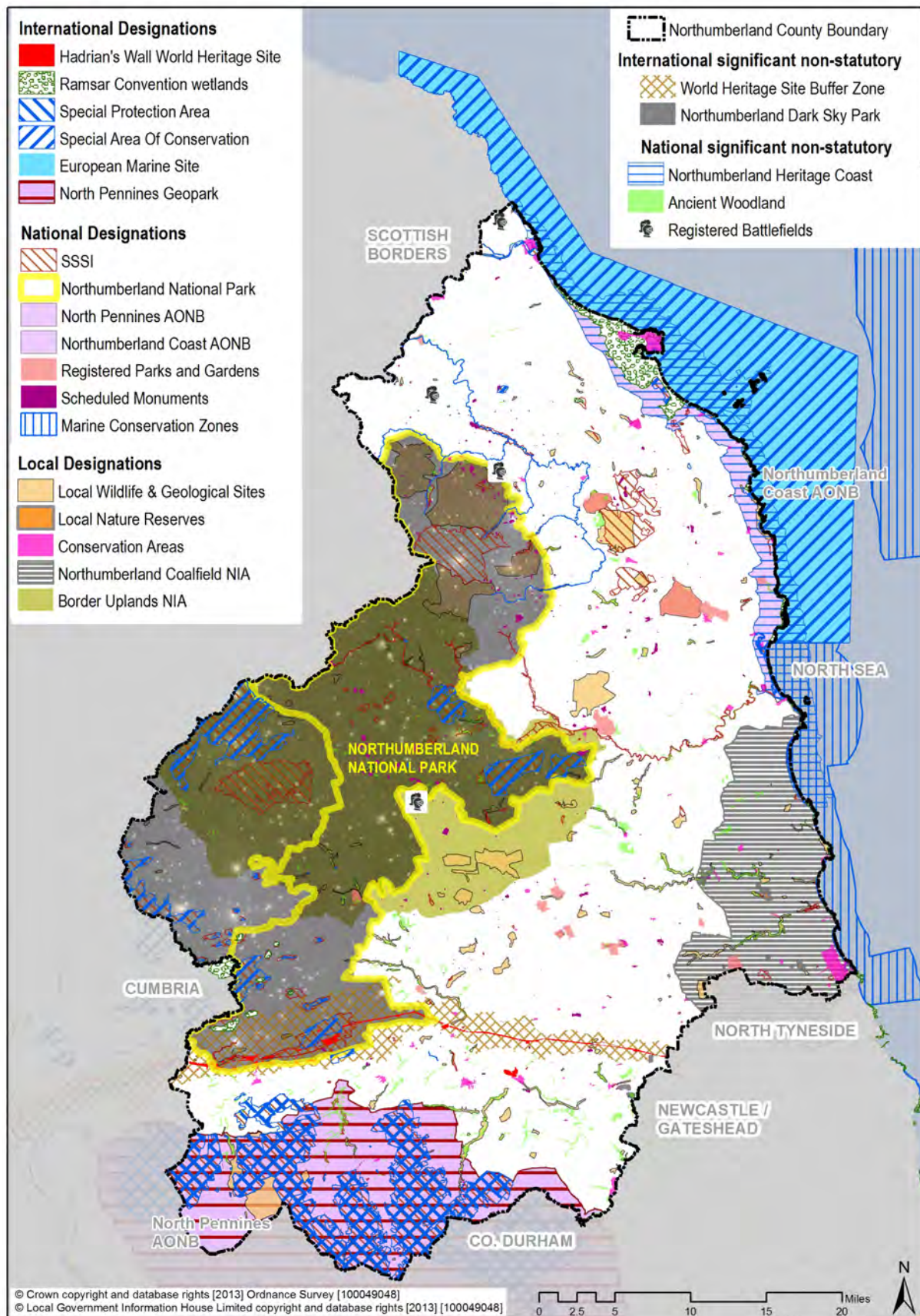
**Table 10.1 Natural and heritage designations in Northumberland**

International	National	Local
<b>Statutory:</b>		
<p>Scheduled Monuments that form part of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire - Hadrian's Wall, World Heritage Site</p> <p>4 Ramsar Convention wetlands</p> <p>Seven Special Protection Areas (SPAs)</p> <p>14 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)</p>	<p>More than 100 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)</p> <p>The Northumberland National Park</p> <p>North Pennines AONB</p> <p>Northumberland Coast AONB</p> <p>18 Registered Parks and Gardens</p> <p>Nearly 1,000 Scheduled Monument and more than 5,500 Grade I, II* and II Listed Buildings</p> <p>9 National Nature Reserves</p> <p>3 Marine Conservation Zones extending landward of Mean Low Water</p>	<p>More than 200 Local Wildlife and Geological Sites (LWGSs)</p> <p>23 Local Nature Reserves</p> <p>69 Conservation Areas</p> <p>2 Nature Improvement Areas: (the Border Uplands NIA and the Northumberland Coalfield NIA)</p>
<b>Significant non-statutory:</b>		
<p>The Frontiers of the Roman Empire - Hadrian's Wall, World Heritage Site and its buffer zone - all that does not have a statutory designation in its own right.</p> <p>The North Pennines UNESCO Global Geopark (geological heritage)</p> <p>Some key areas of Ancient and Semi-ancient Woodlands (continually wooded since at least 1600 AD)</p> <p>Northumberland International Dark Sky Park (Kielder area)</p>	<p>The Northumberland Heritage Coast</p> <p>Ancient Woodlands (continually wooded since at least 1600 AD) and ancient and veteran trees</p> <p>Registered Battlefields</p> <p>Certain non-designated archaeology</p>	<p>Locally Listed Heritage Assets and their settings</p> <p>Non-statutory nature reserves managed by Northumberland Wildlife Trust, Woodland Trust RSPB and other local groups</p> <p>Heritage assets recorded on the Historic Environment Record</p>

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Figure 10.1 Natural and built heritage designations



The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies.

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## Policy ENV 1

### Approaches to assessing the impact of development on the natural, historic and built environment (Strategic Policy)

1. The character and significance of Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic and built environments, will be conserved, protected and enhanced by:
  - a. Giving appropriate weight to the statutory purposes and special qualities of the hierarchy of international, national and local designated and non-designated nature and historic conservation assets or sites and their settings, as follows:
    - i. Greatest weight will be given to international and national designations, in accordance with the obligations set out in relevant legislation and advice;
    - ii. Following this, those of regional and local importance;
  - b. Protecting Northumberland's most important landscapes and applying a character-based approach to, as appropriate, manage, protect or plan landscape across the whole County.
2. In applying part (a) above, recognising that:
  - a. Assets or sites with a lower designation or non-designated, can still be irreplaceable, may be nationally important and/or have qualitative attributes that warrant giving these the appropriate protection in-situ;
  - b. Development and associated activity outwith designations can have indirect impacts on the designated assets or sites;
3. An ecosystem approach will be taken that demonstrates an understanding of the significance and sensitivity of the natural resource. ~~Such an approach~~ This should result in a neutral impact on, or net benefit for those ecosystems and the ecosystem services that they provide.

## Biodiversity and geodiversity

- 10.9** The NPPF recognises that moving from a net loss of biodiversity to achieving net gains is central to sustainable development and that contributing to conserving and enhancing the natural environment is a core planning principle<sup>(82)</sup>.

### Impacts on internationally protected sites

- 10.10** Internationally protected sites (SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites) are strictly protected, and the NPPF states that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply to developments that may affect such sites. Where such sites could be affected by development, the impact of this must be assessed in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Nationally important sites are also strictly protected, with the NPPF advising that developments that are likely to affect SSSIs should normally be refused.
- 10.11** Adverse impacts on these key sites can be indirect as well as direct. For example increased foul water discharges to rivers and coastal streams can lead to adverse impacts on coastal SACs and SPAs caused by elevated nutrient levels. Coastal sites, designated for their important bird communities, can also be adversely affected by increased levels of recreational disturbance from the additional population arising from new development.
- 10.12** Increased recreation-related disturbance on the coast is a particular concern because the whole of the Northumberland coast, except for a few hundred metres at Lynemouth, is designated as SSSI because of its nationally important bird populations; and much of it is also designated as SPA and 'Ramsar Site' because of the international importance of some of these populations. In order to ensure that effective mitigation can be provided to address this problem, the Council is introducing the Northumberland Coastal Mitigation Service. This is a developer-funded wardening service that will provide a presence within the designated sites to educate and advise recreational users such as dog walkers, joggers, horse riders and sea anglers as to how they can enjoy the coast without causing excessive disturbance to important bird populations. Where necessary they will also develop a control programme for pirri-pirri bur within the SSSI and SAC dune grasslands<sup>(83)</sup>.
- 10.13** Mitigation for these impacts on coastal designated sites is required for development that will cause a net increase in housing numbers or tourism accommodation within 10 kilometres of the coast. This zone of influence was identified by gathering evidence concerning the point of origin of dog-walkers on the coast, and is explained in more detail in the Coastal Mitigation Service Strategy Document. It is shown on the Local Plan Policies Map. A steering group, comprising representatives of NCC, Natural England, RSPB and the Northumberland Coast AONB Partnership, is being established to oversee the work of the Service and to monitor its effectiveness.

82 Defra is due to publish a revised metric for measuring biodiversity net gain shortly. The Council will consider this, once published, and determine the most appropriate way to take this forward locally.

83 The pirri-pirri bur is a non-native invasive species is spread primarily by people and dogs via its very sticky seed burs, and damages dune grassland plant communities by displacing native vegetation.



**10.14** Currently, contributions to the Coastal Mitigation Service for major developments vary for sites within 7 kilometres of the coast and sites 7 to 10 kilometres from the coast, while minor developments contribute within 7 kilometres of the coast and are exempt beyond that. These bands have been established to ensure that a proportionate approach is taken, as evidence shows that about 75% of dog-walking visits originate within 7 kilometres and a further 15% from 7 to 10 kilometres of the coast<sup>(84)</sup>.

### Regional and local biodiversity considerations

**10.15** Local Wildlife and Geological Sites are non-statutory sites containing habitats or populations of species of at least local importance, although their importance can be considerably greater. These, together with legally protected species and habitats all contribute to the very important ecological resources that occur outside of sites receiving statutory protection and are important material considerations in the determination of planning applications.

**10.16** The government encourages a wide range of people to be involved in how decisions are made about the natural environment in their local area. Northumberland currently includes two Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs): the Northern Upland Chain LNP, including Northumberland National Park and the North Pennines AONB; and the North-East England LNP, comprising a wide coastal and lowland area in Northumberland, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Gateshead, South Tyneside, Sunderland and Durham.

**10.17** A key initiative led by these LNPs is Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs). These are intended to bring about measurable improvements in nature conservation over widely defined areas. Currently within Northumberland, these are:

- **The Northumberland Coalfield NIA**, which aims to tackle the lack of connectivity between wildlife areas over a 41,000 hectare area, straddling the boundaries between Northumberland, Newcastle and North Tyneside. The area presents many opportunities for significant improvements to be achieved, especially through habitat creation linked to existing networks of subsidence wetlands, wet grassland, neutral grasslands, ancient woodlands and coastal habitats. Because of the high human population in this area, there are valuable opportunities to increase people's experience of the natural world; and
- **The Border Uplands NIA**, which covers an area of approximately 100,000 hectares in west Northumberland with just over half in the Northumberland National Park, straddling the two current LNP areas. It contains significant forestry and includes much of the catchment of the Rivers Rede and North Tyne, rivers which support important species and economically important fisheries. Important features include species-rich grassland, broadleaved woodland, upland heath and blanket bog. There are substantial opportunities to improve ecological networks through enhanced management and expansion of a number of moorland related habitat types.

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84 [Further detail on the Coastal Mitigation Service can be found in the Coastal Mitigation Service Strategy Document.](#)

**10.18** Development proposals within the Northumberland Coalfield NIA in particular can contribute to the restoration and enhancement of important habitats. For example, there are over one hundred subsidence wetlands in south east Northumberland formed by the collapse of old mine workings. These are blighted in terms of their development potential due to ground instability and are too wet to farm. However they provide valuable foci for habitat creation being important for a range of wetland wildlife. South east Northumberland also has important corridors of ancient woodland running along its river valleys but these tend to be very narrow with abrupt transition to developed land or intensive agriculture. Providing opportunities for expansion of these woodlands through natural regeneration would similarly be very valuable. Isolated but important fragments of species-rich neutral grassland also survive in this area; securing appropriate management and expanding these areas is also a priority.

**10.19** In order to help tackle the fragmentation and isolation of important habitats within this area, the Council has also developed the South East Northumberland Wildlife Network. This takes the form of a map showing existing areas of semi-natural vegetation; areas where semi-natural vegetation forms an important component in a mosaic of other land uses; and areas where there is a commitment to develop ecologically valuable land uses, such as on restored surface mines. The purpose of recording such features on a map is to show where networks of semi-natural vegetation are strong and so should be protected; where they are weaker and also need to be made more robust through the creation of new habitats adjacent to them; and where areas of important habitats exist in isolation, and so need appropriate habitats to be created to link them into the network. The planning process can play an important role in delivering all of these requirements, so that valuable ecological features are protected and enhanced, and so that people living in the most densely populated part of the county have better access to wildlife-rich areas. The network also identifies the key links into important wildlife corridors in Newcastle and North Tyneside, which must be safeguarded in order to prevent the further isolation of important wildlife areas within the Tyneside conurbation.

## Policy ENV 2

### Biodiversity and geodiversity

1. Development proposals affecting biodiversity and geodiversity will minimise their impact and net gains for biodiversity will be secured by:
  - a. Avoiding significant harm through location and/ or design. Where significant harm cannot be avoided, applicants will be required to demonstrate that adverse impacts will be adequately mitigated or, as a last resort compensated for;
  - b. Securing net biodiversity gains and/or wider ecological enhancements through new development.
2. Where sites are designated for their biodiversity or geodiversity, planning decisions will reflect the hierarchical approach set out in Policy ENV 1.

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3. In the case of Local Wildlife and Geological Sites and Local Nature Reserves:
  - a. Permission will be refused if the proposed development would adversely affect them, unless it can be demonstrated that the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the harm to the nature conservation value of the site.
  - b. Where permission can be granted in accordance with (3)(a) above, planning conditions or obligations will be used to protect the site's remaining nature conservation interest and to provide appropriate compensatory measures for the harm caused.
4. The Council expects the ecosystem approach to be applied in development through:
  - a. The conservation, restoration, enhancement, creation and/or (where appropriate) the re-creation of priority habitats and the habitats of priority species;
  - b. The protection and enhancement of all ecological networks and links to promote migration, dispersal and genetic exchange, including the South East Northumberland Wildlife Network, as shown on the Policies Map, including its linkages with Newcastle and North Tyneside;
  - c. Measures that will buffer or extend existing sites of ecological value, support the development of the Border Uplands Nature Improvement Area and Northumberland Coalfield Nature Improvement Area or contribute to national or local biodiversity objectives;
  - d. Minimising any adverse effects on habitats and species caused by the wider impacts of development and its associated activities including:
    - i. Disturbance; or
    - ii. The inadvertent introduction of non-native species; or
    - iii. Reductions in water quality; or
    - iv. Other forms of pollution that would adversely affect wildlife;

The above to be achieved through precautionary measures including appropriate buffer zones and developer contributions to the Coastal Mitigation Service within zones shown on the Policies Map;
  - e. Maximising opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around development through additional built-in or planted features; and
  - f. Securing the continued management of those ecological features created, restored or enhanced as a result of development.
5. Harm to geological conservation interests will be prevented and, where appropriate, opportunities for public access to those features will be provided.

## Landscape

- 10.20** Northumberland's landscape is rightly considered a jewel in its crown. It has huge variety and great drama. It contains a spectrum of character from the rugged to the picturesque. It derives from the interaction between nature and people. A rich geodiversity, modified by rivers and climate, underpins this landscape. Human activity, from early forest clearance and cultivation through to modern housing and industry, has changed the visible landscape almost beyond recognition from what would have been there in prehistoric times. Today, expansive upland moors and forests sweep into Cumbria and the Scottish Borders. Rolling farmland intersperses with country estates, parkland and wooded valleys. The other great influence, the sea, meets the geology of the land in a spectacular coastline characterised by rocky headlands, islands and sandy bays backed with dunes.
- 10.21** Northumberland's settlements have distinctive architecture using local building stones. The more densely populated, south east area occupies a landscape associated with deep and opencast coal mining, and industries which led to the expansion of fishing villages into larger coastal towns. Early mining restoration led to the creation of some relatively featureless agricultural land across the coastal plain but, through the planning process, recent projects have included more sensitive landscape restoration, improved public access and land art.

## Landscape character

- 10.22** Landscape protection, management and planning is promoted by the European Landscape Convention (ELC), which takes a holistic approach to the landscape recognising that "landscape can exist at any scale from parks, gardens and streetscape to extensive tracts of land". The NPPF requires that all England's diverse landscapes are valued and well looked after, providing a sense of place and identity relevant to people's lives, and that their complex ecosystems function well.
- 10.23** Local Plans are able to embrace this holistic approach by considering what is important about the character of any landscape, i.e. what gives it its sense of place, rather than confining the consideration of landscape to defined areas.
- 10.24** The starting point for the defining landscape character in the County is National Character Area (NCA) profiling carried out by Natural England. Nine of the defined NCAs fall fully or partly in Northumberland<sup>(85)</sup>. The Northumberland Landscape Character Assessment<sup>(86)</sup> sub-divided the nine NCAs into 44 local Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and 108 Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). Each of the 108 LCAs has a detailed profile. In addition, each of the 44 LCTs has, defined for

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85 Information about the National Character Areas can be found at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making/national-character-area-profiles>

86 The Northumberland Landscape Character Assessment, August 2010.

it, key qualities, forces for change and accompanying guidance on how to treat proposals which may impact on these positively or negatively. Each LCT has, assigned to it one of three overarching guiding principles, as follows:

- **Protect** - where conservation of landscape character is required in the face of pressures for change; or
- **Manage** - where some change can be absorbed but changes arising from social, economic and environmental processes need to be managed; or
- **Plan** - where important landscape character has been eroded and strong action is needed to enhance or restore it.

**10.25** The LCTs and their guiding, and more detailed principles provide general guidance on landscape character. Any given LCT covers a relatively large expanse of land within which there will be local variations. More detailed assessments of local landscapes exist for some areas - notably within the two AONB management plans. A detailed, locally focussed character assessment will need to be carried out in association with proposals for certain types of development.

**10.26** Also of significance in assessing the landscape surrounding a development is the Historic Landscape Characterisation, which identifies and interprets the varying historic character within an area, adding to the understanding of how the landscape as a whole has evolved.

### Policy ENV 3

#### Landscape

1. The contribution of the landscape to Northumberland's environment, economy and communities will be recognised in assessing development proposals, as follows:
  - a. Proposals affecting the character of the landscape will be expected to conserve and enhance important elements of that character; in such cases, design and access statements should refer, as appropriate, to Northumberland Landscape Character Assessment and other relevant studies, guidance or management plans;
  - b. Great weight will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the special qualities and the statutory purposes of the Northumberland National Park, the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
  - c. Within those parts of the North Northumberland Heritage Coast, which are not part of the Northumberland Coast AONB, consideration will be given to the special character of the area and the importance of its conservation;
  - d. Where applicable, the contribution of the Northumberland landscape to the understanding and enjoyment of heritage assets will be taken into account;
  - e. In assessing development proposals in relation to landscape character:

- i. The guiding principles and other relevant guidelines set out in the Northumberland Landscape Character Assessment will be applied;
  - ii. The possibility of wider impacts on the landscape, townscape or seascape or of other significant impacts on the environmental resource will be assessed through the proportionate use of landscape and visual impact assessment;
  - iii. The impact on the setting and surroundings of the County's historic towns and villages will be assessed, ensuring that new development on the edge of settlements does not harm the landscape character of the settlement edge and, where possible that it has a net positive impact;
  - iv. The Historic Landscape Characterisation will be applied;
  - v. The potential impact that small scale development can have on the landscape in sensitive rural settings will be assessed; and
  - vi. Any net negative cumulative impacts of development on landscape character will be assessed.
- f. Where it is considered that landscape character may be adversely affected, or aspects of this character that warrant protection would be degraded as a result of a proposed development, then the development will only be permitted if it can be clearly demonstrated:
- i. How the harmful effects will be satisfactorily mitigated or, as a last resort, satisfactorily compensated; and
  - ii. There are significant national or, outside designated landscapes, regional or local planning reasons for allowing the development, and these considerations outweigh the landscape considerations.

## Tranquillity and dark skies

**10.27** Northumberland was ranked first out of 87 authorities in terms of tranquillity, according to a Campaign to Protect Rural England study undertaken in 2006. The Council recognises tranquillity as a distinctive characteristic of Northumberland's remote countryside including areas around and beyond the National Park, as well as the two AONBs, and will seek to avoid urbanising effects in these areas. Such effects also include light pollution. Seeking a reversal of the trend for increased night time brightness through decisions on development can help to maintain the quality of life in the County.

**10.28** In recognition of the significance of a particularly large expanse of dark skies, Northumberland National Park, along with Kielder Water and Forest Park has been designated as Northumberland International Dark Sky Park. At 1,481 square kilometres it is also Europe's largest area of protected night sky, and the fourth largest in the world. Due to its pristine skies it was awarded gold tier designation



by the International Dark Sky Association, making it officially the best place in England for people to go to enjoy the heavens. Other areas, including the North Pennines AONB, actively promote dark sky tourism through initiatives such as 'dark sky discovery sites'.

### Policy ENV 4

#### Tranquillity, dark skies and a sense of rurality

1. In order to limit the urbanising effects on open countryside landscapes, natural habitats and the settings of historic / cultural assets, and to conserve or enhance tranquillity, development proposals will be required to demonstrate that:
  - a. The level of noise, traffic and light generated as a result of the development during construction and thereafter are minimised and dark skies maintained;
  - b. Intrusive external features, such as hard surfaces, car parking and urban-style boundary treatments are minimised;
  - c. Where a sense of openness of the open countryside is a key quality of the local landscape character, that this will not be reduced;
  - d. The quiet enjoyment of the landscape is maintained.
2. During construction and thereafter, development should not result in a net adverse impact on the level of dark skies and where appropriate improvements should be sought, most especially in or affecting Northumberland Dark Sky Park but also in the North Pennines and Northumberland Coast AONBs and other areas where dark skies can be experienced, including some small settlements. Exterior lighting on developments, which has the potential to impact upon the dark skies should be designed in accordance with the latest guidance.

### National landscape designations

**10.29** There are three areas wholly or partly within Northumberland which are nationally important designated landscapes. The Northumberland National Park and the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) are wholly within the County. The North Pennines AONB straddles the boundaries of Northumberland, Cumbria and Durham. The Northumberland National Park, while entirely within Northumberland, is a separate planning authority with its own planning policies.

**10.30** The strong landscape and ecosystem connections between the National Park and the rest of Northumberland mean that great importance must be attached to the County Council's statutory responsibility to only allow development outside the

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boundaries of the National Park that does not impact on its special qualities and statutory purposes. The National Park has a management plan, as well as its own Local Plan, natural environment vision and landscape guidance policy documents. Under its statutory duties, the County Council will have full regard to the implications of these documents when making decisions on planning applications.

## Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

**10.31** There are two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, (AONBs) in Northumberland, the Northumberland Coast and North Pennines. The NPPF states that, within AONBs great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and natural beauty, as they, alongside National Parks, have the highest status of protection in relation to their special qualities. It is clear that planning applications for major developments in AONBs should be refused where they would adversely impact on these special qualities, except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest, and subject to three tests:

- The need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations and the impact of permitting or refusing it upon the local economy;
- The cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the AONB or meeting the need in some other way; and
- Any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which these could be moderated.

**10.32** Although there is a national definition of 'major development' <sup>(87)</sup>, the Council has discretion, within AONBs, to vary this. Therefore, as set out in Planning Practice Guidance, whether a proposed development in an AONB should be treated as a major development will be a matter for the Planning Authority, taking into account the proposal in question and the local context.

**10.33** To assist in the conservation and enhancement of the AONBs, AONB partnerships have been formed comprising local authorities, statutory agencies, voluntary or community organisations and interest groups and local people. The partnerships prepare and keep under review a statutory AONB Management Plan for each area, and prepare guidance documents. The Management Plans inform the policy of Councils towards the AONBs within their boundaries.

## Northumberland Coast AONB

**10.34** The Northumberland Coast AONB comprises a narrow strip of coast between Spittal and the Coquet Estuary, and covers a distance of 64 kilometres. However, it is only around 4 kilometres wide at its widest point and covers just 138 square kilometres. It is best known for its sweeping sandy beaches, rolling dunes, rocky headlands

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87 The definition of major development used generally comprises, for housing, 10 or more homes or a site of 0.5 hectares or more; for other development, an additional 1,000 square metres of floor space or 1 hectare or more.

and isolated islands, and contains numerous nationally and internationally important designated sites. The landscape contains scattered settlements, imposing castles and extensive sea and inland views.

- 10.35** The area has a population of around 12,500; it contains a string of living, working communities, including North Sunderland / Seahouses, Longhoughton, Lesbury / Alnmouth, Bamburgh, Beadnell, Embleton, Craster and Warkworth, as well as several smaller villages and hamlets. Traditional agriculture and fishing often sits alongside more recent employment types, many of which are connected with tourism. Communities and businesses within the area have links with Berwick-upon-Tweed, Amble, Alnwick, Belford, as well as places further afield.
- 10.36** Visitor numbers, in particular, place considerable pressure on the key components of the AONB's special qualities. Without a careful, sustainable management approach, conflict could easily result, so threatening the unique environment and possibly the functioning of the local coastal economy and communities.
- 10.37** An important local issue within the AONB is the proliferation of second and holiday homes, which while providing some economic benefits, also contribute to settlements along the coast losing their sense of community, as a large number of properties become unoccupied and services do not operate at certain times of the year. Recognising this issue, the North Northumberland Coast Neighbourhood Plan restricts the use of new market housing to ensure that each new dwelling is occupied only as a principal residence.

### Policy ENV 5

#### Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

1. The special qualities of the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be conserved and enhanced, having regard to the current AONB Management Plan and locally specific design guidance.
2. When assessing development proposals affecting the AONB particular considerations will include:
  - a. The sensitivity of local landscapes and their capacity to accommodate new development, including temporary structures such as caravans and chalets;
  - b. Intervisibility between the AONB, the seascape and the landscape beyond, including the Kyloe and Cheviot Hills;
  - c. Interdependency between the special qualities of the landscape and the marine and coastal environment, including the internationally and nationally important nature conservation sites and associated ecosystems, geology, species and habitats; and
  - d. The need to sustain and, where appropriate, enhance:

- i. The significance of heritage assets, including any contribution made by their setting;
  - ii. A sense of remoteness, wildness and open views and dark skies;
  - iii. The natural functioning of the coastline; and
  - iv. A clear distinction between settlements and open countryside.
- 3. As far as possible, it will be recognised that the AONB is a living, working area by allowing small scale development where it does not impact on the AONB's special qualities including those in criteria (2) a. to d. above. In particular, in assessing development proposals, consideration will be given to the extent to which the development:
  - a. Adds to the availability of permanently occupied and affordable housing to meet local needs; and
  - b. Supports the growth and diversification of the rural economy through the expansion of existing businesses and the development of new businesses.
- 4. The conversion of redundant farm buildings to appropriate uses will be supported, but the scale and form of the farm steading will be protected and new built development will not normally be supported.
- 5. Major development will not be supported except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated to be in the public interest; and that there is no alternative location which could absorb the development without a significant adverse impact on the AONB.
- 6. Where the nature or location of a development proposal necessitates detailed consideration of its impact on the special qualities of the AONB, a full planning application will be required.

## North Pennines AONB

**10.38** The North Pennines AONB covers an area of 1,983 square kilometres. Approximately a third of the AONB is within the County, the remainder in the counties of Durham and Cumbria, and North Yorkshire. The North Pennines landscape has a highly distinctive character which has been shaped by early settlers who cleared the forests, followed by generations of farming, a long history of mining for lead and other minerals, quarrying, moorland management and more recent development. Part of its unique quality reflects the retention of a sense of wildness, remoteness and tranquillity. The significance of the geology of the AONB, reflected, in part, in its UNESCO Global Geopark status, is another key element of the landscape character.

- 10.39** The area has an open character, including significant areas of open moorland, which in the context of the rest of England can be considered relatively remote, tranquil and free from large scale visual intrusion. This sense of wildness and remoteness gives the area much of its character. The settlements are found in the valleys of the Derwent, the East and West Allen and the South Tyne, with only isolated hamlets and scattered farmsteads elsewhere. The landscape is the result partly of the underlying geology but also of the interaction between people and nature over thousands of years – deforestation, hill farming and a long history of mining for lead and other minerals which brought enclosure of the land as well as creating a legacy of buildings, structures and landscape features such as hushes. Other special qualities of the area include truly dark night skies, species rich hay meadows, and internationally important birdlife.
- 10.40** There is not a high level of development pressure within the Northumberland part of the North Pennines AONB. Indeed the population of the Allen Valleys was much higher in the past than it is now. It is important however to seek to sustain the local population, while recognising that even a single development which is out of scale or character with the area, including those beyond the AONB boundary, can have a widespread impact due to the open character of much of the AONB.
- 10.41** The visitor economy is key to sustaining the AONB area. Accessing moorland areas is clearly an integral part of such visits with activities ranging from traditional grouse shooting to many new walking, riding and cycling opportunities. Clearly, the proper management of impacts of these activities on the landscape and wildlife is vital, avoiding heavy concentrations of these activities can lead to structures such as stone roads being put in place in remote locations and, without careful planning, these could damage the special landscape qualities of the AONB.

### Policy ENV 6

#### North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

1. The special qualities of the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be conserved and enhanced, having regard to the current AONB Management Plan and locally specific guidance.
2. In assessing development proposals in and around the AONB particular considerations will include:
  - a. The openness of the landscape and its sensitivity to development;
  - b. Inter-visibility between the AONB and areas to its north and east;
  - c. Interdependency between the landscape quality and the natural functioning of the environment taking into account internationally and nationally important nature conservation sites and associated species and habitats, and the geodiversity;
  - d. The need to sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets, including any contribution made by their setting; and

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- e. A sense of remoteness, wildness, tranquillity and dark skies.
3. Small scale development will be supported where it does not impact on the AONB's special qualities, including those in criteria 2 a to e above. In particular, in assessing development proposals, consideration will be given to the extent to which the development:
    - a. Adds to the availability of permanently occupied and affordable housing to meet local needs;
    - b. Supports the growth and diversification of the rural economy through the expansion of existing businesses and the development of new businesses;
    - c. Reuses redundant buildings that contribute to the character of the area; and
    - d. Applies the most up to date design guidance, recognising that a variety of materials, including timber, have their place in the local vernacular and could contribute to lower cost, more energy efficient buildings.
  4. Major development will not be supported except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated to be in the public interest; and that there is no alternative location which could absorb the development without a significant adverse impact on the AONB.
  5. Where the nature or location of a development proposal necessitates detailed consideration of its impact on the special qualities of the AONB, a full planning application will be required.
  6. Development proposals should avoid any urbanising effects on the qualities of remoteness and tranquillity that characterise the North Pennines AONB, by avoiding bright lighting or noise-generating uses, unless there are other strong planning reasons to do so and it can be demonstrated that all possible measures have been taken to minimise these effects.
  7. Stone tracks across moorland, for non-agricultural purposes, will not be approved on deep peat areas that are or have the potential to be blanket bog. New or upgraded tracks elsewhere involving moorland may be supported if:
    - a. it will result in net biodiversity or landscape gain; and
    - b. there is no alternative existing track or potential route that is less harmful or visually intrusive; and
    - c. the least environmentally damaging construction methods are used; and
    - d. maximum potential recreational benefits are accrued.



### Historic and built environment

- 10.42** The NPPF looks to Local Plans to set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, while also looking more widely at the social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring, taking full account of local character and distinctiveness.
- 10.43** Northumberland's historic environment has been shaped by a combination of factors, which include the economic value of its agriculture, fishing, minerals and other natural resources; its position as a national and maritime frontier; its importance for north-south communication between England and Scotland; and its remoteness.
- 10.44** Northumberland's historic legacy is the setting for people's lives; it is where they live, work, shop and enjoy leisure and recreation activities. It is also an important draw for tourists. Many of the County's heritage assets are iconic symbols of Northumberland. They have intrinsically shaped and defined the historic character of North East England.
- 10.45** Northumberland's physical and cultural heritage is manifest in well-preserved historic towns, buildings, archaeological sites, battlefields, designed and historic landscapes, many of international importance. Designated assets include the Frontiers of the Roman Empire: Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings. All recorded heritage assets are included on the Historic Environment Record, which is supplemented by a range of local studies and resources, including those locally important non-designated heritage assets. Some locally important assets have been identified through local lists. The County is also rich in undesignated archaeological sites. It is not always possible to understand the significance of heritage assets, particularly archaeological sites, without further investigation. Where potential heritage assets have not been included on a local list they will be assessed according to the criteria set out for local listing in Historic England's Guidance Note 'Local Heritage Listing: Historic England Advice Note 7', or subsequent national guidance.
- 10.46** Currently there are over 150 items, which are drawn from Grade I and II\* Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens and structural Scheduled Monuments, on Historic England's current Heritage at Risk Register in Northumberland. Historic England assesses whether assets should be included on the basis of condition and, where applicable, occupancy (or use). They are removed from the Register when they have been brought into a stable condition, their future secured, and where appropriate, occupied or in use. There is no comprehensive information on Grade II Listed Buildings or Structures at risk. However, given the much greater numbers of buildings and structures falling within this category, it follows that there will be substantially greater numbers of them 'at risk'.

## Policy ENV 7

### Historic environment and heritage assets

1. Development proposals will be assessed and decisions made that ensure the conservation and enhancement of the significance, quality and integrity of Northumberland's heritage assets and their settings.
2. Decisions affecting a heritage asset will be based on a sound understanding of the significance of that asset and the impact of any proposal upon that significance, involving:
  - a. Use of the Historic Environment Record, the Historic Landscape Characterisation Study, any relevant character appraisals or design guides, and/or other relevant records to help inform decision making;
  - b. A requirement for applicants to provide a heritage statement; describing the significance of the asset and any contribution made to this significance by its setting, and assessing the impact of the proposal on this significance.
3. Development proposals, which will affect a site of archaeological interest, or a site which has the potential to be of archaeological interest, will require an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.
4. Development proposals that would result in substantial harm to or total loss of the significance of designated heritage assets will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that would outweigh that harm or loss, ~~A less than substantial public benefit could only justify such harm or loss if or~~ all of the following apply are met:
  - a. The nature of the heritage asset would prevent all reasonable uses of the site; and
  - b. No viable use of the asset itself could be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that would enable its conservation; and
  - c. Conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership would demonstrably not be possible; and
  - d. The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.
5. Where development proposals would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing the optimum use that is viable and justifiable.
6. Development proposals that affect non-designated heritage assets shall require a balanced judgement, taking into account the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. Where, in the case of a non-designated

heritage asset of archaeological interest, the significance is equivalent to that of a scheduled monument, the policy approach for designated heritage assets will be applied.

7. If, following the above assessment, a decision is made that will result in the loss of all or any part of a heritage asset, or a reduction in its significance, developers will be required to record and advance understanding of the asset through appropriate compensatory measures. The results of such measures should be made publicly accessible through appropriate archiving and publication. The ability to create full records in this way should not, in itself, be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be supported.
8. Development proposals that affect heritage assets at risk (national or local) should demonstrate how they will be brought into repair, or appropriately conserved, and the decline halted (and preferably reversed) in a timely manner. Where the asset at risk is a vacant building of permanent and substantial construction (i.e. not a ruin that should remain so), the proposal should secure its reuse in a manner consistent with its conservation.
9. Decisions affecting historic places and sites should take account of the individual and cumulative effect on the visitor economy, the vitality of the area and the quality of place.

### Frontiers of the Roman Empire: Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site

**10.47** World Heritage Sites are places of 'Outstanding Universal Value' (OUV), recognised as such under the terms of the 1972 World Heritage Convention. The trans-national Frontiers of the Roman Empire - Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site (WHS) was inscribed on the List of World Heritage by UNESCO in 1987. The section of the WHS that falls within Northumberland, the National Park, and indeed England, is only part of the far larger trans-national WHS.

**10.48** The NPPF regards World Heritage Sites in the same way as all important designated heritage assets when proposals may cause substantial harm or loss to their significance.

**10.49** Hadrian's Wall, with a total length of 118 kilometres, was built around the year 122 AD on the orders of the Emperor Hadrian, at the northernmost limits of the Roman province of Britannia. It constituted the main element in a controlled military zone across northern Britain. The Wall was supplemented by the ditch and banks, including the Vallum to the south of the Wall, supporting forts, camps and other features in a wide area to the north and south, linked by an extensive road network.

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- 10.50** While a WHS is an international designation, it is the responsibility of national governments to ensure that the Outstanding Universal Value is maintained. However the designation itself brings no additional statutory controls over and above those afforded through the planning system and through other designations that cover elements of the WHS. Much of the length of the Wall and its associated forts and surrounding settlements are however scheduled monuments, and protected as such. The planning controls that apply to these assets are an important part of the recognition and protection of the OUV of the World Heritage Site. There are remaining elements, however (often the less obvious surface features) which, while being part of the Roman frontier, are not scheduled or part of the WHS. They rely for their protection on the application of criteria-based policies and a precautionary approach applied across the WHS itself and its setting. A Management Plan<sup>(88)</sup> informs such decisions, as well as the day to day management of the whole extent of the Frontier and its setting.
- 10.51** The key objective within the Hadrian's Wall Management Plan, is to secure the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the Outstanding Universal Value of the WHS. The OUV is described in an agreed statement and covers matters such as the historic (Roman archaeological) significance and the group value of features within the WHS. The Management Plan also covers the educational and recreational benefits associated with the Wall and its associated assets.
- 10.52** In order to protect and conserve the OUV of the WHS, heritage impact assessments of the effect on the OUV of development proposals, within or adjacent to the site and its wider setting, may be required. These should follow ICOMOS Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties<sup>(89)</sup>, and advice should be sought from expert bodies, as necessary.

## Policy ENV 8

### Frontiers of the Roman Empire - Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site

1. The Council supports measures to protect and enhance Hadrian's Wall in accordance with the Scheduled Monument designation of much of its length and associated assets. Development that would result in substantial harm or loss of the significance of the WHS or assets within it will not be supported unless the exceptional circumstances set out in Policy ENV 7(4) apply.
2. Development proposals throughout the extent of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire: Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site (WHS) ~~or its~~ setting should , or defined Buffer Zone, where possible, seek opportunities to sustain and better reveal the

88 Hadrian's Wall Management Plan can be found at:  
<https://hadrianswallcountry.co.uk/hadrians-wall-management-plan>

89 [https://www.icomos.org/world\\_heritage/HIA\\_20110201.pdf](https://www.icomos.org/world_heritage/HIA_20110201.pdf)

significance of its Outstanding Universal Value as set out in the adopted Statement of OUV and informed by World Heritage Site Management Plan, including seeking to protect and, where appropriate, enhance:

- a. Evidence of the scale and complexity of the Wall and its associated frontier features;
- b. The group value of features, including features beyond the World Heritage Site;
- c. The setting; and
- d. Communal values including educational and recreational.

### Conservation Areas

**10.53** Conservation areas are ‘areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’ (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, s.72. They are designated by the local planning authority using local criteria. Under s.69 of the same Act, the Council must, from time to time, review which parts of the County are worthy of conservation designation.

**10.54** Conservation area designation remains the principal means by which local authorities can apply conservation policies to a particular area. The Council has a duty, in exercising its planning powers, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of conservation areas. In considering these factors, the main sources of information will be conservation area character appraisals and any design guidance relevant to the conservation of the local historic environment. The Council also has a duty, from time to time, to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas, and consult local people on them.

**10.55** Given that conservation areas are located predominantly in towns and villages, their well-being can be significantly harmed if the condition of their building stock deteriorates. The management of development in conservation areas, and affecting their settings, acts as a means of protecting and enhancing the intrinsic qualities of Northumberland’s towns and villages.

## Policy ENV 9

### Conservation Areas

1. Within a conservation area, or where its setting may be affected:
  - a. Opportunities will be sought to, and development will be encouraged that will, help preserve or enhance the character or appearance and/or reinforce its local distinctiveness and/or better reveal its significance;
  - b. Development that would lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) any aspect of a Conservation Area that contributes to the reasons that it was so designated, will not be supported unless the exceptional circumstances set out in Policy ENV 7(4) apply; if the harm is less than substantial, this will be weighed against any public benefit and any compensatory contribution that the same development may make to part 1(a) above;
  - c. Development must respect existing architectural and historic character and cultural associations, by having regard to:
    - i. Historic plot boundaries, layouts, densities and patterns of development; and
    - ii. The design, positioning, grouping, form, massing, scale, features, detailing and the use of materials in existing buildings and structures; and
    - iii. The contribution made by the public realm, private spaces and other open areas, including hard and soft landscape features, trees, hedges, walls, fences, watercourses and surfacing.
2. Development on public and private open spaces that are integral to the special character of a conservation area or form part of its setting, will not be supported if there would be substantial harm or total loss of significance, applying part 1(b) above and, where the harm would be less than substantial, the development should retain the openness and create a significant public benefit relating to the optimum viable use of the open space. Such spaces include those which:
  - a. Contribute to the area's special historic interest;
  - b. Are important spatially and visually to the landscape or townscape qualities of the conservation area;
  - c. Provide views or vistas into, out of or within the conservation area.
3. Development involving the demolition of buildings or structures in a conservation area will be granted consent if they do not make a positive contribution to the conservation area's special interest. Where they do make such a contribution:
  - a. It must be demonstrated that the structural condition of the building or structure is beyond reasonable economic repair; and



- b. There should be approved detailed plans for the redevelopment of the site and a contract should have been entered into for the implementation of that redevelopment.
4. Where the nature, scale or form of a development, or its position within the conservation area, necessitates detailed consideration of the significance of and impact on the special character or appearance of the conservation area, or on individual heritage assets within it, a full planning application will be required.

### Supporting the conservation of heritage assets

**10.56** In order to support the positive strategy for the historic environment, when assessing development proposals, the Council will pro-actively conserve and enhance heritage assets throughout the County. Assets that are characteristic of (or even unique to) Northumberland, in the context of its history, cultural development or landscape, will not necessarily be limited to those that are nationally Listed or formally designated, but may be identified locally.

**10.57** A key priority will be the removal from **Historic England's at Risk Register** of any Grade I, Grade II\* buildings and structures or Scheduled Monuments identified therein, while avoiding assets falling into the risk category.

### Supporting the conservation of heritage assets commitments

This will be achieved through a Council commitment to work with partners, including the owners of assets, Historic England and communities and could also help secure external funding. Such partnership working could also help identify other heritage assets vulnerable to becoming at risk including those that are nationally listed at Grade II or locally identified assets.

The Council will also work with developers if their proposals will impact on the significance of heritage assets, not only to avoid and mitigate any negative impact, but also to ensure that the development sympathetically integrates with, and responds positively to, established character, where possible reinforcing local distinctiveness through the quality of its design and the use of materials.

In addition to the above, the Council will, as appropriate, work in partnership with Historic England, other stakeholders and communities to direct resources towards:

- a. Preparing, updating and acting on Conservation Character Appraisals and Conservation Area Management Plans;
- b. Designating additional Conservation Areas, where justified;
- c. Protecting areas within Conservation Areas, if evidence shows that permitted development rights are causing cumulative harm, through Article 4 Directions;
- d. Assisting local groups in compiling local lists of heritage assets of local significance;

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- e. Preparing or supporting master plans or design briefs covering areas of major change that will affect heritage assets;
- f. Promoting and supporting bids for external funding to conserve and enhance the historic fabric of towns or villages.

## 11. Water Environment

### Introduction

- 11.1** Water systems have shaped the topography, landscape and ecology of Northumberland. The same systems supply water to the County's homes and business and the same systems need to be able to cope with outflows of waste water from these homes and businesses.
- 11.2** The natural water environment, comprises the water table, springs, river systems, inland water bodies and the sea. All subject to pressures from human activity and associated development. This includes demands on water supply and drainage, modifications to watercourses, the effects of pollution on water quality and water-based ecosystems, flood risk, erosion and the results of climate change.
- 11.3** Therefore, as with all aspects of the environment, sustainable planning and design must always consider the demands and effects of development on the water environment. The water environment policies reflect the increasing attention given to ensuring:
- The protection of water supply and quality;
  - The protection and where appropriate the restoration of the natural form and function of the river environment; and
  - That there is maximum resistance and resilience to flood risk.
- 11.4** The policies on the water environment will deliver a number of the plan's strategic objectives, particularly those that seek to protect the environment, mitigate the effects of climate change, and prudently manage the natural resources. Good water quality, water supply and sewerage facilities are vital to maintaining and creating sustainable communities.
- 11.5** The Council has worked closely with all relevant agencies and water authorities to achieve agreement on the policies below. They also seek to take on board the wider concerns of residents and businesses regarding flooding in particular.

### Water quality

- 11.6** Northumberland has some of the only few 'high status' surface water bodies in England.<sup>(90)</sup> They support protected species like the Freshwater Pearl Mussel that rely on the exceptional water quality to exist at all. The Council and relevant statutory bodies would resist any proposed development affecting the high status of these water bodies. This Local Plan sets out policies which will: protect the water environment from pollution; maintain quality; and improve water resources, systems,

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90 Water bodies include ground waters, as well as all surface water bodies, including lakes, streams, rivers, ponds, wetlands and artificial features such as reservoirs. The precise definition of what constitutes a water body revolves around its hydrological function within the water environment. Advice on this will be sought from the Environment Agency where necessary.

natural processes and environments, which do not currently meet European and national standards. The impacts of new development need to be managed to avoid compromising the quality of river and coastal systems, thereby protecting communities from the risk and effects of water pollution and environmental deterioration.

**11.7** The European Water Framework Directive 2000 seeks to ensure that all water bodies achieve 'good status'. In line with this, the Environment Agency is aiming to achieve good status in at least 60% of waters by 2021 and in as many waters as possible by 2027. The Directive also established the requirement for river basin management plans.<sup>(91)</sup> It seeks a common, consistent approach to the management of the water environment. Under the Directive each country has to:

- Prevent deterioration in the status of aquatic ecosystems, protect them and improve the ecological condition of waters;
- Aim to achieve at least good status for all water bodies by set deadlines;
- Meet the requirements of Water Framework Directive Protected Areas;
- Promote sustainable use of water as a natural resource;
- Conserve habitats and species that depend directly on water;
- Progressively reduce or phase out the release of individual pollutants or groups of pollutants that present a significant threat to the aquatic environment;
- Progressively reduce the pollution of groundwater and prevent or limit the entry of pollutants; and
- Contribute to mitigating the effects of floods and droughts.

**11.8** The Council has a major contributory role in relation to the above national aims, through the policies in this Plan and its decisions on individual development proposals. The complexity of the water environment in the County means that assessing existing issues, measuring progress towards eliminating them or achieving enhancements, and gauging how the wider ecosystem may be affected, can be difficult:

- All areas of water that are above ground are required to have "good ecological status" and "good chemical status". Given the huge variations in water bodies, measuring these is complex, reflecting differing 'hydromorphology' – how the bodies of water move and flow in the context of the rocks, sediments etc. that are present. There will be areas where higher standards can and must be set, than others. This would be the case, for example, where drinking water comes straight from the water body or where there is a risk that sensitive areas will be flooded.
- In the case of groundwater, the presumption is that it should not be polluted at all. This means that the EU imposes a prohibition on direct discharges to groundwater, and (to cover indirect discharges) a requirement to monitor groundwater bodies for changes in chemical composition.

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91 River Basin Management Plans are produced by the Environment Agency and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency. Northumberland is covered by the Northumbria River Basin Management Plan and the Solway Tweed River Basin Management Plan.

- The directive also sees the extraction of water as reducing the quality if it reaches the point where reduction adversely affects ecosystems.
- 11.9** By 2012, just under half of the inland water bodies in Northumberland were achieving 'good' status. Where meeting the (originally set) 2015 target has not been possible under Cycle 1 of the Directive, it does allow, subject to certain criteria, the revised (Cycle 2) target date of 2021 to be used or at the very latest 2027. River Basin Management Plans action plans have been assisting in bringing the remaining water bodies up to standard and seeking to achieve this by the 2021 target.
- 11.10** This Local Plan recognises agriculture as a major contributor to the Northumberland economy. It covers extensive areas of the County and straddles innumerable water bodies. Inevitably, therefore, agriculture is one of the main sources of water pollution, reflecting its infrastructure and practices. For this reason, when agricultural development requires planning permission, every effort will be made to ensure that the development does not result in a deterioration in the quality of water in affected rivers, streams, ponds or underground water sources. Where possible improvements will be sought.
- 11.11** Related to the overall issue of water quality is the quality of bathing waters – i.e. beaches, lakes or ponds that are used by a large number of bathers. A separate EU Directive on Bathing Water requires Member States to monitor and assess the bathing water and inform the public about bathing water quality. In Northumberland, there are 12 designated Bathing Waters, where standards, set out in the revised Bathing Water Directive, must be achieved by the end of the decade. Planning decisions must therefore make sure that the network of sewerage facilities and pumping stations associated with new development have sufficient capacity and will not exacerbate any outflows (whether from normal conditions or storm event) affecting these Bathing Waters. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) can help with this and also contribute to enhancements of Bathing Waters.
- 11.12** Water quality is not just about water for drinking or bathing, it is about maintaining water bodies as valuable habitats. The effective management of the water environment is therefore integral to the ecosystem approach advocated across Northumberland's natural environment and, by implication, to the provision and maintenance of strategic and local green infrastructure.
- 11.13** Within Northumberland, it is recognised that abandoned coal mining has resulted in poor quality water (minewater) which could potentially impact on ground and surface waters. Within the minerals section of the Local Plan Policy MIN 1 deals with ground and surface water quality, flow and water abstraction issues, requiring applicants to consider the potential for the proposal to affect the flow, quality and quantity of ground and surface water supplies and include measures to prevent water pollution.
- 11.14** The challenge for the policies within the Local Plan and development management process is to maintain current water quality, in all its aspects, and improve areas that are not currently meeting required European and national standards. It is vital that discharges from new developments do not compromise the quality of river and

coastal waters, nor should development be put at risk from water pollution. Other policies within the plan will also contribute to this aim – not least Policy WAT 3, which seeks to minimise surface water run-off and the risk of sewer flooding.

- 11.15** It is also important to recognise that, under the Water Framework Directive, any development schemes where impact on a water environment is a possibility must result in improvements.

## Policy WAT 1

### Water quality

1. In assessing development proposals, the Council will seek to ensure that all water bodies achieve 'good status' by 2021 in terms of their ecological balance and other relevant factors, preventing any deterioration in that status. This will be achieved in line with the Water Framework Directive and/or the Bathing Water Directive, having regard to local river basin management plans and the findings of the Northumberland Water Cycle Study, applying the ecosystem approach, through:
  - a. Supporting development and/or landscape measures that maintain, or may result in enhanced water quality, including bathing water;
  - b. Ensuring that any development where impact on a water environment is a possibility, will bring about an improvement to that environment;
  - c. Not supporting development if it would have an adverse impact on water quality in surface water bodies or it could disrupt the ground water movement or affect its chemical balance, including any wider impacts, taking full account, where appropriate, of the presence of minewater;
  - d. Avoiding any reduction in the 'high status' of certain surface water bodies in the County, giving very close scrutiny to any development that may affect them; and
  - e. Assessing the effects of development on designated Bathing Waters.



### Water supply and sewerage

**11.16** In accordance with national planning policy, there is a need to ensure that the expected level and distribution of proposed development is deliverable and will not result in water supply and sewerage infrastructure issues that cannot be resolved.

**11.17** In terms of **water supply**, Northumberland is identified as an area of predominantly 'low water stress'<sup>(92)</sup> and most of the river catchments in Northumberland are classified as having 'water available'. There are exceptions to this, mentioned below.

**11.18** The supply of water in Northumberland is split into two 'water resource zones' (WRZs), shown in Figure 11.1:

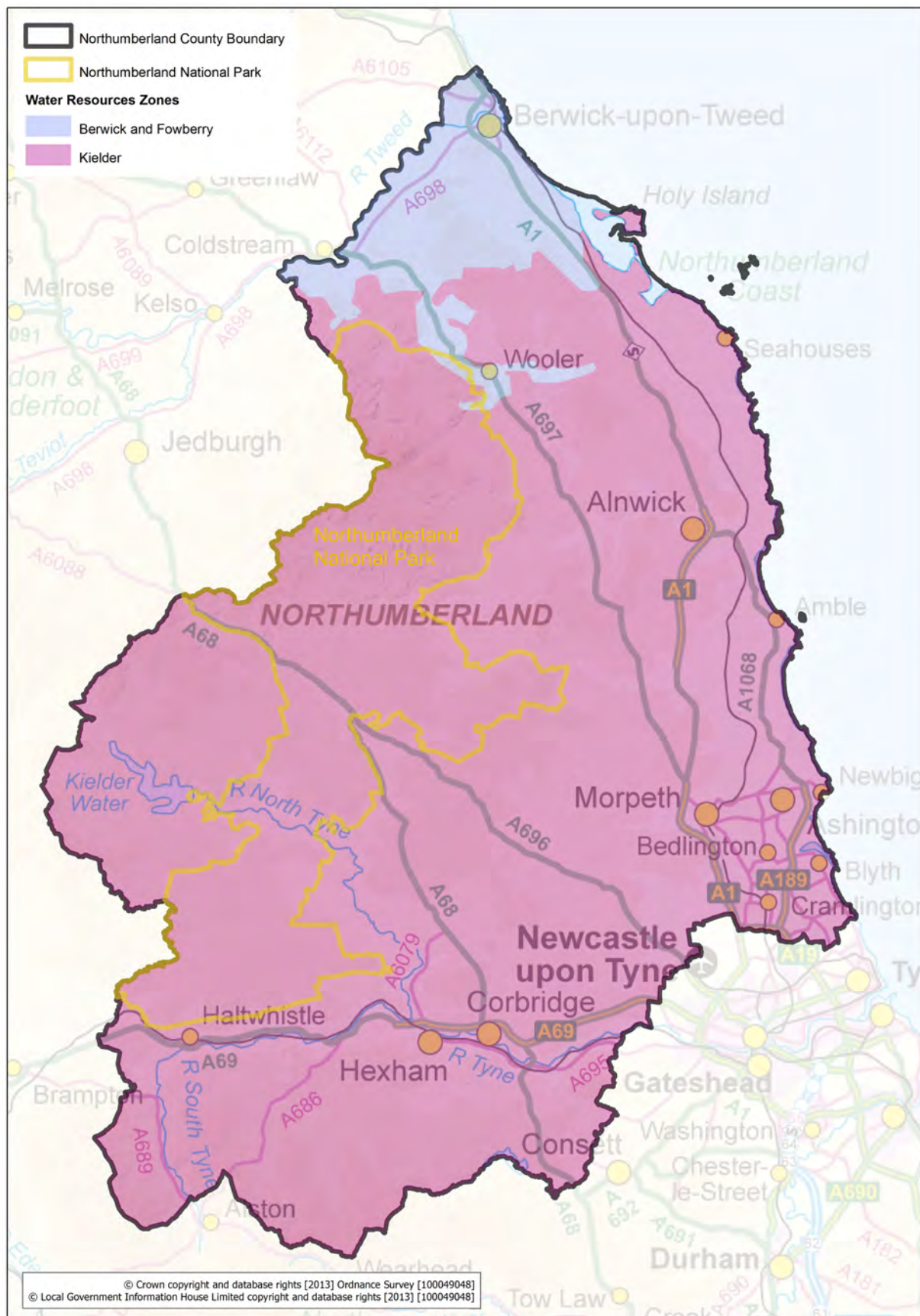
- **The Kielder WRZ** serves the vast majority of Northumberland. Most development coming forward in this zone would be capable of being supplied without problem, although, within the area, the rivers Coquet and Font have been identified as experiencing some water resource availability issues.
- **The Berwick and Fowberry WRZ** serves the far north of Northumberland and whilst there is generally an adequate water supply, shortages have been experienced during periods of high demand. Work has been undertaken by Northumbrian Water to improve this situation and ensure adequate supplies for existing users and new development, as well as protecting the sources themselves. Further action may include improving infrastructure, demand management and leakage control. Northumbrian Water's Water Resources Management Plan includes the current position and future plans to ensure that there is a sustainable water resource for the Berwick-upon-Tweed area.<sup>(93)</sup>

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92 Water stress occurs when the demand for water exceeds the available amount during a certain period or when poor quality restricts its use. See Environment Agency, Water Stressed Areas - Final Classification, July 2013.

93 Northumbrian Water Final Water Resources Management Plan, 2014 and Annual Reviews(s).

Figure 11.1 Water Resource Zones



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- 11.19** The importance of maintaining the quality of groundwater has been emphasised above. Apart from the ecological implications of not doing so, this is important because groundwater is a significant contributor to household water supply in Northumberland. The Fell Sandstone outcrop, which extends from Berwick-upon-Tweed in the north, south to Wooler and Rothbury, and then to the south west of Kielder Reservoir, is a designated Principal Aquifer which supports a number of important licensed groundwater abstractions in the Berwick-upon-Tweed and Wooler areas. These groundwater abstractions are a source of water supply within the Berwick and Fowberry WRZ. There are also a number of Secondary Aquifers, such as the Carboniferous Limestone and Millstone Grit, which are capable of supporting water supplies at a local scale, including Abbey Well in Morpeth. Given the rural nature of the County both the Principal and Secondary Aquifers support a significant number of private water supplies. It is important that these water resources are protected.
- 11.20** In terms of the **foul water sewerage system** as with any infrastructure, an important principle of sustainable planning is to make best use of existing capacity. Through the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, associated with this Local Plan, necessary new or upgraded capacity in wastewater treatment works must be shown to be deliverable in a timely manner. Some of these will be capable of accommodating wastewater from new development through the plan period. Others have limited capacity and will require investment in the medium term. However, certain treatment works do not have any remaining capacity, meaning that there are areas of the County where little or no additional development could be accommodated until new capacity is installed. Allowing new development in advance of such works could compromise water quality.
- 11.21** Some wastewater, from parts of the County close to its boundary with Tyne and Wear, is treated at the Howdon Wastewater Treatment Works in North Tyneside, along with wastewater from neighbouring authorities. There are potential future capacity issues relating to these treatment works. A large part of the Howdon catchment is served by combined sewers and there is often no option but to accept both foul and surface water from development, leading to unnecessary treatment of surface water. To ensure wastewater from future new development can be accommodated at the treatment works, there has been joint working between the Council, other local authorities, Northumbrian Water and the Environment Agency on the development of a strategic policy to reduce the amount of surface water run-off from new developments, and separate it from the sewerage system. Northumbrian Water has now delivered the agreed Surface Water Separation schemes.
- 11.22** Parts of the County, mainly in rural areas are not served by mains sewerage. This results in the use of non-mains systems such as package treatment plants and septic tanks. The proliferation of some small scale non-mains drainage proposals has contributed towards water bodies failing to meet the Water Framework Directive within the County, reflecting systems being poorly positioned and/or having insufficient capacity and/or being adequately maintained, causing spillages and adverse impacts on water bodies and the ecosystem generally. Therefore:

- Foul flows from all new development that is located in sewered areas should be directed to the public sewer system.
- Where remoteness dictates that this is not possible, other methods of disposal must meet stringent standards in their positioning, capacity and maintenance regimes.

**11.23** The capacity for existing sewerage infrastructure to cope with new development in the County was examined, at a high level, in the Northumberland Outline Water Cycle Study (WCS)<sup>(94)</sup>, followed by the Detailed WCS<sup>(95)</sup>. This helped inform the detailed site allocations and also the Infrastructure Delivery Plan which accompanies the Local Plan.

### Water supply and sewerage commitments

The Council will work with Northumbrian Water, prospective developers and key stakeholders to identify where strategic solutions to water-related infrastructure investment may be required in order to support the strategic aims and expectations of this Plan. This will mostly relate to the provision or upgrading of waste water treatment works, but it will also apply to assurances over the supply of water in certain areas where there are issues in its guaranteed continuity.

## Policy WAT 2

### Water supply and sewerage

1. The satisfactory provision of adequate water supply and sewerage infrastructure will be maintained or secured, having regard to the findings of the Northumberland Water Cycle Study, as follows:
  - a. Minimising the need for new infrastructure by directing development:
    - i. In terms of the supply of water;
      - To areas where an adequate supply can be guaranteed;
      - Within the Berwick and Fowberry Water Resource Zones, ensuring the adequate protection of existing abstraction sources; and
      - Obtaining an assurance from the water provider that a supply is available to support the development before the proposal is agreed;
    - ii. In terms of the sewerage network and treatment works, primarily to areas where the necessary capacity already exists, and only then to areas where the required capacity is planned, having regard to:

94 Northumberland County Council, Outline Water Cycle Study, May 2012.

95 Northumberland County Council, Detailed Water Cycle Study, October 2015.

- The infrastructure providers' Water Resource Management and Strategic Business Plans; and
  - The findings of the Northumberland Water Cycle Study.
- b. Ensuring that, where new water related infrastructure is needed to serve development:
- i. That the provision of the infrastructure and the development are aligned, including any appropriate phasing;
  - ii. That the infrastructure provision does not have a harmful impact on existing ecosystems, sites of international, European, national or local importance for biodiversity, the natural or built environment, archaeology, or the amenity of local residents;
- c. Ensuring that new or improved water and sewage treatment facilities, including fluvial and coastal outfalls, contribute towards improvement in water quality and demonstrate no significant adverse impact upon the natural environment, including the coastal and marine environment;
- d. Where new or upgraded water related infrastructure is required to meet urgent or essential operational needs, granting permission except where any adverse impact outweighs the need; and
- e. Retaining an appropriate buffer between development and sewage treatment works, sufficient to allow for operational needs, including any planned expansion of the works, and in order to avoid any odour or noise issues for sensitive neighbouring uses.
2. Non-mains drainage systems, such as package treatment plants should only be employed where the development is sufficiently remote from sewered areas. In such locations, septic tanks should only be employed, in very exceptional circumstances, where on-site treatment is totally unfeasible. Where non-mains drainage systems meet these criteria and are the only solution, careful consideration of their precise siting and design will be required to ensure that there is no adverse impact upon groundwater, water quality or existing ecosystems.
3. The construction of infrastructure must be to the British Standard BS 6297:1983, or any future issues of that standard.



## Flood risk

- 11.24** Flood risk is critical when assessing the location of development. There is strong evidence that flood risk is increasing because of climate change. National policy therefore requires that Local Plans should minimise the risk of flood damage by locating development away from areas of highest risk of flooding.
- 11.25** The main sources of flood risk within Northumberland are from rivers and watercourses (fluvial), the sea (tidal), surface water run-off and sewers. Groundwater flooding is localised in nature.
- 11.26** Fluvial and tidal flood risk maps have existed for many years, ~~and~~ While these assist allow accurate planning of where different types of buildings should or should not be sited according to their vulnerability, not all potential sources can be identified in this way. Therefore, it is important that possible flood risk from all sources are identified and taken into account in the design of development.
- 11.27** National guidance sets out a 'sequential test' to be used to steer vulnerable buildings towards areas of low risk from all forms of flooding. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for Northumberland, the Northumberland Water Cycle Study and the Environment Agency Flood Maps provide a more detailed picture of areas susceptible to different types of flooding and identifies risks across the County.

## Resilience and resistance to flooding

- 11.28** Not all flooding is as predictable as fluvial, in either location or frequency. Planning policies and decisions must concentrate on minimising risk. This can be greatly assisted by adopting a 'blue-green infrastructure' approach, whereby development including the design of buildings and landscaping, as well as any other infrastructure improvements, seek to replicate a natural water cycle and contribute to amenity by bringing water management and green infrastructure together.

## Sewer flooding

- 11.29** Flooding from sewers is increasingly recognised as an issue in areas that are not necessarily at risk from fluvial flooding – whereby rainfall events, sometimes away from the area concerned, cause major surface water run-off to enter the sewerage system. In places, the network does not have the capacity to accommodate these peak flows, causing wastewater to discharge from the network to surrounding land, housing and commercial property.
- 11.30** Northumbrian Water invest in sewerage infrastructure projects, specifically targeted to reduce the incidence of sewer flooding, including the separation of surface water from combined sewerage systems. However, future investment in sewerage infrastructure must also address increased sewage disposal resulting from future development. A collaborative approach between the County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority and Northumbrian Water will deliver sustainable surface water management, directing it from conventional systems to Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS - see below). This will prevent excess surface water run-off entering the sewer system. Other benefits of such an approach will include a much reduced



risk to water quality. A number of Drainage Area Studies, undertaken by Northumbrian Water, will, through detailed sewer capacity information, help prioritise the location of development in relation to sewer flood risk.

### Design and flooding

- 11.31** Sometimes a development scheme that includes highly vulnerable uses, may encroach into areas at risk from flooding, including those areas prone to surface water flooding, in which case opportunities will be sought to reduce the overall level of risk through the layout, mix and/or form of the development, as well as the appropriate application of a blue-green infrastructure approach, incorporating SuDS (see below).
- 11.32** Where floodwaters are likely to affect buildings and it has been demonstrated that development may be acceptable in the particular location, the design can build in resistance to water penetration ('dry proofing'), or, if this cannot be achieved, resilience to the entry of water ('wet proofing'). Resilience can also be designed into a building's internal layout, fixtures and fittings so that, in the event of a flood incident, there will be, for example, easy access to safer upper floors and the opportunity for quick reoccupation afterwards. The SFRA has identified a number of resistance and resilience measures for consideration in the assessment of development proposals. The guidance covers building materials, foundations, floors, walls, doors and windows, fittings and utilities.<sup>(96)</sup>

### Surface water

- 11.33** Relatively small changes in hard surfacing and surface gradients can result in surface water flooding becoming more frequent.<sup>(97)</sup> Reusing brownfield land can be beneficial insofar as development is likely to increase rather than reduce their permeability.
- 11.34** National guidance sets out a hierarchy of acceptable surface water discharge solutions with discharge into the ground being the most preferred solution and connection to sewers the least preferred solution. The emphasis of the guidance is that surface water run-off entering the sewerage system should be kept to an absolute minimum.
- 11.35** Surface water flooding is an issue in parts of Northumberland and there is a need for surface water management to reduce the risk of flooding from **all** new development. The large scale prevention of water draining into sewers, (see above), is a key part of this. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are integral to dealing with this issue at a whole range of scales - see below.
- 11.36** The provision of green infrastructure (explained in Chapter 4) can also play a less direct but important role in the management and mitigation of surface water flooding, including preventing pollution by filtering surface water run-off, thereby maintaining or improving the quality of water in the environment in line with legislation.

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96 Northumberland Level 1 SFRA, September 2010, Table 6-1.

97 An example would be paving over of front gardens.

**11.37** The issue of whether minewater is present in the water table in the vicinity of proposed developments will be a key consideration in discussion with the Environment Agency and the Coal Authority, in terms of the type of surface water drainage solution that is employed. An incorrect solution could exacerbate the minewater problem and/or detrimentally affect the effectiveness of any sustainable drainage feature.

## Flood alleviation

**11.38** There are a number of existing flood defences and other flood management structures across Northumberland. These are mostly on rivers close to low-lying populated areas or other vulnerable land uses. There are still communities affected by flooding, where there will be a need to plan for additional flood defence and management schemes. Following the 2008 flood at Morpeth, work has now been completed on a major flood alleviation scheme involving raised flood defences and the storage of floodwater upstream.

## Policy WAT 3

### Flooding

1. In assessing development proposals the potential for both on and off-site flood risk from all potential sources will be measured, taking into account the policy approach contained within: the relevant Catchment Flood Management Plan; the Northumberland Local Flood Risk Management Strategy; the Northumberland Outline Water Cycle Study; and the findings of Drainage Area Studies.
2. Development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they will minimise flood risk to people, property and infrastructure from all potential sources by:
  - a. Avoiding inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding and directing the development away from areas at highest risk, applying the Sequential Test and if necessary the Exceptions Test, in accordance with national policy and the Northumberland Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Site Specific Flood Risk Assessments will be required in accordance with national policy and guidance;
  - b. Ensuring that the development will be safe over its lifetime, taking account of climate change, will not increase flood risk elsewhere and where possible, reduce flood risk overall;
  - c. Assessing the impact of the development proposal on existing sewerage infrastructure and flood risk management infrastructure, including whether there is a need to reinforce such infrastructure or provide new infrastructure in consultation with the relevant water authority;
  - d. Ensuring that development proposals in areas at risk from flooding are made resistant and resilient, in terms of their layout, mix and/or building design, in accordance with national policy and the findings and recommendations of the Northumberland Strategic Flood Risk Assessment;

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- e. Pursuing the full separation of foul and surface water flows as follows:
  - i. A requirement that all development provides such separation within the development; and
  - ii. Where combined sewers remain, the Council will work with statutory sewerage providers to progress the separation of surface water from foul;
- f. Ensuring that built development proposals, including new roads, separate, minimise and control surface water run-off, **with using** Sustainable Drainage Systems **being the preferred approach**, modified as necessary where minewater is present; in relation to this:
  - i. Surface water should be managed at source wherever possible, so that there is no net increase in surface water run-off for the lifetime of the development;
  - ii. Surface water should be disposed of in accordance with the following hierarchy for surface water run-off:
    - To a soakaway system, unless it can be demonstrated that this is not feasible due to poor infiltration with the underlying ground conditions **and/or high groundwater levels**;
    - To a watercourse, unless there is no alternative or suitable receiving watercourse available;
    - To a surface water sewer;
    - As a last resort, once all other methods have been explored, disposal to combined sewers;
  - iii. Where greenfield sites are to be developed, the surface water run-off rates should not exceed, and where possible should reduce, the existing run-off rates;
  - iv. Where previously developed sites are to be developed:
    - The peak surface run-off rate from the development to any drain, sewer or surface water body for any given rainfall event should be as close as reasonably practicable to the greenfield run-off rate for the same event, so long as this does not exceed the previous rate of discharge on the site for that same event; or
    - Where it is demonstrated that the greenfield run-off rate cannot be achieved, then surface run-off rate should be reduced by a minimum of 50% of the existing site run-off rate;
- g. Full consideration should be given to solutions within the wider catchment area, including blue-green infrastructure based solutions and those providing ecosystem services, with wider solutions especially applied if local solutions could be harmful to biodiversity, landscape or built heritage;

### 3. In relation to flood alleviation schemes:

- a. The early implementation of approved schemes will be supported through development decisions;
  - b. Any proposal for additional schemes should demonstrate that they represent the most sustainable solution and that their social, economic and environmental benefits outweigh any adverse environmental impacts caused by new structure(s), including increasing the risk of flooding elsewhere.
4. Any works relating to the above, which impact on natural water systems, should consider the wider ecological implications, applying the ecosystem approach, and link into green infrastructure initiatives wherever practicable.

## Sustainable Drainage Systems

**11.39** National planning policy requires that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Due to increased pressure on the sewerage system, including greater numbers of connected properties and increased level and intensity of winter precipitation, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should always be used ~~are generally the preferred approach~~ to addressing surface water drainage within developments.

**11.40** In contrast to traditional piped sewerage systems, which struggle with sudden influxes of rainwater, SuDS features such as ponds, porous road surfaces and shallow drainage channels (swales) are designed to absorb rainwater where it falls or slow water down to reduce the levels entering the drainage system. Fast run-off from hard surfaces results in flash floods from rainwater trying to enter the drainage system within a short period of time. By slowing down and separating out run-off, the highest peak levels of water entering the drainage system are reduced and flooding limited. The issue of flash flooding due to extreme weather events has affected certain parts of the County quite badly in recent years and needs to be addressed in a way which reflects a coordinated approach and the benefits of which accumulate over time.

**11.41** The Government expects local planning policies and decisions on major developments (10 dwellings or more or equivalent non-residential or mixed development) to put sustainable drainage systems in place, unless demonstrated to be inappropriate. SuDS which would only be ~~inappropriate~~ in a minority of locations ~~- e.g. where the soils or rocks are impervious or where minewater is present~~. With regard to housing, given that many housing development sites in Northumberland are for less than 10 dwellings, ~~efforts will be made to secure appropriate SuDS on smaller sites as well~~ developments of this size cumulatively contribute to flood risk across the local and wider vicinity. As such, it is imperative to ensure SuDS are included within these smaller sites.

**11.42** [Paragraph amalgamated with Paragraph 11.41]

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- 11.43** Different situations will call for different types of SuDS, according to their effectiveness and efficiency and taking into account what is reasonable and practicable. In terms of design, construction and maintenance costs, SuDS that provide surface features such as swales and ponds can be comparable in cost (including those associated with the additional land take) with the cost of conventional, piped sewerage systems, while delivering additional environmental and social benefits.
- 11.44** SuDS should be embedded as early as possible in the design process to benefit from cost efficiencies, to maximise and integrate social and environmental benefits and to ensure maintenance and operation requirements are economically proportionate. In addition to managing surface water run-off volumes, in designing SuDS, it is important that surface water leaving the development does not detrimentally affect the water quality of any receiving water body or sewer. All schemes should ensure an appropriate level of treatment before leaving the development. Where possible, consideration should be given to improving water quality for example by filtering out harmful pollutants from road surfaces.
- 11.45** Occasionally particular types of SuDS will not be appropriate (e.g. because they will bring more birds close to airport runways or otherwise cause a hazard, ground conditions are unstable, there is (or could in the future be) minewater present, or the development is on a steep slope). However, with regard to major development the onus is on the applicant to provide evidence if their view is that SuDS are inappropriate.
- 11.46** The Government requires that through the use of planning conditions or planning obligations there are clear arrangements in place for ongoing maintenance over the lifetime of the development. With regard to design, implementation and lifetime maintenance, the Council is working with other Local Planning Authorities and Lead Local Flood Authorities across the North East to achieve consensus on sub-regional SuDS guidance.
- 11.47** Consideration will be given to using the Community Infrastructure Levy towards the promotion of sustainable drainage.

## Policy WAT 4

### Sustainable Drainage Systems

1. Water sensitive urban design, including Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) will be incorporated into all developments whenever necessary, in order to separate, minimise and control surface water run-off, in accordance with national standards and any future local guidance and giving strong preference to SuDs which offer multi-use benefits.
2. SuDS will be a requirement for any development where it is necessary to manage surface water drainage unless it can be clearly demonstrated:
  - a. That SuDS are not technically, operationally or financially deliverable or viable and that any surface water drainage issues resulting from the development can be alternatively mitigated; or
  - b. That the SuDS scheme will itself adversely affect the environment or safety, including where ponds could increase the risk of bird strike close to the airport or where existing minewater problems could be exacerbated.
3. SuDS or other water sensitive urban design schemes should be devised to take account of predicted future conditions and, where appropriate, efforts should be made to link them into wider initiatives to enhance the green infrastructure, improve water quality, benefit wildlife and/or contribute to the provision of an ecosystem service.
4. Arrangements must be put in place for the management and maintenance of SuDS over the lifetime of the development, with such arrangements taking account of the cumulative effectiveness of SuDs in the area concerned.

## Coastal change

**11.48** Along with Northumberland's river systems, the sea is the other element of the water environment which most shapes the County's environment. The Northumberland coastline is approximately 130 kilometres in length and stretches from the Scottish Border in the north to Seaton Sluice in the south east of the County. Large parts of the coastline have important natural and built assets; its land and seascapes are particularly distinctive. It comprises a series of dune systems and wide, sandy bays separated by lengths of cliffs and small islands (Holy Island, the Farne Islands and Coquet Island). It also includes a number of towns and villages including: Berwick-upon-Tweed, Bamburgh, Seahouses, Beadnell, Craster, Alnmouth, Amble, Cresswell, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Cambois, Blyth and Seaton Sluice. These are important communities in social and economic terms and many retain connections with the sea for employment and commerce. Only a small proportion of the coastline is protected by man-made defences, most notably in the more urban areas.

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- 11.49** In its role as the Coast Protection Authority, the Council has powers to carry out coast protection works, while the prevention and mitigation of coastal flooding sits with the Environment Agency. The Northumberland and North Tyneside Shoreline Management Plan 2<sup>(98)</sup> provides a large-scale assessment of the risks from coastal erosion and sea flooding to places, people and the historic and natural environment. It presents a policy framework to manage these risks over 20, 50 and 100 years. There are areas of the Northumberland Coast where there is the need to address the issue of coastal erosion and coastal change to protect commercial, economic and residential areas. Key challenges posed by the Shoreline Management Plan include the possible need to relocate caravan parks and golf courses and realign sections of roads in certain areas, as well as specific issues of eroding colliery spoil in the Lynemouth area and sea flooding at Blyth.
- 11.50** The management of coastal change and its attendant processes requires an integrated approach and the Council is working closely with its partners and neighbouring authorities to promote a coherent planning strategy along the Northumberland Coast and beyond. In line with national policy, the Council will continue to work with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) under the Duty to Cooperate to ensure integration of land-use and marine planning, taking into account the requirements of the UK Marine Policy Statement and the forthcoming marine plan for the north east<sup>(99)</sup>.
- 11.51** National planning policy is clear that the planning system should reduce the risk from coastal change by avoiding inappropriate development in vulnerable areas or adding to the impacts of physical changes to the coast. The Local Plan has a role to play in overseeing and planning for coastal change over time and directing development accordingly.
- 11.52** The policy below sets criteria on coastal erosion and Coastal Change Management Areas (CCMAs), setting out the type of development which would not be appropriate within them, the circumstances in which development may be permissible and the circumstances where a Vulnerability Assessment will be required. CCMAs are defined as the area between the shoreline and the 100 year predicted erosion line plus a 30 metre buffer.

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98 Northumberland and North Tyneside Shoreline Management Plan 2, May 2009.

99 The MMO is responsible for issuing licences needed for activities involving a deposit or removal of a substance or object below the mean high water spring mark or in any tidal river to the extent of tidal influence

## Policy WAT 5

### Coastal erosion and coastal change management

1. Areas vulnerable to coastal change will be managed in accordance with the principles and approach set out in the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2), while giving full weight to the level of importance of the coast's ecological and heritage value.
2. Development proposals in these areas in particular will be required to:
  - a. Demonstrate that the need for a coastal location overrides the risk of coastal change and provides wider benefits, such as substantial, sustainable environmental, economic and social benefits;
  - b. Provide an Erosion Vulnerability Assessment which demonstrates that the development is safe over its planned lifetime and will not have an unacceptable impact on coastal change processes elsewhere. The assessment should be appropriate to the degree of risk and the location, scale and nature of the development;
  - c. Demonstrate that there will not be any harm or loss to the significance of ecological and/or heritage assets and/or designations, including the Northumberland coastal footpath; and
  - d. Provide an assessment of the impact of the development on existing coastal defence infrastructure, including whether new infrastructure would be required as a result of the development proposal.
3. Proposals for new or replacement coastal defence schemes will be supported where it can be demonstrated that:
  - a. The works are consistent with the relevant management approach for the area, set out in the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2); and
  - b. There will be no significant adverse impacts on the coastal environment, including ecological landscape and heritage assets and designations; and
  - c. Where required, a programme of mitigation can be agreed.
4. Within the Coastal Change Management Area (CCMA), as shown on the Policies Map, development will only be supported, where:
  - a. It can be demonstrated that it would not result in adverse changes to the coast taking account of any impacts on landform, land stability, the ecology or biodiversity; and
  - b. It can be demonstrated that it would need to be located within the zone, as opposed to further inland, by virtue of being concerned with a coastal activity that has a direct environmental, community or economic benefit; and
  - ~~c. Except in exceptional circumstances, any structures are small scale, of a temporary form of construction, granted for a temporary period, and designed to minimise any risk of future erosion effects, and~~

c. It will not increase coastal erosion as a result of changes in surface water run-off. ~~and~~

d. In exceptional circumstances, where it is necessary to reduce a potentially unacceptable level of future risk to people and the development, structures may be required to be small scale, and/or of a temporary form of construction, and/or granted for a temporary period

e. If, applying the above criteria, the Coast Protection Authority identifies that there could be a risk of adverse effects, including inland of the CCMA, then an erosion vulnerability assessment will be required as part of the application.

## 12. Pollution and Land Quality

### Introduction

- 12.1** This chapter includes policies to assist in the consideration of the acceptability of development proposals; on land where there are stability or contamination issues; where development may be affected by or could cause pollution to air, water and land and where development proposals have implications for soil and agricultural land quality.
- 12.2** The policies will help deliver the Local Plan objective to conserve and enhance the natural, historic, water and built environment of Northumberland by:
- Preventing new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability;
  - Remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate;
  - Using areas of poorer quality agricultural land in preference to land of higher agricultural quality; and
  - Minimising adverse impacts on local communities and the environment.

### Contaminated and unstable land

- 12.3** Land instability and contamination have the potential to cause harm to human health and the wider environment as well as damage to property and infrastructure.
- 12.4** In accordance with the Environmental Protection Act 1990: Part 2A, contaminated land is that which is in such a condition by reason of substances in, on or under the land, that it can cause a risk to human health, property or the wider environment, or that it can cause significant pollution of controlled waters.
- 12.5** Northumberland has a considerable legacy of land contamination and land instability, much of which originates from past coal mining and industrial activities, concentrated in the south east of the County. Land contamination can, however, also be caused by naturally occurring sources, agricultural activities and other smaller scale uses such as fuel filling stations. Similarly land instability can be caused by natural geological features and the action of water. Some contaminated, or unstable land, may be of historic or archaeological interest.
- 12.6** The Local Plan has an important role with respect to minimising the risks and effects of land instability and contamination issues by:
- Ensuring that various types of development are not allowed in locations affected by land instability or contamination without the appropriate precautions; and
  - Providing opportunities to address and reduce land instability and contamination where remediation can form part of the overall development proposal.

**The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies.**

- 12.7** When dealing with land that may be affected by contamination, the planning system works alongside a number of other regulatory regimes, and judgements relating to contaminated land will normally be made by officers in the Council's Public Protection team. Responsibility lies with the developer to ensure that land contamination is appropriately addressed, that necessary remediation takes place and that the site is cleaned up to a level appropriate for the proposed end use. It is important that new development recognises any problems and takes a positive approach to addressing them in a manner that will allow the development to take place safely.
- 12.8** The Coal Authority have identified 'Coal Mining High Risk Areas' where past coal mining activities have lead to a higher likelihood of land instability issues. In these areas, for most types of development, applicants will be required to submit a Coal Mining Risk Assessment.
- 12.9** The Council will require that proposals on land which is known or suspected to be contaminated or unstable, or for uses that would be vulnerable to contamination or instability are supported by sufficient information to fully assess the contamination and instability risks. Details of the information required to support a planning application and the circumstances when this information is required is set out in the Council's planning application validation checklist.

### Policy POL 1

#### Unstable and contaminated land

1. Development proposals will be supported where it can be demonstrated that unacceptable risks from land instability and contamination will be prevented ~~by ensuring the development is appropriately located~~ and that measures can be taken to effectively mitigate the impacts.
2. Planning applications for proposals on land that is potentially unstable or contaminated shall be accompanied by an assessment showing:
  - a. The nature and extent of contamination or instability issues and the possible effects this may have on the development and its future users, biodiversity and the natural and built environment; and
  - b. The remedial measures needed to allow the development to go ahead safely giving consideration to the potential end users, including, as appropriate:
    - i. Removing the contamination;
    - ii. Treating the contamination;
    - iii. Protecting and/or separating the development from the effects of contamination; and
    - iv. Addressing land instability; and
  - c. That the benefits of any proposed remediation measures are not outweighed by any harm to the natural, built and historic environment caused by the remediation works themselves.

3. Where remedial measures are needed to allow the development to go ahead safely, these will be required as a condition of planning permission.
4. Support will be given to development proposals that allow for the beneficial remediation of contamination or unstable land.

## Pollution

### 12.10 Pollution can affect health, undermine quality of life and affect natural habitats.

Alongside other consent regimes and processes, the planning system plays an important role in preventing and limiting the impact of polluting emissions such as noise, light, fumes, chemicals and noxious and hazardous substances.

### 12.11 The Local Plan aims to protect new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of pollution. The Council requires development to comply with national air and water quality standards and adopt techniques to prevent, minimise or render harmless polluting substances. When national standards become more stringent, efforts must be made to enhance the quality of the air, water and/or soils.

### 12.12 In Northumberland special consideration should be given to:

- Protecting and enhancing:
  - the high quality of the water environment;
  - the tranquil nature of the County's countryside;
  - the special qualities of the Northumberland International Dark Sky Park;
  - the important qualities of the coastline and the communities and habitats it serves.
- The need to improve the natural environments in the two Nature Improvement Areas;
- The need to limit the effects of air, noise and light pollution along major routes (i.e. road, rail and aircraft from Newcastle International Airport).

## Air Quality

### 12.13 Poor air quality, caused by harmful pollutants, can have a significant negative impact on public health and biodiversity, and can contain greenhouse gases. Air quality in Northumberland is generally good and there are currently no Air Quality Management Areas in the County. However, air quality issues are particularly likely to arise from developments that may generate significant levels of traffic, introduce a new source of air pollution or expose people to existing sources of air pollution. Proposals for development which may have a detrimental effect upon air quality will need to be accompanied by an air quality assessment as part of the application and provide mitigation measures. The cumulative effects of a development upon air quality should be considered in context of existing and permitted development.



### Noise

- 12.14** Noise is an important consideration for developments either for uses which are sensitive to noise or for uses which generate noise, and for any development in proximity of an existing source of noise. Noise assessments, which should set out mitigation measures, and have regard to the Noise Policy Statement for England, will be required for any application for a development that will introduce a noise source or that will create a sensitive receptor to existing noise source. Assessing noise impacts can be complex, and regard must be given to the prevailing ambient conditions, and the cumulative impacts that may arise from multiple sources. In determining the significance and acceptability of the likely impacts, good practice guidance from the World Health Organisation will be a key factor. The Council's requirements are set out in the Council's planning application validation checklist.
- 12.15** Aircraft movements associated with Newcastle International Airport (NIA) represent a significant existing noise source in the County. The noise impact of NIA's current and future forecast air traffic movements have been mapped as 'noise contours' by the Civil Aviation Authority. In order to ensure that new development is not significantly adversely affected, NIA's current and forecast noise contours will be the starting point for any noise assessments made in relation to the noise impacts of NIA.

### Lighting

- 12.16** Artificial lighting provides valuable benefits, but can also be a significant source of annoyance to people, harmful to wildlife, undermine enjoyment of the countryside or detract from enjoyment of the night sky. The effects of artificial lighting can also damage the perception of a heritage asset, especially if the asset is experienced at night or is floodlit. A lighting assessment will be used to understand the impact of a development proposal's lighting on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation. Development proposals whose lighting may have an effect on open countryside, natural habitats and the settings of historic or cultural assets should have regard to Policy ENV 4 Tranquility, dark skies and a sense of rurality.
- 12.17** The circumstances where an air quality, lighting or noise assessment is required, and what information should be contained in such assessments is set out in the Council's planning application validation checklist.

### Soil quality

- 12.18** Soil is a vital element of the environment that requires protection from loss and degradation, and improvement where degradation may already have occurred. Due to its extremely slow process of formation, soil is considered as a non-renewable resource, having a vital role within eco-systems - storing and filtering water and nutrients and acting as the biggest global carbon store. In addition, soil is a key element in the production of food, determining the quality of agricultural land. It is therefore important that the soil resources are appropriately protected and used sustainably.

## Policy POL 2

### Pollution and air, soil and water quality

1. Development proposals in locations where they would cause, or be put at unacceptable risk of harm from, or be adversely affected by pollution by virtue of the emissions of fumes, particles, effluent, radiation, smell, heat, light, noise or noxious substances will not be supported.
2. Development proposals that may cause pollution of water, air or soil, either individually or cumulatively, are required to incorporate measures to prevent or reduce their pollution so as not to cause nuisance or unacceptable impacts on the environment, people or biodiversity.
3. Development proposed where pollution levels are unacceptable, and unable to be mitigated to acceptable levels, will not be supported.
4. Where the operation of an existing business or community facility could have a significant adverse effect on a development proposal, the development proposal will be required to provide suitable mitigation.
5. Development will be required to help:
  - a. Maintain soil quality standards and protect the quality of any displaced soil through sustainable use by following the most up to date guidance from the Government<sup>(100)</sup>;
  - b. Improve water quality standards in line with the requirements of Policy WAT 1; and
  - c. Maintain air quality standards and support improvements in any identified Air Quality Management Areas consistent with any local air quality action plans.
6. Advice on the storage and handling of hazardous substances will be taken from the Health and Safety Executive.

100 Currently the Code of practice for the sustainable use of soils on construction sites' by Defra

### Agricultural land quality

- 12.19** The quality of agricultural land is classified by Defra and Natural England using the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC). The ALC system classifies land into five grades, with grade 3 subdivided into sub-grades 3a and 3b. The best and most versatile land is defined as Grades 1, 2 and 3a in the NPPF. This is the land which is most flexible, productive and efficient in response to inputs and which can best deliver future crops for food and non food uses such as biomass, fibres and pharmaceuticals.
- 12.20** The majority of agricultural land in Northumberland is classified as grade 3, with some small areas of grade 2 land in the north of the County, and some areas of grades 4 and 5 land in the west of the County.

### Policy POL 3

#### Agricultural land quality

1. Development of 'best and most versatile' agricultural land will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that:
  - a. There are no suitable alternative sites on previously developed or lower quality land; and
  - b. The need for the development clearly outweighs the need to protect such land in the long term; or
  - c. In the case of temporary/potentially reversible development (for example, minerals), that the land would be reinstated to its pre-working quality.

## 13. Managing Natural Resources

### Introduction to minerals

**13.1** Minerals are important resources; they are the raw materials which are necessary to provide the infrastructure, buildings, goods and energy that both society and the economy needs, therefore supporting sustainable economic growth.

**13.2** The most significant minerals in Northumberland are:

- Carboniferous limestone, igneous rock and sand and gravel for aggregate uses;
- Coal for use in energy generation;
- Sandstone for use as building stone; and
- Brick-making clays (including fireclays, coal measures mudstones, brick shales and glacial clay).

**13.3** There are also other mineral resources found in Northumberland, which are not currently extracted. These include fluorspar, witherite and barite, which occur in veins with lead and zinc ores and conventional hydrocarbons, shale gas and gas from coal seams and workings.

**13.4** The policies within the Local Plan aim to deliver the strategic objective to manage the prudent use of Northumberland's natural resources, which includes minerals, while minimising the adverse impacts of their extraction and transportation on both communities and the environment by seeking to ensure that:

- These finite resources are not unnecessarily sterilised;
- Existing, planned and potential infrastructure associated with the transportation, handling and processing of minerals are safeguarded;
- High quality restoration and aftercare is provided for at the earliest opportunity;
- Land is made available to ensure a steady and adequate supply of minerals; and
- Extraction, as well as the associated processing and transportation, does not have unacceptable adverse impacts on the environment and local communities.

### Environmental criteria for assessing minerals developments

**13.5** The potential for unacceptable adverse impacts on residential amenity and the local environment as a result of minerals extraction, processing and transportation is a major concern for communities. Notwithstanding this the environmental effects arising from minerals development are not always negative and minerals developments can bring environmental benefits, particularly through high quality restoration and after-use.

**13.6** The NPPF states that Local Plans should set out environmental criteria against which planning applications for minerals extraction will be assessed so as to ensure that proposals do not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the natural and historic environment and on human health. Policy MIN1, therefore, sets out the

**The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies.**

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policy criteria to support the consideration of the environmental acceptability of minerals proposals in Northumberland and will be used to support the assessment of the environmental effects in conjunction with the policy criteria detailed in the resource based policies for minerals development (i.e. Policies MIN 6 to MIN 13).

- 13.7** Applicants will be required to provide sufficient information in support of their planning application to ensure a full and robust assessment can be made of the likely environmental effects of the proposals. Information should also be provided on the control, mitigation and monitoring measures that will be utilised to address the effects identified.

### Policy MIN 1

#### Environmental criteria for assessing minerals proposals (Strategic Policy)

1. Proposals for mineral extraction will be supported where the applicant can demonstrate that any adverse effects on local communities and the environment are acceptable.
2. In considering applications, appropriate weight will be given to potential effects on:
  - a. Local amenity – applicants will be required to demonstrate that there is appropriate separation between the site and dwellings and other sensitive uses, to prevent unacceptable levels of noise, dust, vibration, air pollution and harmful visual impact;
  - b. Landscape character and sensitivity – applicants will be required to demonstrate that the proposal can be effectively and appropriately integrated with its surroundings and the character of the landscape, particularly as a result of changes to landform and topography both during and after extraction;
  - c. The conservation and enhancement of nature conservation and geological sites, including internationally, nationally and locally designated sites, priority habitats and protected and priority species – applicants will be required to demonstrate that their proposal will deliver a net gain for biodiversity where possible through the creation of priority habitats and by contributing to the creation of a coherent and resilient ecological network and that there will be no unacceptable adverse effects on national or international nature conservation designations or irreplaceable habitats;
  - d. The North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the adjoining Northumberland National Park and their settings – applicants will be required to demonstrate that the proposals do not have unacceptable adverse effects on the special qualities and the statutory purposes of these designations;
  - e. Cultural heritage, including known and unknown archaeological features, designated and undesignated heritage assets and their settings – applicants ~~should~~ **will be required to** demonstrate that the proposals will not result in unacceptable harm to heritage assets;

- f. Soils and agricultural land quality – applicants ~~should~~ will be required to demonstrate that the soil resource is managed in a sustainable way and where proposals affect best and most versatile agricultural land applicants should demonstrate there is no suitable alternative of lower quality agricultural land that provides the same benefits in terms of other environmental considerations, the land could be restored to its previous agricultural land quality or there is an overriding need for the development;
  - g. The capacity and suitability of the transport network, including numbers of movements, site access arrangements, and impacts on non-motorised users – The transport of minerals using rail and water is encouraged and where road transport is proposed applicants ~~should~~ will be required to demonstrate that transport by rail or water is not practicable or feasible;
  - h. The use of public rights of way – where disruption to a public right of way is unavoidable applicants will be required to demonstrate how the proposals make provision for the diversion of routes or for the creation of an alternative route during both minerals extraction and restoration that are convenient and safe and, wherever possible, take opportunities to enhance public rights of way;
  - i. Flood risk – applicants ~~should~~ will be required to demonstrate that the proposals do not have an unacceptable adverse impact on flood flows or storage capacity and do not increase the risk of flooding at other locations;
  - j. Ground and surface water quality, flow and water abstraction – applicants ~~should~~ will be required to consider the potential for the proposal to affect the flow, quality and quantity of ground and surface water supplies and include measures to prevent water pollution;
  - k. Light pollution – applicants ~~should~~ will be required to demonstrate the proposals incorporate measures to control light pollution;
  - l. Land stability – applicants should demonstrate that the operation and restoration of the site does not create land instability and the quarry slopes and storage mounds are designed so as not to create instability, and
  - m. Aviation safety – where proposals are within aerodrome safeguarding zones, applicants ~~should~~ will be required to demonstrate that the proposals do not give rise to new or increased hazards to aviation.
  - n. Climate change - applicants ~~should~~ will be required to demonstrate how the proposal impacts on climate change and, where appropriate, proposed mitigation and adaptation measures.
3. The criteria listed above should be considered both individually and cumulatively. In assessing cumulative impact, particular regard will be had to:
- a. The combination of effects from an individual site;
  - b. The combination of effects from one or more sites in a locality; and
  - c. The effects over an extended period of time either from an individual site or a number of sites in a locality, whilst recognising that mineral resources can only be extracted where they occur, the benefits from extending existing sites rather than opening up new areas to working and the desirability of comprehensively working resources in an area to avoid sterilisation.



### Benefits of minerals developments

**13.8** The NPPF highlights that minerals are essential to support sustainable economic growth and quality of life and goes on to state great weight should be given to these benefits when determining planning applications. Such benefits can be both national and local and include, amongst other things:

- Supplying materials to provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods the country needs;
- Economic benefits by contributing to high and stable levels of economic growth and by providing employment opportunities;
- Environmental enhancements through high quality restoration;
- Opportunities to deal with areas of contaminated or derelict land and areas of unstable ground, particularly those resulting from the legacy of underground coal mining; and
- Opportunities to recover a resource that would otherwise be sterilised by non-mineral development.

**13.9** Policy MIN 2 identifies the benefits that will be given weight when determining planning applications in Northumberland for minerals developments. The criteria in Policy MIN 2 are not intended to be an exhaustive list of the benefits of minerals extraction but seek to identify the key matters. Other benefits that are material planning considerations and that are not listed in Policy MIN 2 will be considered where applicants outline these in an application.

**13.10** The benefits need to be given great weight in the decision making process and balanced against the environmental effects (see Policy MIN 1) arising from the mineral extraction, transportation and processing.

## Policy MIN 2

### Criteria for assessing the benefits of minerals proposals (Strategic Policy)

1. When determining proposals for minerals extraction, great weight will be given to the benefits of minerals extraction except where the proposal relates to the coal extraction.
2. In assessing the benefits of individual proposals for minerals extraction including coal extraction, the following matters will be considered:
  - a. The economic benefits of the proposal both nationally and locally, including contribution to the wider economy and the maintenance of employment and the creation of new employment opportunities;
  - b. The contribution the extraction of the mineral will make to a steady and adequate supply of that material both locally and nationally;
  - c. Environmental enhancements, including those delivered through the restoration of the site following extraction and the after-use of the site and outside of the operational area;
  - d. The avoidance of a mineral resource being sterilised by non-mineral development;
  - e. In the case of prior extraction, the contribution this can make enabling a non-mineral development taking place;
  - f. The contribution towards the reclamation of areas of derelict or contaminated land and/or the remediation of underground coal mining legacy issues; and
  - g. The use of rail transport, water transport, conveyors and pipelines where these methods are used instead of road transport.
3. Other benefits that are material planning considerations and that are not listed in (2) above will be considered where applicants provide evidence of these in support of a planning application.

### Mineral and landfill site restoration, aftercare and after-use

**13.11** It is essential that mineral and landfill sites are properly restored at the earliest opportunity and the after-use is appropriate to the site concerned. The restoration, aftercare and after-use of minerals sites are, therefore, an important consideration in assessing the acceptability of proposals for mineral extraction or landfill. Applicants should address site restoration and after-use at an early stage in the planning process and are encouraged to engage with the Council and local communities prior to applications being submitted.

- 13.12** Good site restoration and aftercare has the potential to enhance the environment and contribute to the achievement of wider policy objectives. The policy for site restoration, aftercare and after-use seeks to deliver environmental and community benefits by providing environmental enhancements that maximise opportunities for nature conservation, landscape enhancements and informal outdoor recreation.
- 13.13** It may not be possible to deliver all aspirations in all circumstances and this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis having regard to the constraints, the characteristics of the site and surrounding area, the use of the site prior to working, local community aspirations and opportunities, including opportunities to link to wider area enhancements or initiative. It is, however, recognised that the majority of minerals sites in Northumberland lie in the open countryside and acceptable after-uses will, therefore, be restricted to agriculture, forestry, informal recreation and nature conservation in most circumstances. After-use proposals involving built development, such as housing and business uses, will be assessed against the relevant policies in the development plan. These types of after-uses may be particularly relevant on sites well-related to existing settlements and where the mineral extraction has supported the remediation of derelict and/or contaminated land.
- 13.14** All proposals are required to make provision for the after-care and maintenance of the restored site for a period of not less than five years. However, it will be appropriate to extend the period for after-care and maintenance in circumstances where a period of more than five years is required for the after-use to become established or a particularly innovative restoration and after-use is proposed. For example, if wildlife habitats are created they can take much longer than the standard five-year after-care period to become established and provision for the longer-term after-care and management of these habitats will be important in these circumstances.

### Policy MIN 3

#### Mineral and landfill site restoration, aftercare and after-use (Strategic Policy)

1. Proposals for minerals extraction will be supported where provision has been made for the high quality restoration and aftercare of the proposed site at the earliest opportunity.
2. Proposals for the restoration, aftercare and after-use of mineral extraction and landfill sites should:
  - a. Deliver net-gains for biodiversity following restoration by contributing to priority habitat creation and local ecological networks, having particular regard to the biodiversity action plan and the biodiversity strategy for England;

- b. Deliver improved public access and/or public open space, including links to the surrounding green infrastructure and expansion of the public rights of way network, whilst taking great care to minimise disturbance to wildlife;
- c. Protect soil resources by ensuring that they are retained, conserved and handled in line with best practice during site extraction operations ~~and during restoration and in the case of mineral development affecting best and most versatile agricultural land, the land is capable of being restored back to best and most versatile agricultural land;~~
- d. When creating wetland habitats, take account of the requirement to manage the risk of birds striking aircraft when within Aerodrome Safeguarding Zones and include elements to assist in flood alleviation;
- e. Include provision for the phased working and restoration of the site, unless it can be demonstrated that this is not practicable or feasible as a result of the site characteristics and constraints;
- f. Include sufficient detail to demonstrate that the proposed restoration and after-use scheme is practically achievable and includes details of the final proposed landform, the proposed after-use and how the soil resource and overburden will be managed;
- g. Make provision for the aftercare of the restored site, or a relevant part of the site where a site is subject to progressive restoration, for a period of ~~up to~~ five years to ensure the land is capable of sustaining the approved after-use or after-uses. The aftercare period may be extended by legal agreement beyond five years where it is required for the after-use to become established or a particularly innovative restoration and after-use is proposed; and
- h. Include sufficient safeguards to ensure the adequate restoration and aftercare of the site from the commencement of development until completion of restoration and aftercare. In exceptional circumstances, such as long-term schemes where no progressive restoration is proposed, proposals where innovative techniques are to be used, or where there is reliable evidence of financial failure, a financial bond or other financial guarantee shall be sought.

### Mineral resource safeguarding

**13.15** The NPPF advocates that known minerals resources should not be needlessly sterilised by development either above the resource or near to it. Local plans are therefore required to define 'Minerals Safeguarding Areas' (MSAs), MSA designation does not convey any presumption that working will take place. MSAs are defined around the following mineral resources:

- Carboniferous limestone;
- Clay (including brick clay, brick shale and fireclay);
- Coal;

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- Igneous rock;
- Sandstone; and
- Sand and gravel.

**13.16** In line with advice on best practice, the MSAs for Northumberland will cover the whole of the resource area, include known mineral resources beneath existing settlements and overlap with other planning and environmental designations. The MSAs also extend beyond the boundary of the resource to create a buffer thereby protecting the potential extraction of the mineral from development near the resource.

### Policy MIN 4

#### Safeguarding mineral resources (Strategic Policy)

1. Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSAs) are identified on the Policies Map around the following mineral resources and these resources will be protected from unnecessary sterilisation by non-mineral development:
  - a. Carboniferous limestone;
  - b. Clay (including brick clay, brick shale and fireclay);
  - c. Coal;
  - d. Igneous rock;
  - e. Sand and gravel; and
  - f. Sandstone.
2. Applications for non-mineral related development in a Mineral Safeguarding Area are required to include an assessment of the effect of the proposed development on the mineral resource beneath or adjacent to the site of the development.
3. Proposals for non-mineral development which would lead to the unnecessary sterilisation of mineral resources within a Mineral Safeguarding Area will not be supported unless:
  - a. The applicant can demonstrate that the mineral concerned is not of economic value;
  - b. The mineral can be extracted prior to the non-mineral development proceeding without adversely affecting the viability of the development;
  - c. The development is temporary in nature and will not impact on the potential for mineral extraction within a timescale in which the mineral is likely to be needed;
  - d. There are no reasonable alternative options for the proposed development which would avoid or minimise the sterilisation of minerals;

- e. The overall social, economic or environmental benefits of the proposed development outweigh the potential loss of the mineral resource; or
- f. It constitutes non-mineral development that is exempt from the safeguarding provisions. Exempt non-mineral development comprises:
  - i. Householder development, which includes extensions, alterations or improvements to existing dwellings, the erection of domestic garages, outbuildings and garden walls or fences;
  - ii. An advertisement;
  - iii. Reserved matters applications following the grant of outline planning permission;
  - iv. Applications to change the use of an existing building, except where the change is to a residential dwelling (use class C3) and other sensitive uses such as schools (use class D1), residential care homes, hospitals, nursing homes, boarding schools, residential colleges and training centres (use class C2);
  - v. Applications to remove or amend a condition attached to an existing planning permission;
  - vi. Works to trees;
  - vii. Prior notifications submitted in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 2, parts 6 and 7 of the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 2015;
  - viii. An application for a Certificate of Lawfulness of Existing Use or Development (CLEUD);
  - ix. An application for a Certificate of Lawfulness of Proposed Use or Development (CLOPUD); and
  - x. Non-material amendments.



### Mineral infrastructure safeguarding

**13.17** The NPPF requires Local Plans to safeguard existing, planned and potential sites for important minerals related infrastructure. This includes:

- Minerals transportation infrastructure, such as rail heads, rail links to quarries, wharfage and associated storage, handling and processing facilities for the bulk transport of minerals by rail, sea or inland waterways;
- Sites for concrete batching and the manufacture of other concrete products;
- Sites for the manufacture of coated materials; and
- Sites for the handling, processing and distribution of substitute, recycled and secondary aggregate material.

**13.18** The most strategically important sites to safeguard in the context of Northumberland are the sites that are used, or have the potential to be used, to support the transportation of minerals by rail and water. Unlike the other types of site listed above, the potential location for these facilities is more limited and there is less flexibility in terms of where these sites can be located due to their need to be connected to the existing rail network and navigable waterways, usually at ports and harbours. The safeguarding of these sites is also particularly important as the use of rail and water for the sustainable transportation of minerals is encouraged.

**13.19** The introduction of some other types of development in close proximity to sites can also raise important safeguarding issues. For example, if housing and business uses that require a high quality local environment are located close to sites used for the transportation, handling and processing of minerals it can lead to conflict. This is as a result of the potential environmental effects arising from the operation of the site, such as noise, vibration and impacts from vehicle movements; that can impact on local amenity. Policy MIN 5 therefore requires applicants of development proposals in the vicinity of the safeguarded sites to demonstrate that they will not prevent or prejudice the current or future use of the site.

**13.20** Details of the safeguarded minerals infrastructure is identified in Table 13.1 below. The boundaries of the safeguarded sites are also shown on the Policies Map.

**Table 13.1 Safeguarded minerals infrastructure**

Infrastructure Type	Site/ Facility
Rail heads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Butterwell, Linton</li> <li>• Steadsburn, Widdrington</li> <li>• Belford (Easington) Quarry</li> <li>• Potential rail depot for Cragmill Quarry, Belford</li> </ul>
Rail links to mineral sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• East Coast Main Line to Northumberland Line at Ashington via Butterwell railhead</li> <li>• East Coast Main Line to Steadsburn railhead</li> <li>• Rail links to the Port of Blyth</li> </ul>
Wharves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Battleship Wharf, Cambois</li> <li>• Tweed Dock, Berwick-upon-Tweed</li> </ul>
Concrete batching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Old Gasworks, Alnwick</li> <li>• Barrington Road, Bedlington</li> <li>• Battleship Wharf, Cambois</li> <li>• Belford South Farm, Belford</li> <li>• Townfoot, Haltwhistle</li> <li>• Howford Quarry, Acomb</li> <li>• Lynefield Park, Lynemouth</li> <li>• Red Row, Bedlington</li> <li>• Brock Lane, West Sleekburn</li> </ul>
Manufacture of concrete products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aggregate Industries, West Sleekburn</li> <li>• <a href="#">Battleship Wharf, Cambois</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">FP McCann, Littlehoughton</a></li> <li>• Lynx Precast, Lynefield Park</li> </ul>
Coating plants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barrasford Quarry</li> <li>• Cragmill Quarry</li> <li>• Divethill Quarry</li> <li>• Howick Quarry</li> <li>• Keepersfield Quarry</li> <li>• Swinburne Quarry</li> </ul>
Recycled and secondary aggregates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Coopies Haugh, Morpeth</a></li> <li>• East Cramlington</li> <li>• <a href="#">Hadston Recycling Centre</a></li> <li>• Howford Quarry</li> <li>• Lynemouth Power Station</li> <li>• Linton Transfer Station</li> <li>• Longhoughton (Ratcleugh) Quarry</li> <li>• Thornbrough Quarry</li> <li>• West Sleekburn</li> </ul>

## **Policy MIN 5**

### **Safeguarding minerals related infrastructure (Strategic Policy)**

1. The minerals related infrastructure identified in Table 13.1 and shown on the Policies Map will be safeguarded from unnecessary loss to non-mineral related development on the site or within its vicinity.
2. Proposals for non-mineral development that would result in the loss of the infrastructure will not be supported, unless it can be demonstrated that:
  - a. The proposal for non-mineral development will not prevent or prejudice the current or future use of the site;
  - b. The site is no longer needed for mineral handling, processing, storage and transport; or
  - c. Alternative capacity for mineral storage, processing and transport can be provided and delivered sustainably at an alternative site.
3. Proposals in the vicinity of minerals related infrastructure will be required to demonstrate that:
  - a. It will not place unreasonable restrictions on the operation of the minerals related infrastructure as a result of the proposal being permitted; and
  - b. Where the operation of such a site could have an adverse effect on the proposed development, the proposal provides suitable mitigation to protect local amenity.

## Aggregate minerals

**13.21** Aggregates are hard, granular materials used either on their own or with other materials for concrete, mortar, roadstone, asphalt, railway ballast, drainage courses and bulk fill. The principal aggregate minerals in Northumberland are Carboniferous limestone, igneous rock, and sand and gravel. Aggregates can also be produced from recycled material, typically recycled road planings and construction and demolition waste, and from secondary materials, which arise as a by-product of an industrial process or other quarrying operations.

**13.22** The key igneous rock resource is the Whin Sill, located around Belford and Alnwick and to the north of Hexham. The Carboniferous limestone resources are associated with the Whin Sill and are also principally found in the south and west of the County to the north east of Hexham. The principal sand and gravel resources are found along the Tyne Valley and in the Coquet, Breamish, Glen and Till valleys. Quarries with planning permission for the extraction sand and gravel and crushed rock for aggregates uses are listed in Table 13.2.

**Table 13.2 Quarries in the Northumberland Local Plan area with planning permission for the extraction of sand and gravel and crushed rock for aggregate uses and included in the landbank of permitted reserves**

Resource	Quarry name	Reserves with planning permission (As at 31 December 2017)
Sand and gravel	Ebchester (Broadoak) Quarry Haughton Strother Hedgeley Quarry Hemscott Hill Beach Lanton (Cheviot) Quarry Merryshields Quarry Wooperton Quarry	5.4 million tonnes
Crushed rock	Barrasford Quarry Belford (Easington Crag) Quarry Cocklaw Quarry Cragmill Quarry Divethill Quarry Howick Quarry Keepersshield Quarry Longhoughton (Ratcleugh) Quarry Mootlaw Quarry Swinburne Quarry	79.8 million tonnes <sup>(1)</sup>

1. The reserve figure for crushed rock has been calculated by subtracting estimated reserves at sites within the Northumberland Local Plan area from total Northumberland sales, which additionally includes reserves at a quarry within Northumberland National Park.

**13.23** The NPPF requires the preparation of an annual Local Aggregate Assessment (LAA) to assess the demand for aggregates and the options for their supply. The LAA for Northumberland has been prepared jointly with Durham County Council, Northumberland National Park Authority and the five Tyne and Wear authorities.

**13.24** In terms of sand and gravel, the LAA forecasts an annual demand of 420,000 tonnes that should be supplied from Northumberland. Based on this forecast of demand, the current reserves with planning permission for extraction would provide for 12.8 years of provision from the end of 2017. As summarised in Table 13.3, there would be a shortfall in supply to the end of the plan period. The following preferred areas site allocations have been identified in this plan to meet this forecast demand and are shown on the Policies Map:

- Anick Grange Haugh, located to the east of Hexham (9 million tonnes)
- Wooperton Quarry east extension, located to the north of Wooperton Sawmill (1 million tonnes)
- West Wharmley, located to the south of Newbrough and Fourstones (2 million tonnes)

**13.25** The allocations for sand and gravel seek to ensure that an adequate landbank of at least 7 years is maintained, provide productive capacity and ensure a balance between supply areas in the south and west of Northumberland and the north and east of Northumberland.

**Table 13.3 Summary of balance between supply and demand of sand and gravel for aggregate uses in Northumberland**

Reserves with planning permission at 31 December 2017	5,409,638 tonnes
Annual demand forecast in LAA	420,000 tonnes
Demand from 2018 to 2036	7,980,000 tonnes
Landbank at 31 December 2017	12.8 years
Balance between supply and demand to 2036	-2,570,362 tonnes
Balance between supply and demand to maintain landbank of at least 7 years in 2036	-5,510,362 tonnes

**13.26** In terms of crushed rock, the LAA forecasts an annual demand of 1,650,000 tonnes that should be supplied from Northumberland. Based on this forecast of demand, the current reserves with planning permission would provide for 49.1 years of provision from the end of 2017, and as summarised in Table 13.4, there would be no shortfall against demand up to and beyond the end of the plan period. However, the LAA indicates that some flexibility is required in terms of the policy approach to ensure additional land to provide of crushed rock for aggregates uses is available

over the plan period. This is to maintain productive capacity and a balance in supply between quarries in the north and east of Northumberland and those in the south and west of Northumberland in light of the following:

- The current planning permissions for five of the quarries producing crushed rock in Northumberland expire before the end of the plan period;
- The reserves with planning permissions for extraction within a number of the quarries are projected to be exhausted by the end of the plan period;
- A proportion of permitted reserves (estimated to be 17.5% at the end of December 2017) are contained in sites that are inactive and which have not been worked for a number of years; and
- A large proportion of the permitted reserves are contained within a single site (estimated to be 58.8% at the end of December 2017).

**Table 13.4 Summary of balance between supply and demand of crushed rock for aggregate uses in Northumberland**

Reserves with planning permission at 31 December 2017	81,015,832 tonnes <sup>(1)</sup>
Annual demand forecast in LAA	1,650,000 tonnes
Demand from 2018 to 2036	31,350,000 tonnes
Landbank of permitted reserves at 31 December 2017	49.1 years
Balance between supply and demand to 2036	+49,665,832 tonnes
Balance to maintain landbank of at least 10 years in 2036	+33,165,832 tonnes

1. Includes permitted reserves at a site within the Northumberland National Park.

**13.27** The following preferred areas site allocations have, therefore, been identified in this plan in order to maintain supply over the plan period and are shown on the Policies Map:

- Belford Quarry extension, located east of Belford (5 million tonnes)
- Divethill Quarry north and east extensions, located to the south west of Great Bavington (6.6 million tonnes)
- Longhoughton Quarry east extension, located west of Longhoughton (1.75 million tonnes)
- Northside, located south west of Kirkwhelpington (4 million tonnes)

**13.28** Policy MIN 6 provides policy for assessing proposals involving aggregate minerals and include criteria to consider proposals for borrow pits. Borrow pits are temporary aggregate mineral extraction sites that serve major construction projects, such as road schemes. Borrow pits can help to meet peaks in demand for aggregates associated with these projects as well as reducing vehicle movements and the distances aggregates are transported. Proposals for borrow pits will be assessed in the same way as proposals for other aggregates extraction and proposals for borrow pits would be required to demonstrate the materials cannot be reasonably



supplied from existing quarries or available waste materials, it is well related to the construction project it is supplying and the material extracted is only for use in the specified project.

## Policy MIN 6

### Aggregate minerals (Strategic Policy)

1. Provision **towards for** a steady and adequate supply of aggregates to meet local and wider needs will be made by:
  - a. Making land available to meet the needs for crushed rock and sand and gravel for aggregate uses identified in the Local Aggregates Assessment;
  - b. Maintaining a landbank of permitted reserves of at least seven years for sand and gravel and at least ten years for crushed rock; and
  - c. Encouraging the use of recycled and secondary aggregates by supporting proposals that maximise the use of secondary and recycled aggregates;
2. Proposals for sand and gravel extraction and crushed rock extraction for aggregate uses will be supported where they are located within a preferred area identified in Policy MIN 7 and MIN 8 and defined on the Policies Map.
3. Planning permission for extensions to existing sites and new quarries outside of the preferred areas in Policy MIN 7 and Policy MIN 8 will be supported where:
  - a. The proposal would help to maintain productive capacity to meet the required provision set out in criteria (1a and b) of this policy.
  - b. The proposal would assist in maintaining the balance between supply areas in the south and west of Northumberland and the north and east of Northumberland.
  - c. The proposal would not result in unacceptable adverse environmental, social or economic effects; and
  - d. Provision has been made for the timely restoration and subsequent aftercare of the site.
4. Borrow pits to supply aggregate minerals for major construction projects will be supported where:
  - a. The material cannot be practically supplied from existing quarries or from available waste materials;
  - b. The location of the proposal is well related to that of the construction project;
  - c. The material to be extracted is for use only in the specified project and the proposal is time limited to that of the construction project;
  - d. The proposal would not result in unacceptable adverse environmental, social or economic effects; and
  - e. Provision has been made for the adequate and timely restoration and subsequent aftercare of the borrow pit site.

**13.29** Policy MIN 7 and Policy MIN 8 allocate sites for the extraction of sand and gravel and crushed rock for aggregate uses respectively and include a set of requirements for each site that a planning application should address. The list of requirements is not exhaustive. It is expected that applications for minerals extraction would be preceded by a request for pre-application advice, which will provide more detailed, and potentially additional, requirements that should be addressed in a planning application.

### Policy MIN 7

#### Aggregate mineral site allocations - Sand and gravel (Strategic Policy)

1. Proposals for the extraction of sand and gravel for aggregate uses will be supported within the areas set out below and as defined on the Policies Map.
  - a. Anick Grange Haugh, subject to the following requirements:
    - i. Working - Phased working and restoration with prior extraction as a first phase of development in the area allocated in Policy ECN 6 (3a) for employment uses;
    - ii. Residential amenity - Appropriate separation between the proposed workings and the dwellings in the vicinity in line accordance with the requirements of Policy MIN 1. An application should be accompanied by a noise assessment considering cumulative impacts with surrounding uses;
    - iii. Utilities - Appropriate stand-off to the electricity transmission lines that cross the site or provision for their relocation;
    - iv. Green Belt - The site compound and any plant shall be located so as to reduce any impact on the openness of the Green Belt;
    - v. Transport - Lorries should travel by Ferry Road and A6079 (Rotary Way) to the A69. Mitigation measures should address potential cumulative impacts with other surrounding land uses and potential conflict with cyclists using National Cycle Network Route 72. An application should be accompanied by a Transport Assessment;
    - vi. Water environment - Mitigation to address overland flow routes and flood risk issues. An application should be accompanied by a flood risk assessment and drainage strategy;
    - vii. Nature conservation - Mitigation to address presence of protected species on site. An application should be accompanied by an Ecological Impact Assessment;
    - viii. Historic environment - An application should be accompanied by an Archaeological Assessment and Heritage Statement, which should give consideration of the visual impact of the development on the setting of designated heritage assets;
    - ix. Soils - Mitigation to address presence of best and most versatile agricultural land and to protect the soil resource;
    - x. Landscape - An application should be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. A phased working plan should seek

- to concentrate working in as small an area as possible with the use of temporary bunding to screen site activities;
- xi. Restoration - Deliver a net gain in ecological value through the creation of suitable habitats for wading birds and deliver an increase in floodplain storage. The restoration proposals should also consider the potential visual impact on the setting of designated heritage assets in the area.
- b. Wooperton Quarry east extension, subject to the following requirements:
- i. Working - Phased working and progressive restoration;
  - ii. Residential amenity - Appropriate separation between the site and dwellings in the vicinity in ~~line~~ accordance with the requirements of Policy MIN 1. An application should be accompanied by a noise assessment considering the cumulative effects with the adjacent land uses;
  - iii. Transport - Suitable access arrangements from the B6346 to the A697, including consideration of movements between the proposed site and the existing quarry site. An application should be accompanied by a Transport Assessment, including consideration of any cumulative effects;
  - iv. Water environment - An application should be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy;
  - v. Nature conservation - An application should be accompanied by an Ecological Impact Assessment;
  - vi. Historic environment - Extensive archaeological investigation, which may result in the need for preservation *in situ* of important remains. Mitigation measures are likely to include comprehensive excavation, recording, analysis and publication of archaeological remains;
  - vii. Soils - Mitigation to protect the soil resource;
  - viii. Landscape - An application should be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. A phased working plan should seek to concentrate working within in one area of the site at a time. Existing trees and hedgerows should be retained and used alongside temporary bunding to screen site activities;
  - ix. Restoration - Deliver a net gain in ecological value through the creation of shallow water and grassland habitats.
- c. West Wharmley, subject to the following requirements:
- i. Working - Phased working and restoration;
  - ii. Residential amenity - Appropriate separation between the site and dwellings in the vicinity in line with the requirements of Policy MIN 1. An application should be accompanied by a noise assessment;
  - iii. Green Belt - The site compound and any plant shall be located so as to reduce any impact on the openness of the Green Belt;
  - iv. Transport - Suitable access arrangements to the site from A69. An application should be accompanied by a Transport Assessment;

- v. Water Environment - An application should be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy;
- vi. Nature conservation - An application should demonstrate that the development will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Wharmley Riverside SSSI and the Tyne and Allen River Gravels SAC. An application should be accompanied by an Ecological Impact Assessment;
- vii. Historic environment - An application should be accompanied by an Archaeological Assessment and a Heritage Statement, which should give consideration to the visual impact of the development on the settings of the Scheduled Monument of Red House Roman Fort, The Frontiers of the Roman Empire: Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site, Newborough Conservation Area and relevant listed buildings;
- viii. Soils - Mitigation to protect the soil resource;
- ix. Landscape - An application should be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. A phased working plan should seek to concentrate working in as small an area as possible. Temporary bunding should be used to screen site activities and existing trees and hedgerows should be retained to mitigate the impact on the landscape;
- x. Restoration - Deliver a net gain in ecological value through the creation of suitable habitats for wading birds and deliver an increase in floodplain storage. The restoration proposals should also consider the potential visual impact on the setting of designated heritage assets in the area.

### Policy MIN 8

#### Aggregate mineral site allocations - Crushed rock (Strategic Policy)

Proposals for the extraction of crushed rock for aggregate uses will be supported within the areas detailed in this policy and defined on the Policies Map.

- a. Belford Quarry extension, subject to the following requirements
  - i. Working - Phased working and restoration in conjunction with that of the existing site;
  - ii. Residential amenity - Appropriate separation between the proposed workings and the dwellings in the vicinity in line with the requirements of Policy MIN 1. An application should be accompanied by a noise assessment;
  - iii. Utilities - An application should demonstrate that there would not be harmful impacts on private water supplies and associated infrastructure;
  - iv. Transport - An application should be accompanied by a Transport Assessment. Access to the site should be via the existing access to the quarry;

- v. Public Rights of Way - An application should demonstrate that the safety of the Public Right of Way that crosses the site access;
  - vi. Water environment - An application should be accompanied by a flood risk assessment and drainage strategy;
  - vii. Nature conservation - An application should be accompanied by an Ecological Impact Assessment;
  - viii. Historic environment - An application should be accompanied by an Archaeological Assessment and a Heritage Statement, which should give consideration of the visual impact of the development on the setting of Kippy Heugh Scheduled Monument;
  - ix. Soils - Mitigation to protect the soil resource;
  - x. Landscape - An application should be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Consideration should be given to what mitigation measures could be used to provide screening of site activities;
  - xi. Restoration - Deliver a net gain in ecological value through the creation of whin grassland. The restoration proposals should also consider the potential visual impact on the setting of Kippy Heugh Scheduled Monument.
- b. Divethill Quarry north and east extensions, subject to the following requirements:
- i. Working - Phased working and restoration, which should seek to ensure the concurrent working of either of the extension areas and existing site is avoided;
  - ii. Residential amenity - Appropriate separation between the proposed workings and the dwellings in the vicinity in line with Policy MIN 1. An application should be accompanied by a noise assessment;
  - iii. Transport - Access to the site shall be by the access to the existing quarry. An application should be accompanied by a Transport Assessment;
  - iv. Public Rights of Way - Mitigation to address potentially adverse effects on users of the Public Footpath to the east, which is part of the St Oswald's Way long distance route;
  - v. Water environment - Assessment of, and mitigation to address, overland flow routes and flood risk issues. An application should be accompanied by a flood risk assessment and drainage strategy;
  - vi. Nature conservation - Mitigation to address the potentially adverse effects on the whin grassland communities within the Divethill and Claywalls Local Wildlife and Geological site. An application should demonstrate that the development will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Bavington Crags SSSI. An application should be accompanied by an Ecological Impact Assessment;
  - vii. Historic environment - An application should be accompanied by an Archaeological Assessment and a Heritage Statement, which should give consideration to the visual impact of the development on the setting of Great Bavington Conservation Area and other designated heritage assets;
  - viii. Soils - Mitigation to protect the soil resource;



- ix. Landscape - An application should be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Consideration should be given to what mitigation measures could be used to provide screening of site activities;
  - x. Restoration - Deliver a net gain in ecological value through the creation of whin grassland and improvements to flood risk if possible. Restore watercourses across the site to their original state, with improvements if possible. Consider the potential visual impact on the setting of designated heritage assets in the area;
- c. Longhoughton Quarry extension, subject to the following requirements:
- i. Working - Phased working and restoration, which should seek to ensure the concurrent working of the extension area and existing site is avoided;
  - ii. Residential amenity - Appropriate separation between the proposed workings and the dwellings in the vicinity in line with the requirements of Policy MIN 1. An application should be accompanied by a noise assessment, which should include consideration of the adjacent permitted waste management operation;
  - iii. Transport - An application should be accompanied by a Transport Assessment considering vehicle generation from the extended site. An increase in vehicular movements compared to the current permission is unlikely to be acceptable;
  - iv. Public Rights of Way - The Public Footpath that crosses the site should be protected and if disruption is unavoidable it should be diverted or a safe and convenient alternative route created both during extraction and restoration;
  - v. Water environment - Mitigation to address and, where necessary monitor, overland flow routes, discharge rates, storage of surface water and flood risk issues. An application should be accompanied by a flood risk assessment and drainage strategy;
  - vi. Nature conservation - An application should be accompanied by an Ecological Impact Assessment and include mitigation, avoidance and compensation measures to address presence of protected species on site;
  - vii. Historic environment - An application should be accompanied by an Archaeological Assessment;
  - viii. Soils - Mitigation to protect the soil resource;
  - ix. Landscape - An application should be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. A phased working plan should seek to ensure the concurrent working of the extension area and existing site is avoided. Existing trees and hedgerows should be retained around the site boundaries and used alongside temporary bunding to screen site activities;
  - x. Restoration - Deliver a net gain in ecological value through the creation of whin and limestone grassland and provide a lake to deliver flood protection. The restoration proposals should consider the potential visual impact on the setting of designated heritage assets in the area.
- d. Northside, subject to the following requirements:
- i. Working - Phased working and restoration;

- ii. Residential amenity - Appropriate separation between the proposed workings and the dwellings in the vicinity in line with Policy MIN 1. An application should be accompanied by a noise assessment;
- iii. Transport - An application should be accompanied by a Transport Assessment considering how the site is to be accessed for two-way vehicle movements from the A696;
- iv. Public Rights of Way - The Public Footpath and Bridleway, which is part of the St Oswald's Way long distance route, that cross the site should be protected and if disruption is unavoidable they should be diverted or a safe and convenient alternative route created both during extraction and restoration. Mitigation to address potentially adverse effects on users of the Public Byway to the south, which is also part of the St Oswald's Way long distance route. ;
- v. Water environment - Mitigation to address water flow and flood risk issues. An application should be accompanied by a flood risk assessment and drainage strategy;
- vi. Nature conservation - An application should be accompanied by an Ecological Impact Assessment;
- vii. Historic environment - An application should be accompanied by an Archaeological Assessment;
- viii. Soils - Mitigation to protect the soil resource;
- ix. Landscape - An application should be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Consideration should be given to what mitigation measures could be used to provide screening of site activities;
- x. Restoration - Deliver a net gain in ecological value through the creation of whin grassland and restore, and if possible improve, water courses to enhance flood alleviation for downstream areas. Consider the potential visual impact on the setting of designated heritage assets in the area. The new access road and junction from A696 shall be removed or scaled back.

### Coal

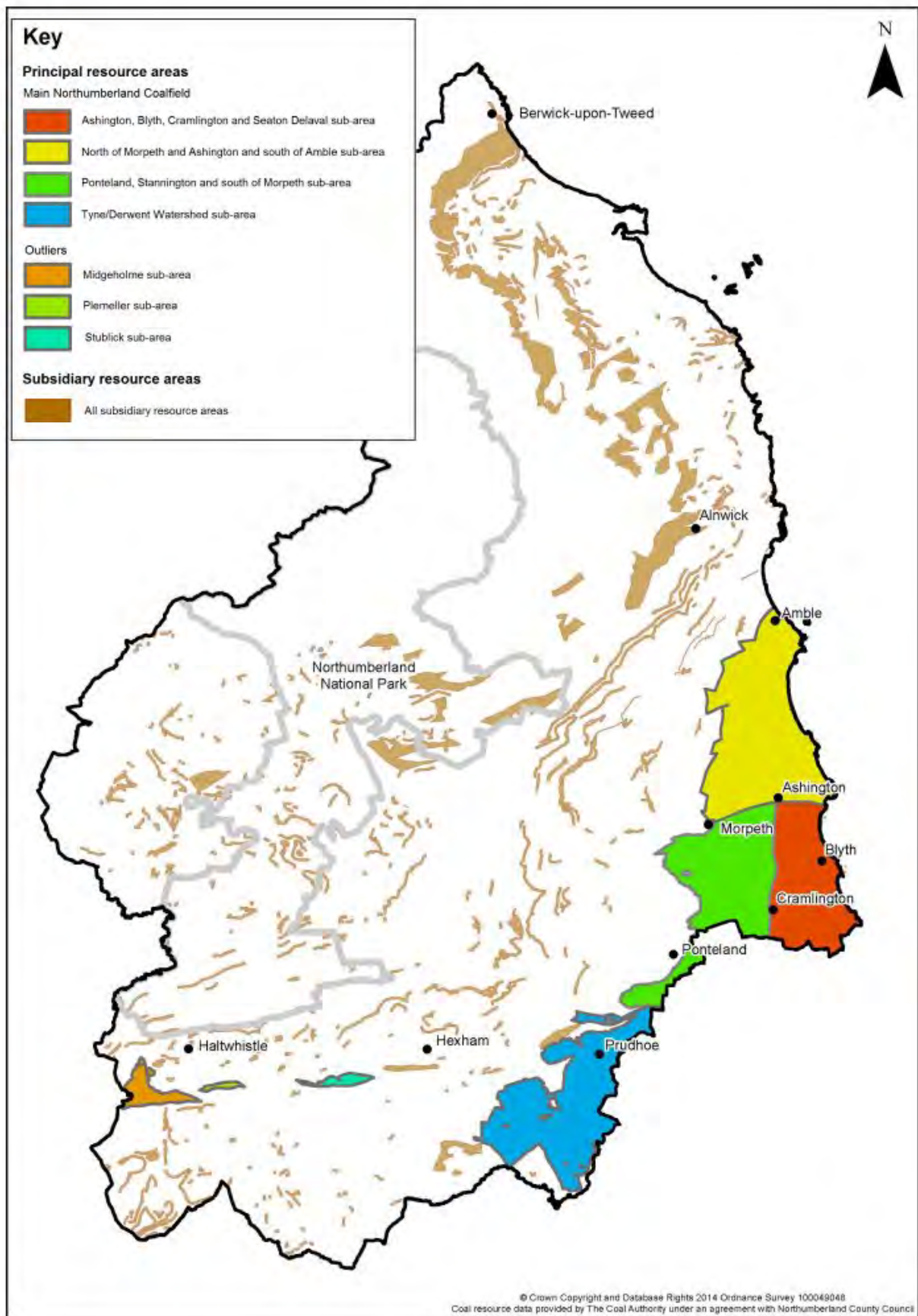
- 13.30** Northumberland has a long history of coal extraction and the surface mines in the County have made a significant contribution to meeting national demand for coal in recent years. The demand for coal has, however, reduced significantly in recent years as a result of government policies to address climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions through encouraging the replacement of coal fired power stations with lower carbon alternatives by the mid-2020s. Future demand for coal in the UK is likely to come from the industrial sector, including steel and cement manufacture. The Local Plan provides a policy to assess the acceptability of proposals for coal extraction, particularly in terms of potential adverse effects of the extraction operations on local communities and the environment. The effects arising from the use of coal following extraction is outside of the remit of the Local Plan policy.
- 13.31** The coal resource in Northumberland is found across extensive areas of the County and is shown in Figure 13.1. The resource has been divided into 'principal resource areas'<sup>(101)</sup> and 'subsidiary resource areas'<sup>(102)</sup>. The principal resource areas represent the most important resource areas in Northumberland due to the closely-spaced nature of the coal seams and the quality of the coal found in these areas.
- 13.32** All proposals for coal extraction in Northumberland will be assessed against the overarching policy test for coal extraction, which is set out in Policy MIN 9. The criteria in Policy MIN 1 (Environmental criteria for assessing minerals proposals) will be used to assess environmental acceptability of the proposals and Policy MIN 2 identifies the benefits arising from the proposals that will be given consideration.
- 13.33** In addition, Policy MIN 9 divides the principal resource areas into sub-areas, recognising the characteristics of these sub-areas and the specific issues associated with coal extraction in these areas<sup>(103)</sup>, and identifies the key environmental issues within the principal resource areas that are particularly relevant to assessing acceptability of proposals for coal extraction in these areas.

101 The 'Principal resource areas' comprise closely-spaced coals within the Coal Measures.

102 The 'Subsidiary resource areas' comprise much more widely-spaced coals in Lower Carboniferous.

103 The key matters identified have been informed by the Landscape Character Assessment, the Key Land Use Impact Study, the Environmental Considerations and Mineral Resources Study and the criteria in the existing policies in the Minerals Local Plan (2000).

Figure 13.1 Coal resource areas in Northumberland



**The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies.**

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## Policy MIN 9

### Coal (Strategic Policy)

1. Planning permission for coal extraction shall not be granted unless:
  - a. It can be demonstrated by the applicant that the proposal is environmentally acceptable, or can be made so by planning conditions or obligations; or
  - b. If it is not environmentally acceptable, then it provides national, local or community benefits which clearly outweigh its likely impacts (taking all relevant matters into account, including any residual environmental impacts).
2. Within each of the following sub-areas, proposals will be required to address the following key matters:
  - a. North of Morpeth and Ashington and south of Amble:
    - i. The cumulative effects arising from the proposals in the context of an area that has experienced widespread, large-scale surface coal extraction over a number of decades;
    - ii. The effects of the proposal on the enhancement or restoration of the character of the landscape in this area;
    - iii. The effects on the conservation and enhancement of the nature conservation interest and landscape character along the Druridge Bay coastal strip; and
    - iv. The impact on the openness of the Green Belt around Morpeth;
  - b. Ashington, Blyth, Cramlington and Seaton Delaval:
    - i. The extent to which the proposals contribute to the enhancement of the landscape in this area;
    - ii. The effects on maintaining the openness of the countryside between the settlements, including the impact on the openness of the Green Belt to the south of Blyth, Cramlington and around Seaton Delaval;
    - iii. The effects on the ability to attract inward investment to the area, including effects on the quality of the environment around key employment sites; and
    - iv. The effects on the significance of the historic features and historic landscape to the east of Seaton Delaval around Seaton Delaval Hall.
  - c. Ponteland, Stannington and south of Morpeth:
    - i. The extent to which the proposals contribute to the enhancement of the landscape in this area;
    - ii. The impact on the openness of the Green Belt to the south and east of Ponteland, around Stannington and around Morpeth;

- iii. The effects on the nature conservation interests at Stannington Vale and along the River Blyth and at Prestwick Carr;
  - iv. The effects on the significance of the historic features and landscapes at Blagdon and St Mary's Hospital; and
  - v. The cumulative effects from surface coal extraction in the adjoining Newcastle Metropolitan Borough area.
- d. Tyne/Derwent Watershed:
  - i. The visibility of proposals from surrounding areas, particularly from the Tyne Valley, the North Pennines AONB and areas within and adjoining the Derwent Valley within County Durham;
  - ii. The impact on the openness of the Green Belt between Whittonstall, Stocksfield, Prudhoe and around Hedley on the Hill; and
  - iii. The effects on areas of ancient woodland and local wildlife sites in the north of the area and along the Derwent Valley.
- e. Midgeholme outlier:
  - i. The effects on the setting of the adjacent North Pennines AONB;
  - ii. The impact on the nature conservation areas that are found to the south and east of the resource area; and
  - iii. The effects on the adjoining areas within Cumbria and any cumulative effects from surface coal extraction in the area of the Midgeholme coalfield within Cumbria.
- f. Plenmeller outlier and Stublick outlier:
  - i. The effects on the special qualities and the statutory purposes of the North Pennines AONB, with development for coal extraction subject to the policy tests for major development in a nationally important landscape; and
  - ii. The effects on the nationally and international important nature conservation sites within the North Pennines.



### Clays

- 13.34** The clay resources that are found in Northumberland include fireclays, coal measures mudstone, brick shale and glacial clays. These resources have principally been extracted for use as a raw material in the manufacture of bricks, pipes and tiles.
- 13.35** Fireclay is particularly valued for its use in the manufacture of buff-coloured bricks and the extent of this mineral largely coincides with the coal resource. Fireclay deposits in Northumberland are relatively thin, which means that extraction on its own is not economically viable and it is extracted concurrently with coal at surface coal sites. The Local Plan will allow for the continuation of supply of fireclay to brickworks by supporting its extraction and recovery concurrently with coal. Given the economics associated with extraction and the relationship with coal, it is not possible to identify a landbank as required by the NPPF across Northumberland.
- 13.36** Glacial clay has previously been extracted from the Thrunton Brickworks site but has now ceased, along with the manufacture of bricks at the adjacent brickworks. Significant reserves of clay with planning permission for extraction remain at the site and it is proposed to safeguard this resource through Policy MIN 10.
- 13.37** Where clay is extracted as an ancillary mineral, any proposals for the stockpiling of material that cannot be used by brickworks at the time of extraction will be considered favourably where they comply with the criteria set out in Policies MIN 1 and MIN 2 and it does not delay site restoration.

### Policy MIN 10

#### Clays (Strategic Policy)

1. Proposals for new clay extraction sites will be supported where:
  - a. It would enable a stock of permitted reserves of at least 25 years to be maintained;
  - b. The need for the clay cannot be met from existing reserves with planning permission, or a site closer to a brickworks;
  - c. It can be demonstrated that the proposal would not result in unacceptable adverse environmental, social and economic effects; and
  - d. Provision has been made for the adequate and timely restoration and subsequent aftercare of the site.
2. Proposals for the extraction of brick-making clays, particularly fireclays, concurrently with coal will be supported where:
  - a. The proposals meet the policy tests for coal extraction;
  - b. Site restoration can take place in a timely manner;
  - c. It will enable the efficient use of the clay resource; and

- d. The proposals would ensure that the clay resource is not needlessly sterilised.
3. Proposals for the stockpiling of clay extracted as an ancillary mineral will be supported where:
- a. It can be demonstrated that the proposal would not result in unacceptable adverse environmental, social and economic effects; and
  - b. Provision has been made for the timely and adequate restoration and subsequent aftercare of the site.

### Natural building and roofing stone

**13.38** Sandstone from Northumberland is mainly used as a building material and has been quarried in the County for many years. Its use makes an important contribution to defining the character and appearance of the County's towns, villages, castles, country houses and farm steadings. Its influence also extends further afield, including Edinburgh for example. Many of the building stone quarries in Northumberland are small-scale and are only worked intermittently, responding to demand from specific building or restoration projects where the material with those characteristics is specified. It is therefore difficult to predict future demand for building stone and consequent quarrying activity over the plan period as most of the demand arises from specific building or restoration projects. The Local Plan will however seek to ensure that a steady, adequate and diverse supply of building stone is maintained over the plan period whilst ensuring that the environmental effects from proposals are acceptable.

**13.39** The strategy for natural building and roofing stone is that existing quarries will primarily meet demand during the plan period, with proposals for extensions to existing quarries (including historic quarries which do not have a current planning permission), and for new quarries, being permitted where this would help maintain a steady, adequate and diverse supply of materials and complies with the environmental safeguards set out in Policy MIN 1.

## Policy MIN 11

### Natural building and roofing stone (Strategic Policy)

1. Proposals for the provision of building and roofing stone from new quarries, including historic quarries which do not have a current planning permission, and extensions to existing quarries will be supported where the applicant can demonstrate that:

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- a. The proposal would assist in maintaining a steady, adequate and diverse supply of building and roofing stone or would provide material specifically for the repair of identified heritage assets;
- b. The proposal would not result in unacceptable environmental, social and economic effects; and
- c. Provision has been made for the timely and adequate restoration and subsequent aftercare of the site.

### Conventional and unconventional oil and gas

**13.40** The policy for oil and gas extraction covers both conventional and unconventional hydrocarbons. Conventional oil and gas is where the reservoir is sandstone or limestone and unconventional hydrocarbons refers to oil and gas that comes from sources such as shale or coal seams which act as the reservoirs.

**13.41** In terms of conventional oil and gas, the Carboniferous rocks in Northumberland are identified as having energy generating potential but this potential has not been realised during previous exploration for a viable resource. There are currently no licences for exploration, appraisal or production in Northumberland.

**13.42** Northumberland also has potential for the recovery of gas from coal seams and coal mines and underground coal gasification. The prospects for exploiting these technologies within Northumberland are currently considered to be poor, due to the extensive previous working of the coal resource, and the methane content is considered to be too low to support commercial extraction. There is, however, the potential for underground coal gasification off the South East Northumberland coast, which is outside the area covered by this plan. This could result in proposals for onshore infrastructure to support the production boreholes offshore.

**13.43** The geology of Northumberland has also been identified as having the potential for shale gas, which is able to be extracted using hydraulic fracturing (commonly referred to as 'fracking'). This potential resource is currently untested and it is not known whether an extractable resource is present in Northumberland.

**13.44** The exploration, appraisal or production phase of oil and gas extraction can only take place in areas where the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy have first issued a license. An operator must then obtain planning permission from the County Council as Mineral Planning Authority. However, a number of matters related to oil and gas development are regulated by other agencies, such as the Environment Agency and Health and Safety Executive. Mineral Planning Authorities should not duplicate other regulatory regimes and should assume that these regulatory regimes operate as intended, however, it is recognised that there are matters covered by other regulatory regimes that may be relevant to Mineral Planning Authorities. The policies for oil and gas therefore focus on those matters of relevance to planning.

**The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies.**

**13.45** The policy for oil and gas extraction provides policy criteria to assess proposals which may come forward during the plan period. This is considered appropriate given the uncertainties regarding the future prospects for oil and gas extraction in Northumberland. Many of the planning issues associated with oil and gas development, such as potential pollution of land, air and water, disturbance from noise, visual impact and transportation issues, are similar to the environmental issues that proposals for other types of minerals raise and these matters will be assessed against the requirements of Policy MIN 1. Nonetheless, there are some specific planning matters that are relevant to oil and gas development proposals, including the need for exploration, appraisal and production phases of hydrocarbon development, which are covered in Policy MIN 12.

## **Policy MIN 12**

### **Conventional and unconventional oil and gas (Strategic Policy)**

1. Proposals for exploration and/or appraisal will be supported where the applicant can demonstrate that:
  - a. The site and the associated equipment and facilities are appropriately sited to ensure they do not have unacceptable adverse environmental, social and economic effects;
  - b. There would be no unacceptable adverse impact on the underlying integrity of the geological structure;
  - c. Operations are for an agreed, temporary length of time; and
  - d. Provision has been made for the timely restoration and subsequent aftercare of the site, whether or not oil or gas is found.
2. Proposals for production will be supported where the applicant can demonstrate that:
  - a. The site and the associated equipment and facilities are appropriately sited to ensure they do not have unacceptable adverse environmental, social and economic effects;
  - b. There would be no unacceptable adverse impact on the underlying integrity of the geological structure;
  - c. The proposal is supported by a full appraisal programme;
  - d. The proposal would facilitate the full development of the resource; and
  - e. Provision has been made for the timely restoration and subsequent aftercare of the site.

### Peat

- 13.46** Peat has traditionally been extracted from Northumberland for use in horticulture and as a fuel. The NPPF is clear that local plans should neither identify new sites nor extensions to existing sites for extraction. This is in line with wider Government policy, which seeks to protect peat habitats because of their nature conservation importance and their carbon storage role.
- 13.47** In line with the NPPF the approach is not to allow new sites for peat extraction and extensions to existing sites. Time extensions to previously worked peat extractions sites would be supported where the policy criteria are met with the merits of a proposal considered on a case-by-case basis having specific regard to the effects on nature conservation and climate change.

### Policy MIN 13

#### Peat (Strategic Policy)

1. Proposals for new peat extraction sites or extensions to existing peat extraction sites will not be permitted in order to protect peat habitats for their nature conservation value and their role as a carbon store.
2. Time extensions to previously worked peat extraction sites will be supported where the applicant can demonstrate that the proposal:
  - a. Is necessary to enable appropriate restoration of the site and only peat physically required to implement that restoration is removed;
  - b. Provides enhancements for biodiversity and local ecological networks;
  - c. Would not result in unacceptable environmental, social and economic effects; and
  - d. Will deliver clear benefits.

### Vein minerals

- 13.48** The North Pennine Orefield extends into the south west of Northumberland. The industrial minerals, fluorspar, witherite and barite occur in veins with lead and zinc ores, and have been the principal minerals produced across the wider North Pennines in the latter part of the twentieth century. There has been no recent extraction in Northumberland.
- 13.49** Given that the occurrence of these resources in Northumberland overlaps with the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which extends into the neighbouring areas of County Durham and Cumbria, the proposed strategy for metalliferous and vein minerals is to consider proposals against the overarching policy for the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the tests for

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major development within this area. The overlap of the resource with nationally and internationally important nature conservation designations in the North Pennines means that the effects on these designations will also be a key consideration in determining the acceptability of proposals. Proposals will also be guided by the overarching policies for minerals.



### Introduction to waste

- 13.50** Waste is defined as material or an object which is no longer wanted and requires management. However, rather than being treated as something that needs to be disposed of, the waste is recognised as an important and valuable resource. The Local Plan, has an important role in providing opportunities for a network of facilities that will assist in continuing to move waste management in Northumberland up the 'waste hierarchy' (see Figure 13.2) and assist in recovering these resources rather than disposing of them. This will help to deliver the Local Plan objective to manage the prudent use of Northumberland's natural resources while producing less waste and minimising impacts on local communities and the environment.
- 13.51** The waste management sector also provides important opportunities for economic growth and employment through the development of new and enhanced facilities for waste re-use, recycling and recovery.

**Figure 13.2 Waste Hierarchy**



- 13.52** The management and disposal of waste is regulated by other public agencies and it is assumed that these regulatory regimes operate as intended. The policies relating to waste management and disposal facilities therefore focus on those matters of relevance to planning.

### The amount of waste we need to plan for

- 13.53** Households, businesses and other institutions produce a range of wastes that require management and it is important to understand the amount of waste generated and requiring management. Tables 13.7 and 13.8 set out the tonnages of municipal waste (local authority collected waste) and commercial and industrial waste that are forecast to arise over the plan period and how these are likely to be managed.
- 13.54** It is recognised that the amount of municipal waste (local authority collected waste) currently collected is less than forecast and that this pattern of reduction is likely to continue over the plan period.

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**13.55** The forecasts show some increase in the waste arisings over the plan period. This is due to a projected increase in the number of households in Northumberland over this period, which in turn is projected to result in an overall increase in total arisings despite a decrease in the waste produced per household. Similarly, there is a projected rise in commercial and industrial waste arisings due to forecast economic growth and increased economic activity. It is projected that 8% of local authority collected waste will be managed by landfill throughout the plan period. This is a significant reduction from that managed by landfill prior to 2009, which was in excess of 100,000 tonnes per year. The proportion is assumed to remain at this level because it represents the minimum amount of waste that is either unable to be managed using alternative methods or that has to be managed in this way, for example, because the recovery facility is temporarily unavailable for maintenance purposes. Notwithstanding this, the recovery of local authority collected waste is therefore estimated to be around 92% over the plan period.

**Table 13.5 Summary of projected arisings and management of local authority collected waste from Northumberland for selected years<sup>(1)</sup>**

Year	Projected waste arisings (tonnes)	Waste recycled (tonnes)	Waste recovered (tonnes) <sup>(2)</sup>	Residual waste to landfill (tonnes)
2014/15	208,760	83,504	192,059	16,701
2019/20	220,113	92,447	202,504	17,609
2024/25	232,071	99,795	213,515	18,556
2029/30	244,698	110,114	225,122	19,576

1. Notes: Figures taken from Northumberland County Council's municipal waste management contract.

2. Includes re-use, recycling, composting and recovery

**Table 13.6 Summary of projected arisings and management of commercial and industrial waste for Northumberland for selected years<sup>(1)</sup>**

Year	Projected arisings (tonnes)	Estimated re-use, recycling and recovery (tonnes)	Estimated waste for disposal (tonnes)
2014/15	208,000	148,000	60,000
2019/20	202,000	164,000	38,000
2024/25	197,000	160,000	37,000
2029/30	193,000	157,000	36,000

1. Notes: Figures taken from the North East Waste Forecasting Study.

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**Table 13.7 Summary of projected arisings and management of hazardous waste for Northumberland for selected years<sup>(1)</sup>**

Year	Projected arisings (tonnes)	Estimated re-use, recycling and recovery (tonnes)	Estimated waste for disposal (tonnes)
2014/15	21,000	18,000	3,000
2019/20	20,000	17,000	3,000
2024/25	20,000	17,000	3,000
2029/30	19,000	16,000	3,000

1. Notes: Figures taken from the North East Waste Forecasting Study.

**13.56** Work has been undertaken in partnership with Durham County Council and four of the Tyne and Wear authorities to gather information on the generation of low level radioactive wastes in Northumberland. The study found that relatively low volumes of such wastes are generated in Northumberland, particularly compared with the volumes generated nationally. As the majority of such material can be managed alongside municipal, commercial and industrial waste the study recommended that local provision of specialist facilities for this waste stream is not required. The low level of local arisings is also unlikely to reach a critical mass upon which the development of specialist local facilities would be required.

### Waste prevention and minimisation

**13.57** Waste prevention and minimisation is at the top of the waste hierarchy and if achieved will reduce the amount of waste that requires processing and/or disposal.

**13.58** There are a number of ways the amount of waste produced can be reduced, however many of the tools to do this are outside of the planning system and cannot be influenced by Local Plan policy. One way the Local Plan can help is to ensure that waste associated with the construction and occupation of new development is reduced as much as possible. Policy QOP 5 Sustainable design and construction encourages waste generated during construction to be minimised and space to be provided within developments to allow waste to be separated for re-use and recycling.

## Provision for waste re-use, recycling and recovery capacity

- 13.59** It is recognised that Northumberland already has a well-established and appropriately distributed network of waste management facilities with significant capacity. There will, however, be opportunities over the plan period to improve recycling and recovery rates, particularly with respect to residual commercial and industrial waste. In respect of local authority collected waste, the Municipal Waste Management Strategy identifies a long-term aspiration to provide household waste recovery centres to serve the Coquet valley, North Tyne valley and Amble areas, where access to facilities is currently poor. The Municipal Waste Management Strategy also identifies a need to replace the Seghill facility (which has now closed) in the Cramlington area. Funding to deliver these facilities is unlikely to become available but it remains an aspiration to improve the provision of household waste recovery centres, which should be acknowledged in the Local Plan.
- 13.60** The policy for the provision of new or enhanced waste recycling and recovery facilities is to focus provision on Northumberland's Main Towns and Service Centres. These locations represent the principal sources of waste generation in the County, given the size of their populations, their critical mass of commercial and industrial activity and focus for new development. Because of a concentration of existing facilities and good transport links, including rail links, West Sleekburn area is recognised as a strategically important location for waste management.
- 13.61** The development of waste recycling and recovery facilities outside these locations, in smaller settlements, will generally be smaller-scale facilities (in a Northumberland context a small-scale facility is considered to have an annual capacity of less than 10,000 tonnes), which will be supported where it can be demonstrated that they are located reasonably close to the source of the waste; and/or are to manage waste arising in a local catchment; and the transport network is adequate to accommodate the proposed import and export of material from the site.
- 13.62** The policy also sets out a sequential approach to selecting sites with the on-site management of wastes and the co-location with existing uses preferred ahead of other locations and greenfield sites the least preferred location. The policy recognises that sites identified for employment uses in the plan will be suitable for new or enhanced waste management facilities where the design is compatible with its location, is enclosed within a building, the proposal addresses any potential transport impacts and there are no unacceptable adverse effects on amenity or the natural and historic environment. The policy does not designate industrial estates in recognition that the individual industrial estates in Northumberland are not homogenous, which means a proposal may be acceptable on one part of a particular industrial estate but not acceptable on another part of the same estate depending on the type and characteristics of the development proposals.
- 13.63** On-farm locations will be most appropriate for the treatment of organic and agricultural wastes, including anaerobic digestion and composting. In addition, some waste management techniques, such as open windrow composting, can operate in an outdoor location and this is recognised in the policy.

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## Policy WAS 1

### Principles for the location of waste re-use, recycling and recovery facilities (Strategic Policy)

1. Proposals for new or enhanced waste management facilities for re-use, recycling and recovery will be supported where:
  - a. They are located within or close to one of Northumberland's Main Towns or Service Centres; or
  - b. They are located outside of one of Northumberland's Main Towns or Service Centres but would supplement the provision of an accessible network of local facilities and has suitable connections to the transport network.
2. Proposals should have regard to the locational sequential order of preference below:
  - a. On-site management of waste where it arises;
  - b. Co-location of sites with an existing waste management use and with complementary activities, including the extension of existing facilities, where it can be demonstrated by the applicant that there are no unacceptable adverse cumulative environmental effects from site operations or the transportation of waste; and
  - c. Sites identified for employment uses, previously developed land, active quarries for managing inert construction and demolition waste or redundant agricultural and forestry buildings and their curtilages.
3. In respect to (2), the following locations will also be considered:
  - a. On-farm locations for small-scale facilities to manage agricultural wastes, including anaerobic digestion and composting, will be acceptable in principle where it is located within or is well related to an existing farm complex; and
  - b. Construction/demolition sites on active quarries to manage inert construction and demolition waste will be acceptable in principle for either the life of the construction/demolition project or quarry;
4. Facilities involving the recovery of energy from waste should also give preference to sites with the potential to utilise the energy and heat produced.

## Policy WAS 2

### Development management criteria for waste re-use, recycling and recovery facilities

Proposals for new or enhanced waste re-use, recycling and recovery facilities will be supported where:

- a. The design is compatible with its location in terms of its siting, scale, mass, form and landscaping and contributes positively to the quality and character of the area where it is located;
- b. The facility is fully contained within buildings or enclosed structures, unless it can be demonstrated that any unacceptable adverse environmental effects can be effectively mitigated and/or it is a facility that genuinely requires an outdoor location;
- c. The proposal is well related to the transport network and, where practical, located and designed to enable transport by rail or water. Where road transport is proposed the applicant shall demonstrate that there would be no unacceptable adverse effects on the surrounding highway network and infrastructure capacity, or such effects can be suitably mitigated;
- d. The proposal helps to support a reduction in the distance waste is transported for management, whilst recognising the economics may mean facilities have to operate over large catchments;
- e. The proposal would not result in unacceptable adverse effects on the natural or historic environment, sensitive receptors or residential amenity as a result of noise, dust, lighting, vibration, odour, vermin and birds, litter and visual intrusion; and
- f. The proposal would not give rise to unacceptable adverse cumulative effects.

## Waste disposal

**13.64** In accordance with the waste hierarchy, waste disposal is viewed as the last option for managing waste. However, waste disposal will remain necessary over the plan period to manage waste which is not currently recyclable, including residues remaining after recycling and recovery has occurred. The projections of the tonnages of residual wastes requiring disposal over the plan period are presented in Table 13.5 and 13.6.

**13.65** Landfill sites are split into three distinct categories: non-hazardous landfill, hazardous landfill and inert landfill. In Northumberland there is one non-hazardous landfill site at Ellington Road near Ashington. This site is recognised as a strategically important site for the disposal of residual waste arising in Northumberland, Newcastle and North Tyneside. The strategic role of this site will continue during the plan period due to its remaining capacity.

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**13.66** The preferred approach for waste disposal is to seek to minimise the volumes of waste disposed in this way, maximise the levels of recycling and recovery and plan for a reducing amount of disposal. The preferred approach recognises the strategic role of the Ellington Road landfill site and sets criteria to assess proposals which come forward over the plan period. For inert waste disposal, the preferred policy approach is to maximise construction and demolition waste recycling and where this is not feasible to encourage the positive use of material for the restoration of mineral extraction sites or for land reclamation and improvement schemes.

### Policy WAS 3

#### Waste disposal (Strategic Policy)

1. The strategy for hazardous and non-hazardous waste disposal is to:
  - a. Seek to minimise waste managed by landfill and maximise the use of solutions higher up the waste hierarchy;
  - b. Focus disposal and any further disposal capacity over the plan period at Ellington Road Landfill Site. Alternative locations will be considered where it can be demonstrated that these are more sustainable, particularly in terms of their proximity to the main sources of waste arisings, their transport connections and environmental acceptability; and
  - c. Encourage the positive use of inert waste material through the restoration of mineral extraction sites and for land reclamation and improvement schemes, where it is possible to do so.
2. Proposals for additional disposal capacity will be supported where:
  - a. It can be demonstrated by the applicant that the waste cannot be practically managed using solutions higher up the waste hierarchy;
  - b. It can be demonstrated by the applicant that the proposal would not have an unacceptable adverse effect on local communities, sensitive receptors and the natural and historic environment;
  - c. The proposal would not result in the creation of excessive capacity which would lead to the unnecessary import of waste from outside Northumberland, whilst recognising that the economics and the specialist nature of some facilities may mean they operate over larger than local catchments;
  - d. The proposal is well related to the transport network and, where practical, located and designed to enable transport by rail or water. Where road transport is proposed the applicant shall demonstrate that there would be no unacceptable adverse effects on the surrounding highway network and infrastructure capacity, or such effects can be suitably mitigated through improvement measures;
  - e. It makes provision for the capture and use of landfill gas for energy generation, where the proposal involves the disposal of non-inert waste; and
  - f. The proposal is supported by a detailed restoration and aftercare scheme.

### Safeguarding waste management facilities

- 13.67** Waste management facilities are important elements of Northumberland's infrastructure and are crucial for the sustainable management of waste in line with the waste hierarchy. It is, therefore, important to safeguard them to ensure their continued availability and to avoid the capacity they provide being lost unnecessarily.
- 13.68** The introduction of other types of development, such as housing and business uses that require a high quality local environment, in close proximity to waste management facilities can lead to conflict as a result of the potential effects on amenity arising from the operation of the facility.
- 13.69** The Local Plan will safeguard these facilities to ensure the need to maintain waste management infrastructure is considered during the determination of planning applications for development in their vicinity. Appendix C provides details on the waste management facilities to be safeguarded.

## Policy WAS 4

### Safeguarding waste management facilities (Strategic Policy)

1. Existing waste management facilities (as shown on the Policies Map) will be safeguarded from development that would prejudice or prevent the use of the site for waste management uses.
2. Proposals within or in the vicinity of an existing waste management facility will be supported where the applicant can demonstrate that:
  - a. The proposal will not prevent or unreasonably restrict the operation of the waste development;
  - b. There is no longer a need for the facility;
  - c. The continued use of the site for waste management purposes would be unacceptable in terms of its effects on local communities and/or the environment;
  - d. The current use of the site for waste management is temporary and unsuitable for continued future use for waste management;
  - e. A suitable alternative site for the waste management use is available and has planning permission; or
  - f. There is an overriding need for the proposed development that provides wider benefits that clearly outweigh those from the retention of the site for waste use.

### Introduction to renewable and low carbon energy

- 13.70** Increasing the amount of energy from renewable and low carbon technologies will help to ensure the UK has a secure energy supply, reduce greenhouse gas emissions to slow down climate change and stimulate investment in new jobs and businesses. The planning process has an important role in the delivery of new renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure by supporting development in locations where the local environmental impact is acceptable.
- 13.71** In Northumberland there is potential to generate renewable energy from a number of sources, such as anaerobic digestion, biomass, heat pumps, hydro, onshore wind and solar.
- 13.72** To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat, the NPPF identifies that plans should provide a positive strategy for energy from these sources, that maximises the potential for suitable development, while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily (including cumulative landscape and visual impacts).<sup>(104)</sup> The Planning Practice Guidance recognises that whilst local authorities should design their policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development, there is no quota which the Local Plan has to deliver and the need for renewable and low carbon energy does not automatically override environmental considerations, such as landscape, heritage and local amenity, and the planning concerns of local communities.<sup>(105)</sup> The Local Plan and subsequent planning decisions therefore need to balance the generation of renewable and low carbon energy with the need to protect Northumberland's environment, communities and businesses from any adverse impacts associated with development.

### Renewable and low carbon energy development and associated energy storage

- 13.73** Policy REN 1 is applicable to all renewable and low carbon energy development (including anaerobic digestion, biomass, heat pumps, hydro, onshore wind and solar photovoltaics) and energy storage associated with renewable and low carbon energy developments. Additional policy requirements applicable to onshore wind energy development are set out at Policy REN 2 in line with national policy and guidance.
- 13.74** Policy REN 1 sets out that renewable and low carbon energy proposals will be supported if applicants are able to demonstrate that its effects are acceptable or can be made acceptable. The policy also supports proposals for energy storage, where they are associated with an existing or proposed renewable or low carbon energy development, if applicants can demonstrate that the effects are, or can be made, acceptable. Policy REN 1 includes criteria against which the acceptability of proposed developments will be assessed, alongside other policies in the plan, especially those relating to landscape and the natural, built and historic environment. The criteria within the policy seek to protect those environmental and cultural assets that are important to Northumberland, its communities, economy and visitors. The matters in the policy will be applicable to all relevant proposals but the level of

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104 National Planning Policy Framework, July 2018, paragraph 151.

105 Planning Practice Guidance, Paragraph: 003 Reference ID: 5-003-20140306.

information required in support of a planning application will be proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposal and the environmental and cultural heritage sensitivities of its location.

- 13.75** It is recognised that energy production from some forms of renewable energy, wind and solar for example, can fluctuate depending on the availability of the resource. Energy storage can increase their efficiency by storing excess energy during peak production and releasing it according to demand, thus creating a smoother supply and reducing the demand on the rest of the electricity network. The technology and markets for energy storage are evolving but given the potential benefits Policy REN 1 supports proposals where they are associated with a renewable and low carbon energy developments and the effects of the proposal are considered to be acceptable having regard to the policy criteria in Policy REN 1.
- 13.76** All proposals need to consider the cumulative impacts arising from their proposal in combination with relevant existing developments, developments with planning permission, and development proposals going through the planning application process. Policy REN1 requires applicants to submit an assessment of cumulative impacts. Considerations should include the direct and indirect effects as well as temporary and permanent impacts.
- 13.77** Most renewable and low carbon energy developments have a limited lifespan after which they will need to be decommissioned. By way of example, wind turbines have a typical lifespan of 25 years. It is, therefore, important that provision is made for decommissioning and the removal of temporary operations when they have ceased as part of the proposal and this is reflected in Policy REN 1. The planning permissions associated with these types of development are typically temporary and planning conditions will be used to control the length of time that the operations are permitted and for decommissioning to take place.
- 13.78** The NPPF advises Local Planning Authorities to consider identifying areas for renewable and low carbon energy development where this would help secure development of such resources. However, a criteria-based policy has been developed and is considered to be the most appropriate approach to help guide and assess proposals for renewable energy developments other than onshore wind energy development that may come forward over the plan period.
- 13.79** To provide additional detail on Policy REN 1 and how the policy criteria apply to different renewable energy technologies, a supplementary planning document will be developed. It is intended that this document will provide guidance on best practice and on how applicants would be expected to address the criteria in the policy in order to make successful planning applications.

## Policy REN 1

### Renewable and low carbon energy and associated energy storage

1. Proposals for renewable energy and low carbon energy development will be supported including where decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems are to be used to supply energy to a development.
2. Proposals for energy storage units associated with a proposed or an existing renewable energy and low carbon energy development will be supported where:
  - a. they will improve the efficiency of the development; and
  - b. it can be demonstrated that the effects of the the proposal, individually and cumulatively, are acceptable or can be made acceptable with regard to the criteria under part 3 of this policy.
3. Applications will be supported where it has been demonstrated that the environmental, social and economic effects of the proposal, individually and cumulatively, are acceptable or can be made acceptable. In considering applications, appropriate weight will be given to the following:
  - a. Landscape character and sensitivity and the sensitivity of visual receptors;
  - b. The special qualities and the statutory purposes of the Northumberland National Park, the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
  - c. Internationally, nationally and locally designated nature conservation and geological sites and features, and functionally linked land, and protected habitats and species;
  - d. Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site and other internationally, nationally and locally designated heritage assets and their settings and non-designated heritage assets;
  - e. Air, and ground and surface water quality;
  - f. Hydrology, water supply and any associated flood risk;
  - g. Highways and traffic flow, transport networks, Public Rights of Way and non-motorised users, including the effects upon well-used recreational routes such as the National Trails, long distance routes and the national cycle network;
  - h. Amenity due to noise, odour, dust, vibration or visual impact;

- i. The openness of the Green Belt and whether very special circumstances have been demonstrated to justify otherwise inappropriate development;
  - j. The impact of any new grid connection lines and any ancillary infrastructure and buildings associated with the development; and
  - k. The impact on the safety of aviation operations and navigational systems, with proposals within Aerodrome Safeguarding Areas giving consideration the requirements of Policy TRA 7.
4. Applications will not be supported unless an assessment of cumulative impacts has been undertaken, and taking account of any mitigation measures, the impacts are found to be acceptable.
  5. Where relevant, applications will not be supported unless appropriate provision is made for decommissioning and removal of temporary operations once they have ceased.
  6. Positive weight will be given to proposals where there is clear evidence of them being community-led.

## Onshore wind energy development

**13.80** Onshore wind energy is now an established and common technology for generating renewable energy in the UK. The availability of this technology for deployment, the previous availability of financial incentives and the presence of a wind resource in Northumberland has resulted in considerable development pressure for onshore wind turbine development in the County in recent years.

**13.81** The NPPF sets out that when determining planning applications for wind energy development involving one or more wind turbines, except for the repowering of existing wind turbines, local planning authorities should not consider them to be acceptable unless:

- It is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in the development plan; and
- Following consultation, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by the affected local community have been fully addressed and the proposal has their backing.

## Potentially suitable areas for onshore wind energy development

**13.82** In line with the NPPF, the Planning Practice Guidance sets out suitable areas for wind energy development will need to have been clearly identified in a Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan. To understand whether it is appropriate to identify suitable

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areas in Northumberland an exercise was undertaken to map a number of identifiable environmental and planning constraints to wind turbine development<sup>(106)</sup>. This included mapping constraints relating to residential amenity, physical infrastructure, designations relating to nature conservation, geology and the historic environment, landscape sensitivity, natural features, Green Belt and wind speed.

**13.83** Landscape sensitivity refers to the extent to which a particular landscape character type or area is vulnerable to change due to potentially significant effects on its character, including views, or overall change of landscape character type. It is based on a range of considerations including the physical nature of the landscape, visual, perceptual, qualitative, historic and cultural, and contextual considerations including the cumulative effects with other development. The mapping exercise referred to above was informed by a study<sup>(107)</sup> that assessed the relative sensitivity of each of the Landscape Character Areas in Northumberland to wind energy development using the following five different wind turbine typologies, which are based on their height of the turbine to the tip of the blade:

- Under 25 metres;
- 26 to 40 metres;
- 41 to 65 metres;
- 66 to 100 metres; and
- 101 to 135 metres.

**13.84** For each character area the assessment categorises the sensitivity to each of the five wind turbine typologies as either 'high', 'moderate-high', 'moderate', 'low-moderate' or 'low'. Where a character area was assessed as having a 'high' landscape sensitivity or a 'moderate-high' landscape sensitivity to a particular scale of wind turbine development, those areas are considered to be 'unsuitable' or 'unsuitable in principle', respectively, to wind energy development and therefore a strategic constraint to development in policy terms. Where a landscape character area was assessed as a potential strategic constraint, it has been identified as such in the wider mapping exercise. The mapping exercise also uses the wind turbine typologies above recognising that wind turbine height has a major influence on the scale and extent of effect, which, in turn, affects the potential suitability of areas for development. However, the use of turbine height is for the sake of simplification since landscape and visual impacts are not directly proportional to turbine height. All the factors that underlie the nature of an effect including turbine numbers, design, layout, scale and cumulative impact are important considerations in wind turbine siting and design.

**13.85** The result of the mapping exercise was the identification of areas at a landscape character area scale where there are identified strategic constraints to wind energy development of the heights of turbine considered. Areas without identified constraints

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106 Further details of the mapping exercise can be found in the accompanying technical paper - Northumberland Local Plan Technical Document: Suitable areas for wind turbine development in Northumberland, December 2018.

107 Assessment of the sensitivity of the landscapes of Northumberland to Wind Energy Development, The Planning & Environment Studio and Bayou Bluenvironment, January 2018.

at this strategic scale are, therefore, potentially suitable for wind turbine development of the specified height and are shown on the Policies Map. Potentially suitable areas are identified across relatively large parts of Northumberland for smaller wind turbines with a height of less than 25 metres and 26 to 40 metres in height.

- 13.86** The evidence shows that there are not any significant sized areas in the County without identifiable constraints to larger scale wind turbines (those over 40 metres in height in this context) and so it has not been possible to identify areas as potentially suitable in the Local Plan. Proposals for these larger scale wind turbines would potentially be permitted where it involves the repowering of existing wind turbines and where the impacts of such development, including cumulative effects, are considered acceptable. This provides a positive policy approach to smaller scale wind turbine development of the type that helps individual homes and businesses meet their energy needs through decentralised, renewable energy. It also supports smaller scale community-led proposals of this nature that may come forward in Northumberland over the plan period.
- 13.87** It is important to recognise that the identification and mapping of areas potentially suitable for wind energy development is informed by evidence at a strategic landscape character area scale, across the whole of the local plan area. It is also recognised that landscape character, and thus landscape sensitivity, does not change abruptly as there is usually a gradual transition from one area to another. The acceptability of individual proposals within one of these areas will be subject to the detailed assessment and consideration of effects at a local scale in accordance with the development plan and recognised guidance. The policy criteria in Policy REN 1 and Policy REN 2 will support this assessment and further information on the assessment of individual proposals is provided below.

### **Assessing proposals for onshore wind energy development, including impacts on affected local communities**

- 13.88** Policy REN 2 reflects the policy tests in the NPPF, including the requirement for new wind turbine development proposals, except in the case of proposals for repowering, to be located within an area identified as being potentially suitable for wind energy development and the requirement to fully address the planning impacts identified by affected local communities.
- 13.89** As described above, areas identified as potentially suitable for wind turbine development in Northumberland are shown on the Policies Map but may additionally be identified in neighbourhood plans. Being within a potentially suitable area is the first consideration for a proposal involving one or more wind turbines but the criteria in Policy REN 1 and Policy REN 2 must also be addressed as well as any other material considerations.
- 13.90** For wind turbine proposals over 15 metres in height to the tip of the blade there is a requirement for the applicant to undertake consultation with the local community prior to submitting a planning application. The circumstances where pre-application consultation is required, and the nature of the requirements, is set out in the Council's planning application validation checklist. The consultation exercise should be proportionate to the scale of the proposed development and should identify the

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planning impacts that may affect local communities. The planning impacts are generally those associated with the criteria in Policy REN1 and Policy REN 2, but may also extend to other policies in the plan. In liaison with the local community, applicants should address concerns and seek to mitigate impacts. ~~If it is considered that they have been addressed to an extent that they are judged to be 'acceptable' then this will be the basis for determining community backing.~~ Planning Practice Guidance is clear that whether a proposal has community backing is a planning judgement for the local planning authority<sup>(108)</sup>. so it will, therefore, be necessary for the local planning authority to assess whether the balance of opinion in the affected local community is in favour of the proposal. In coming to a view about whether a proposal is acceptable to a community consideration will be given to the extent of the planning impacts identified in pre-application consultation with the local community, the mitigation measures proposed to fully address those impacts and the proportion of those in the affected communities with outstanding objections to the proposals at the planning application stage.

- 13.91** Policy REN 2 reflects that the NPPF takes a different policy approach to the repowering of existing wind turbines.<sup>(109)</sup> Proposals for the repowering of wind turbines do not need to be located within an area identified as suitable for wind turbine development, as the principle of acceptability for the use has already been established. Applications for the repowering of existing wind turbines will be assessed against the criteria in Policy REN 1 and Policy REN 2, and against other policies in the plan.
- 13.92** One of the main concerns expressed with respect to proposals for the development of wind turbines in Northumberland through the planning application process has been in relation to their overall impact on the landscape of the County and beyond, which is recognised as an important asset to both residents and visitors. Onshore wind turbine development has been recognised as a potential significant force for change on the landscape of Northumberland and an independent study of the landscape and visual effects of the current operational wind farms in Northumberland has been undertaken.<sup>(110)</sup> The conclusions of this study identify the importance of considering the effects on long and medium range views from and to iconic landscapes and heritage assets and the outlooks for heritage assets. This is recognised in Policy REN 2.
- 13.93** Across Northumberland a significant amount of wind turbine development has either already taken place or been consented therefore cumulative effects are a key issue and this is a matter that will require careful consideration. In considering cumulative effects, account should be taken of existing development, including development under construction; approved development awaiting implementation; and proposals submitted as planning applications awaiting determination.

108 Planning Practice Guidance, Paragraph 033, Reference ID 5-033-150618 (Revision date 18 June 2015)

109 Repowering involves replacing older wind turbines with newer ones.

110 Evaluation of the Impacts of Onshore Wind Farms on Tourism, Northumbria University, October 2014.

## Policy REN 2

### Onshore wind energy development

1. Proposals for the development of one or more wind turbines, except for proposals for the repowering of existing wind turbines, will not be permitted unless:
  - a. The development site is in an area identified as potentially suitable for wind energy development of the same scale as that proposed, as identified on the Local Plan Policies Map or in a Neighbourhood Plan; and
  - b. Following consultation it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by affected local communities have been fully addressed and the proposal has their backing.
2. Where the criteria in Part 1 are met, or where proposals are for the repowering of existing wind turbines, proposals ~~for the development of one or more wind turbines~~ will be supported where the applicant can demonstrate that the planning impacts, both individually and cumulatively, are, or can be made, acceptable. The planning impacts will be assessed against the criteria in Policy REN 1 and the following criteria:
  - a. There is sufficient separation from the proposed wind turbines to protect residential amenity as a result of noise, shadow flicker and visual intrusion. To protect visual amenity, there will be a presumption against development within a distance of six times the turbine blade tip height of residential properties unless it can be demonstrated that the presence of turbines would not have an unacceptable impact upon living conditions;
  - b. The proposals have addressed any potential adverse effects on the safety of aviation operations and navigational systems;
  - c. Potential interference to television and/or radio reception and information and telecommunications systems will be avoided and/or mitigated;
  - d. The proposed site access arrangements and access routes will be suitable for the construction phase, including the delivery of turbine components and construction materials, the operational phase, and the decommissioning of the proposed wind farm;
  - e. The proposed wind turbines are located appropriate distances from highways, and railway lines to provide a safe topple distance. A minimum topple distance of the turbine height plus 10% is recommended as a starting point;
  - f. Provision has been made for the satisfactory decommissioning of the turbines and associated infrastructure once the operations have ceased and the site can be restored to a quality of at least its original condition;
  - g. The proposal will not result in unacceptable harm to the character of the landscape and the landscape has capacity to accommodate the proposed development;
  - h. There are no unacceptable adverse effects on long and medium range views to and from sensitive landscapes, such as the Cheviot Hills, Northumberland Sandstone Hills, Northumberland Coast AONB, North

Pennines AONB, the Northumberland National Park and the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site, and lines of sight between iconic landscape and heritage sites and features, particularly where one or more feature is within the Northumberland Coast AONB, the North Pennines AONB or the adjoining Northumberland National Park;

- i. There are no unacceptable adverse effects on sensitive or well used viewpoints; and
- j. There are no unacceptable adverse effects on important recognised outlooks and views from or to heritage assets where these are predominantly unaffected by harmful visual intrusion, taking into account the significance of the heritage asset and its setting.

## 14. Infrastructure and Delivery

### Planning for infrastructure to support sustainable development

- 14.1** Implementation of the Local Plan and its aspirations to achieve sustainable development to maintain, enhance and grow communities across the County can only be achieved if growth can be supported by necessary infrastructure delivered in a timely manner. In the context of the planning system, infrastructure is defined generally in the Planning Act 2008 as meaning: roads and other transport facilities; flood defences; schools and other educational facilities; medical facilities; sporting and recreational facilities; and open spaces.
- 14.2** The legislation confirms that this is not an exhaustive list. There may be a range of other services and facilities of various types and scales that could constitute infrastructure that is needed to support the delivery of a particular development, or the implementation of policies in the Local Plan.
- 14.3** Infrastructure needed to support local communities, which may also be subject to controls exercised through the implementation of planning policy, can include those services and facilities provided through the open market to meet the day-to-day needs of communities. In the majority of circumstances the provision of such services and facilities will be left to the market and it would not normally be appropriate for intervention through the planning system. However, particularly in rural areas where national policy advocates support for a prosperous rural economy, provision exists for planning policy to promote the retention and development of local services in villages.
- 14.4** This Chapter sets out policies that:
- seek to secure development related infrastructure which is reasonably necessary to make new development sustainable;
  - guide other infrastructure planning and investment;
  - guard against the loss of important infrastructure; and
  - describe appropriate mechanisms for securing mitigation for the impact of development, including impacts on infrastructure provision.

### Infrastructure Delivery Plan

- 14.5** The Council has been working collaboratively with a range of infrastructure providers, adjoining local authorities and other organisations to assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure across Northumberland, and the ability of that infrastructure to meet forecast demands arising from new development.
- 14.6** Implementation of the Local Plan will depend on the provision, revision or improvement of infrastructure in a timely manner, particularly where any capacity constraints are identified. This in turn is reliant upon the coordinated activities and investment programmes of a number of agencies, organisations and developers. Preparation of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) has been a mechanism for helping to define the infrastructure requirements needed to deliver the Local Plan. It is also one of the means by which the Council is seeking to enable and foster



successful partnership working with those involved in the provision and management of development related infrastructure. In creating an IDP, which supports the Local Plan, the Council has recorded known recent investment in infrastructure, and sought to define that infrastructure determined to be important in implementing the Local Plan.

**14.7** The IDP covers a range of types and scales of infrastructure and considers capacity and needs by reference to three general categories of infrastructure:

- **Social and community infrastructure** including healthcare facilities, community centres, places of worship, and sports and leisure facilities;
- **Physical infrastructure** including transportation networks, energy supplies and connections, water, drainage and waste provision, and digital and wireless communications networks; and
- **Green infrastructure** which comprises the network of multi-functional open and green spaces, including formal parks, gardens, sports and playing fields, woodland, green corridors, waterways, railways and highway verges.

**14.8** It should be noted that the IDP is a high level document, which is focused on the strategic infrastructure requirements of the County. It does not address all of the requirements of individual settlements, nor does it capture the invaluable network of community led infrastructure, which is often at the heart of a community's sense of place and well-being. Such infrastructure is relevant in the determination of planning applications.

**14.9** Recognising that infrastructure investment planning is fluid and continually changing in light of varying priorities and the availability of funding, the IDP will be routinely reviewed and updated.

### Infrastructure Delivery Plan commitments

The Council will continue to work with organisations, agencies and developers, but also with local communities in the context of development proposals, and developing Neighbourhood Plans, to ensure that strategic and local infrastructure needs are considered and planned for properly.

## Planning and Delivering infrastructure

**14.10** The Local Plan seeks to provide policies that describe and promote mechanisms available within the planning system for protecting and safeguarding against the loss of existing infrastructure, supporting the provision of additional infrastructure that improves the health and well-being of communities and securing new infrastructure reasonably required to serve new development.

### Planning and delivering infrastructure commitments

Where there are known infrastructure capacity constraints, and infrastructure improvement opportunities, including those identified in the IDP, the Council will endeavour to work with partners to find solutions to ensure that development is delivered to meet the objectives and policies of the Local Plan, thereby securing its implementation.

The Council will also work with partners to promote shared use or joint delivery of infrastructure where this is appropriate.

The Council will continue to explore the potential introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and will pursue other infrastructure investment opportunities.

### Development related infrastructure

- 14.11** New development will be expected to make best use of existing infrastructure where capacity exists to accommodate needs. Where improvements to existing infrastructure are required, new development will normally be expected to meet the costs of such infrastructure, along with providing any additional infrastructure requirements arising from the development.
- 14.12** Policy INF 1 seeks to ensure that such provision is secured at the time planning permission is granted and that all necessary infrastructure is provided and phased as appropriate, to serve development when it is needed. This will necessitate submitting suitable evidence in support of planning applications, which accounts for the IDP, the relevant business plans and programmes of infrastructure and service providers, and any local infrastructure issues, outwith the scope of the IDP. Evidence should demonstrate that existing or planned infrastructure is sufficient and sustainable over time both in functional and financial terms. In assessing proposals, the Council will also have regard to the cumulative impacts of development in the vicinity, across the County, and where relevant across its borders, on infrastructure requirements.
- 14.13** The provision or improvement of infrastructure needed to support development will usually be secured through the use of planning conditions attached to a planning permission or by planning obligation where the use of planning conditions is not appropriate. In the future infrastructure may also be secured via the Community Infrastructure Levy or any such similar tariff, pending any changes at a national level to the charging regime.

## Policy INF 1

### Delivering development related infrastructure (Strategic Policy)

1. To ensure that development is acceptable in planning terms, and unacceptable impacts are properly mitigated, proposals must demonstrate that there is sufficient appropriate physical, community, social and green infrastructure capacity, both on and off-site, to support the needs arising from the development.
2. Where infrastructure necessary to serve new development is not available, or where existing infrastructure requires improvement due to capacity or other constraints associated with the impact of that development, planning permission will only be granted where suitable enforceable measures are put in place to secure the provision and maintenance of that new or improved infrastructure in a timely manner and prior to it first being needed to serve the development.

## Community facilities and services

**14.14** Having regard to national policy and guidance, the Local Plan seeks to support the provision of new and enhanced community infrastructure and to guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the ability of local communities in Northumberland to meet their day-to-day needs.

**14.15** Given the important role of community infrastructure in supporting growing sustainable communities the Local Plan sets out the requirement for new development to provide, or make reasonable and necessary contributions towards the provision of, community facilities as part of the development. Such provision would be required through Policy INF 1.

**14.16** Separately, Policy INF 2 seeks to ensure important and valued community facilities that provide for the health and well-being, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs of the community are protected and not lost to development unless it can be demonstrated that there is no longer need for the facility. It also supports the improvement of existing facilities and the provision of new facilities, particularly where this would address deficiencies in provision.

## Healthcare, education and leisure services

**14.17** The provision of healthcare, education and leisure services are all essential community services requiring a range of facilities and built infrastructure.

**14.18** Areas of constrained capacity have been identified through joint working with service providers and representatives and are detailed in the IDP. There are areas where investment is likely to be necessary to ensure that development is adequately supported by such infrastructure, and can be made acceptable in planning terms.

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However, these should not be considered an exhaustive list. Providers, including healthcare and education providers, may need to be consulted on planning applications to consider specific and cumulative needs associated with development.

- 14.19** The delivery of these types of infrastructure has seen significant changes over recent years, particularly through reorganisation and rationalisation of services. Notably, health infrastructure and care arrangements have evolved, with new larger GP practices providing a wider range of primary and community care services. There have also been some key developments, including the Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital at Cramlington. School partnerships have similarly been subject to significant reorganisation around the County, including moves from three tier provision of education to a two tier primary and secondary school system. Council provided leisure facilities have meanwhile been increasingly merged, through the development of new combined leisure, library and customer contact facilities. Changes are expected to continue throughout the Local Plan period.

## Policy INF 2

### Community services and facilities

1. The loss of community services and facilities, that provide for the health and wellbeing, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure or cultural needs of the community will not be supported unless:
  - a. appropriate alternative provision is made; or
  - b. suitable and sufficient evidence can be provided to demonstrate that there is no longer a need for the facility to serve the community in its existing use or as an alternative community use; and
  - c. suitable and sufficient evidence can be provided to demonstrate that its continued current use is no longer economically viable.
2. Improvement in the quantity, quality, accessibility and range of community services and facilities, and the provision of new services and facilities where these will meet an identified need will be supported, subject to conformity with policies elsewhere in the Local Plan, and any made neighbourhood plans, which seek to ensure any significant adverse effects on the environment, habitats, heritage assets and local amenity can be avoided through good design and siting of development or that those effects can be suitably compensated for or mitigated.
3. Where opportunities arise through new built development and changes of use, the shared use of facilities, including community use of educational facilities where appropriate, will be supported and secured through planning conditions or planning obligations as appropriate.

### Local village convenience shops and public houses

**14.20** Infrastructure needed to support local communities includes those services and facilities provided through the open market to meet the day-to-day needs of communities. Meeting those needs can be particularly challenging in more rural areas of Northumberland. National policy and guidance recognises that the planning system has a role to play in supporting rural communities in particular by safeguarding and promoting the retention and development of local services in villages.

**14.21** In addition to supporting other community infrastructure, national planning policy also promotes the retention of local shops and public houses. This is a matter of particular significance to communities in Northumberland where local village shops and pubs are at the heart of the community providing for people's day-to-day needs. The Local Plan therefore seeks to address this issue in addition to matters concerning other physical, community and green infrastructure. Policy INF 3 creates the planning policy framework to ensure all available measures are taken to prevent the loss of valued local village shops and public houses.

### Policy INF 3

#### Local village convenience shops and public houses

1. Proposals that result in the loss through demolition, redevelopment or change of use of local convenience shops and public houses in villages will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that:
  - a. equivalent accessible provision is available locally; or
  - b. the continued use of the shop or public house for its current use is no longer needed to meet community needs; or
  - c. the continued use of the shop or public house for its current use is no longer economically viable.
2. In applying the tests established in this policy regarding the need for, or viability of the continued use of the building for its community use it will be necessary to demonstrate, with sufficient documentary evidence, to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that the building has been marketed at a price reflecting its current or last use for a period of not less than six months prior to the date of submission of any planning application for its demolition, redevelopment or change of use, and that no reasonable offers have been received to continue the current use of the building.

## Assets of Community Value

- 14.22** Many communities across Northumberland have buildings and land that are valuable to them. It is recognised that buildings and land that accommodate community facilities often compete with other uses which can command a higher land value and are therefore subject to development pressures. This can put existing facilities under pressure and it is therefore necessary to have mechanisms to ensure that appropriate weight is given to the need to protect such community assets from loss when they are placed under threat. Guarding against the loss of such valued community assets is a matter advocated through national policy and guidance.
- 14.23** The Localism Act 2011 gives local communities the right to identify and protect facilities that are important to them from immediate disposal through local listing associated with the Community Right to Bid process. Buildings, land or services included in the list are called "Assets of Community Value". Confirmation of listing of such assets introduces a moratorium on the disposal of listed land and buildings for a defined period of time. However, while the process allows community organisations the opportunity to bid to buy listed assets, there is no obligation on owners to sell their asset to a community organisation, and ultimately no control exists over who may take ownership.
- 14.24** The impact of any development proposal on a registered Asset of Community Value is a recognised material planning consideration. The purpose of Policy INF 4 is to ensure that, notwithstanding ownership, assets registered as being of particular value to local communities are safeguarded through the planning system to prevent their loss through demolition or redevelopment, or a change of use arising, unless steps are taken to demonstrate that there is no longer a need for the services provided by the asset, or that their continued use is no longer viable. In fulfilling this requirement to demonstrate any lack of need, or that provision or retention of the asset is no longer viable, applicants will be required to provide sufficient reliable and verifiable documentary evidence showing that the asset has genuinely been made available on the open market at a price that reflects its current or last use providing community benefits for a reasonable period of time which should be not less than six months prior to seeking planning permission for development.
- 14.25** For the purpose of interpreting what constitutes a valued community facility in relation to Policy INF 4, only buildings listed as an Asset of Community Value in accordance with provisions created in the Localism Act will be covered. The policy sets out how applications for demolition, redevelopment or change of use of Assets of Community Value will be assessed.

### Policy INF 4

#### Assets of Community Value

- Proposals that involve the loss, redevelopment or change of use of any registered Assets of Community Value, or any part of that asset, will not be supported unless:

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- a. alternative equivalent provision of the services and facilities provided by the asset is secured to meet community needs; or
  - b. it can be demonstrated that the continued use of the asset for its current use is no longer needed to meet community needs; or
  - c. it can be demonstrated that the continued use of the asset for its current use is no longer viable.
2. In applying parts 1(b) and 1(c) of this policy it will be necessary to demonstrate, with sufficient documentary evidence, that the asset has been marketed at a price reflecting its current or last use as a registered Asset of Community Value for a period of not less than six months prior to the date of submission of any planning application for its demolition, redevelopment or change of use, and that no reasonable offers have been received to continue the current or last use of the asset.

### Open space and facilities for sport and recreation

#### Provision and maintenance of recreational open space

**14.26** Good quality open space, sport and recreational facilities provide recreational benefits for communities and help to promote social inclusion, community cohesion, health and well-being. Many open spaces also make an important contribution to the character and appearance of the built and natural environment. Ensuring the right level of open space provision is, therefore, an important planning consideration. New areas of housing need new open space, sport and play provision unless there is a surplus of accessible existing facilities.

**14.27** Town and Parish Councils now provide, manage and maintain many outdoor assets including allotments and children's play areas; and in some cases they manage some larger outdoor facilities, such as playing fields, parks and cemeteries. Town and Parish Councils are therefore an important stakeholder in supporting infrastructure required for outdoor recreation, sports and play.

#### Identifying what recreational open space is there and what is needed

**14.28** The Council's open space, sport and recreation studies<sup>(111)</sup> provide assessments of the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space across the County.

**14.29** The quality, quantity and accessibility of recreational open space, including ancillary facilities, varies across areas. The existing quantity and access to open space, as well as consideration of quality issues, will form the basis for assessing any proposed development or change of use of open space.

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111 These include an ~~updated Northumberland PPG17~~ Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment and a Playing Pitch Strategy. ~~The Council is developing these as 'live' databases.~~

- 14.30** The Local Plan proposes a flexible approach in establishing the extent of demand and need for additional or improved recreational open space arising from development. This will involve taking into account up-to-date local evidence of demand and need for facilities.

### Strategy for recreational open space

- 14.31** National policy and guidance advocates the creation of policies that guard against the unnecessary loss of recreational open space and associated facilities based on evidence of the continuing need for the infrastructure. The Council will continue to monitor use and provision and review the extent of evidence of need for improvements and provision of additional infrastructure periodically and as appropriate.
- 14.32** New open space and related facilities, including for sport, play and less formal recreation, will be secured through the planning system where necessary to serve needs arising from new development. This may include qualitative improvements where that would allow for more intensive use of the infrastructure. Where new recreational open space and associated facilities are provided, either as a result of needs arising from new development or through investment from Town and Parish councils, the County Council, sports and recreation clubs or other organisations, consideration will be given to securing the shared use of space and facilities to seek maximum value from the investment.

### Protected open space

- 14.33** The need to retain existing areas of open space is recognised in Policy INF 5, which creates a specific designation of Protected Open Space. These areas are defined on the Policies Map. Consideration of development proposals will be expected to follow requirements established in Policy INF 5.
- 14.34** ~~The Council does not currently propose to define additional areas of Protected Open Space through the Local Plan. However, support will be given to Town and Parish Councils who may wish to pursue this through the preparation of neighbourhood plans, provided the designation is suitably evidenced.~~

### Local Green Space

- 14.35** The concept of local communities being able to protect green areas of particular local significance was first introduced into the planning system through the National Planning Policy Framework in 2012 which created the specific designation of 'Local Green Space'. The intention of this designation is to provide locally important green areas a level of protection consistent with that given to the Green Belt thereby preventing development other than in very special circumstances.

**14.36** Local Green Space may only be designated through policy created in a neighbourhood plan or a local plan, and it must be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period. National policy describes the circumstance in which it may be appropriate to use this designation which is limited to where the green space is:

- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

**14.37** Many of the Town and Parish Councils across Northumberland involved in preparing neighbourhood plans have investigated the opportunities presented by this potential designation. All of the neighbourhood plans made to date have designated at least one area of Local Green Space. Whilst the opportunity to create Local Green Space through the Local Plan exists, the County Council considers that, given the need to show that any such designation is demonstrably special to a local community, the most appropriate mechanism for designating Local Green Space is through a neighbourhood plan. It is therefore not proposed to designate any Local Green Space in the Northumberland Local Plan. The County Council will continue to advise and support Town and Parish Councils across Northumberland who are preparing neighbourhood plans and will support the designation of Local Green Space through those plans where it meets the tests established in national policy.

### Policy INF 5

#### Open space and facilities for sport and recreation

1. Development proposals that would result in the loss of land or buildings used for recreational use or the loss of Protected Open Space (as shown on the Policies Map) will not be supported unless:
  - a. They would be replaced by an area of equivalent or better quantity and quality, in a suitable location; or
  - b. An excess of provision in quantitative and qualitative terms is clearly demonstrated; or
  - c. The development proposed is for alternative sports and recreation provision, the need for which clearly outweighs the loss of the existing open space.
2. Development which would result in the loss of open space not shown on the ~~Policies~~ Policies Map that contributes to the character and visual amenity of an area will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that the benefits of development clearly outweigh the loss.
3. Development of ancillary facilities on open space will be supported where:
  - a. It would be appropriate in scale and would not detract from the character of the site or surroundings;
  - b. It would not have an unacceptable negative impact upon residential amenity;

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- c. It would not be detrimental to any other function that the open space performs; and
  - d. It would contribute positively to the setting and quality of the open space
  - e. It is necessary to, or would facilitate the functioning of the open space;
4. In assessing residential development proposals, the provision of sports facilities, recreational open space for outdoor sport, children's play, and less formal recreational activity will be sought, as necessary for the development. The need and demand for the provision will be assessed in accordance with the relevant available evidence, applying locally defined standards including local assessments of need.
5. The following will be required:
- a. Where it is determined that on-site provision is not appropriate, the Council will require off-site provision or financial contributions towards the provision of new open space, or the improvement of existing open space elsewhere in the locality; and
  - b. The future use and maintenance arrangements have been secured, taking full account of the views of Town and Parish Council or others who may be responsible for the facilities, once in place. Where the development is large enough, that provision is on-site unless this is demonstrated to be impracticable.

### Planning obligations and viability

**14.38** The Council will attach planning conditions to a planning permission where these can enhance the quality of development and or mitigate the adverse effects of development which would otherwise make it necessary to refuse planning permission.

**14.39** In addition to the use of planning conditions, where it is appropriate, the Council will seek to enter into planning obligations to prescribe, compensate, and/or mitigate the impacts of a development. Planning obligations will only be used where they meet the relevant statutory tests which require that they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development, and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind. Policy INF6 identifies the measures that may be required.

**14.40** Planning obligations will also be sought to secure ongoing management and maintenance arrangements where necessary.

**14.41** The Council will provide more detailed guidance in relation to planning obligations through a Supplementary Planning Document or Documents, to support policies in the Local Plan. This will ensure the range and level of contributions necessary to

support growth are kept up to date in accordance with requirements, demand and need. It may also account for any national reforms to developer contributions for infrastructure and affordable housing.

### Development viability

- 14.42** The Local Plan is supported by a Whole Plan Viability Assessment<sup>(112)</sup>. The Assessment has ensured that all anticipated development related costs, including those associated with planning policies in the development plan, have been accounted for. The local and national planning policy requirements have been found to be realistic, both individually and collectively, and accordingly do not undermine the delivery of the Local Plan. The Assessment also considers the scope for additional requirements, notably the potential future introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy.
- 14.43** Development proposals which are compliant with the Local Plan are assumed to be viable on the basis of the Assessment and its associated evidence. Where exceptional circumstances exist which impact on the ability of a development scheme to meet all planning policy requirements, including those secured through planning obligations, it will be up to the applicant to demonstrate such circumstances justify the need for a viability assessment at the planning application stage.
- 14.44** Where the Council agrees to consider a viability assessment at the planning application stage applicants will be required to provide the assessment which should follow the approach in National Planning Practice Guidance. The assessment should also be based upon, and refer back to the Local Plan Whole Plan and CIL Viability Assessment, accounting for any site specific issues and, or changes in circumstances since that Assessment. The viability assessment of any such application will be independently verified by the Council, at the expense of the applicant. Following the review of an independently verified viability assessment, if the Council is satisfied that there are overriding viability issues which prevent full compliance with policy requirements, the Council may grant planning permission subject to revised requirements, which should still ensure the mitigation of adverse effects of development.
- 14.45** Planning obligations may be sought, which include a periodic review mechanism ensuring that, where viability improves over the course of development or after planning permission is granted, the fullest possible compliance with the Local Plan is secured.

### Policy INF 6

#### Planning obligations

1. Where it is not possible to address any unacceptable impacts of development through the use of planning conditions, planning obligations will be secured to ensure that otherwise unacceptable development can be made acceptable.

<sup>112</sup> Local Plan and Community Infrastructure Viability Assessment, 2018, CP Viability Ltd.

2. Planning obligations will be used, as necessary, to ensure that development meets relevant planning policy requirements set out in the Local Plan and any made neighbourhood plans.
3. Planning obligations may be used to secure the timely provision, and/or improvement and maintenance of any physical, social, community and green infrastructure and/or any mitigation and/or compensatory measures reasonably necessary to make a development acceptable in planning terms. This may include all or any of the following and any other reasonable measures that meet statutory requirements:
  - a. Affordable housing;
  - b. Measures to address highways, traffic and transportation impacts;
  - c. Provision and maintenance of SuDS schemes;
  - d. Sport, play and recreation provision;
  - e. Open space provision and maintenance;
  - f. Provision for schools and pre-school education;
  - g. Provision for primary healthcare;
  - h. Training and skills and local employment improvement programmes;
  - i. Provision of community facilities and services;
  - j. Measures to facilitate improvement in health and well-being
  - k. Environmental improvement and mitigation schemes;
  - l. Landscape improvement schemes;
  - m. Mineral and landfill site restoration and aftercare; and
  - n. Measures to mitigate development impact on designated habitats and species.

## Future infrastructure funding opportunities

### Community Infrastructure Levy

**14.46** The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a fixed rate tariff, charged per square metre of new development. CIL can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure required to support development across the local authority area. It is not constrained in the way planning obligations that secure funding are limited by reference to a specific development.

**14.47** CIL was devised and introduced into legislation in 2010 to implement successive government's intentions to ensure that development contributes at least a reasonable proportion of funding towards of the cost of infrastructure needed to support implementation of Local Plans. In addition, legislation allows local communities to benefit directly from a share of any CIL charge received since a proportion of the Levy must be given to Town and Parish Councils in those locations where development occurs. That proportion increases in locations where a neighbourhood plan has been made.

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- 14.48** The Levy is viewed by the Council as a positive tool which could help support the delivery of the Local Plan and more particularly unlock opportunities for growth by helping to fund infrastructure required to support sustainable development. It can offer a fair, fast and transparent system for developers by giving certainty about development costs.
- 14.49** The Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies, where known, the funding required to deliver certain infrastructure projects including those necessary to secure implementation of the Local Plan. Notwithstanding the projects and investments for which costs and likely available funding sources are unknown, it is apparent that there is a shortfall between the funding required to deliver infrastructure and that which is available, generally referred to as a 'funding gap'. It is a prerequisite to the introduction of CIL that a funding gap can be demonstrated.
- 14.50** The CIL is currently subject to potential reform. A provisional appraisal on the possibility of introducing CIL has been included in the Whole Plan Viability Assessment that supports the Local Plan. The Council will continue to investigate the viability and benefit of introducing CIL and would anticipate progressing with this matter following adoption of the Local Plan.

### Monitoring

- 14.51** The Council is committed to ensuring robust monitoring of the implementation of the Local Plan. The aim will be to ensure the successful and timely delivery of the plan and to instigate appropriate actions or measures to address any ineffective policies and proposals.
- 14.52** The Local Plan has been devised in such a way to be flexible over the plan period. It can adjust to changes such as, the emergence of new neighbourhood plans, shifting demographics and variable economic conditions. However, there may be circumstances or unexpected external factors that render certain policies less effective or out of date. Monitoring will help identify any such issues and appropriate actions. Actions could include adjusting the implementation of the policies or a partial or full review of the Local Plan or other supporting plans.

### Monitoring and evaluation implementation framework

- 14.53** A Monitoring and Evaluation Implementation Framework has been developed which identifies indicators and targets for the implementation of the Local Plan as a whole and to measure the implementation of specific policies. It also identifies triggers at which it is appropriate to address any issues emerging.
- 14.54** The framework optimises the use of other monitoring systems the Local Planning Authority has such as Planning Application Monitoring. It also seeks to make use of other Council Departments and other organisations monitoring systems.

- 14.55** The Council, in line with national policy, will review the policies in the Plan to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years and the policies will be updated as necessary.

## Glossary

**Active street frontage:** The high street frontage of a building that presents a window display, at least during opening hours, and an entrance way, and less than 25% blank wall.

**Affordable housing:** housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

- a. Affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).
- b. Starter homes: is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.
- c. Discounted market sales housing: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.
- d. Other affordable routes to home ownership: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

**Aggregates / aggregate minerals:** Hard, granular materials, including sand, gravel, crushed rock and other bulk materials used on their own or with the addition of cement, lime or a bituminous binder in the construction.

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

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**Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB):** An area with statutory national landscape designation, the primary purpose of which is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Northumberland has the Northumberland Coast AONB and part of the North Pennines AONB.

**Asset of Community Value:** A local authority maintained list of land in its area that is land of community value. A building or other land would be of community value if in the Council's opinion, its main use contributes to the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community, and it is realistic for this to continue, (possibly involving a different community use of equal value). This is set out in section 87 of the Localism Act 2011.

**Basic Conditions:** Only a draft neighbourhood Plan or Order that meets each of a set of basic conditions can be put to a referendum and be made. The basic conditions are set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as applied to neighbourhood plans by Section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004. Further details regarding the basic conditions can be found in National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) Paragraph 65<sup>(113)</sup>.

**Best and most versatile agricultural land:** Higher quality land falling within Grades 1, 2 and 3a under the Defra system of Agricultural Land Classification, whose long-term capability should normally be safeguarded as a resource for the future.

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

**Biomass:** A form of renewable energy which often refers to plant-based material and can include virgin wood, energy crops, and agricultural residues as well as some food and industrial waste.

**Blue-Green Infrastructure:** An approach whereby development is sympathetic to the natural water cycle, locally and more widely, contributing to flood alleviation and amenity by bringing together water management and Green Infrastructure.

**Blyth Estuary Strategic Employment Area:** Spanning the north and south banks of the River Blyth, this proposed strategic employment area will provide 189 hectares of available land, as a strategic allocation for specific emerging employment sectors, requiring large amounts of land.

**Borderlands Initiative:** A collaboration between Northumberland County Council, Scottish Borders, Carlisle City Council, Cumbria County Council, and Dumfries and Galloway Council, to promote the economic growth and competitiveness of an area that straddles the England-Scotland border.

**Brownfield land:** See 'Previously developed land'.

**B-Class Uses:** The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) puts uses of land and buildings into various categories known as 'Use Classes'. Part B of this Order covers those employment uses that normally require dedicated land or buildings.

113 [www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2#basic-conditions-for-neighbourhood-plan-to-referendum](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2#basic-conditions-for-neighbourhood-plan-to-referendum)

They are split into: "Class B1 Business", consisting of offices, research and development and light industry; "Class B2 General industrial", covering most industries not within Class B1; and "Class B8 Storage or distribution" covering warehouse-type uses as well as open air storage of products and equipment.

**Certificate of Lawfulness:** Applied for in order to check that a development or use (either existing or proposed is (or would be) lawful.

**CIL:** – See 'Community Infrastructure Levy'.

**City-Region:** An area including and surrounding a major city or cluster of cities, generally defined in terms of the influence of the city – e.g. the area from which the city draws its labour force or attracts regular shoppers.

**Climate change:** Long-term changes in temperature, precipitation, wind and all other aspects of the Earth's climate. It is now accepted as partly attributable to increased carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions, such as those resulting from the burning of fossil fuels in vehicles, power stations, factories and homes.

**Climate change adaptation:** Adjustments to natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic factors or their effects, including from changes in rainfall and rising temperatures, which moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

**Climate change mitigation:** Action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

**Coalescence:** The situation where the built-up areas of two or more towns or villages spread out and merge with each other.

**Coastal change:** Physical change to the shoreline through erosion, coastal landslip, permanent inundation or coastal accretion.

**Commercial and industrial waste:** Controlled waste arising from premises, used wholly or mainly for industry and commerce of various kinds.

**Community Facilities:** Local services and facilities are those that benefit the community such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

**Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):** A levy allowing local authorities to raise funds from owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in their area.

**Community-led housing:** Affordable homes provided and managed by Community Land Trusts, Housing Co-operative groups, Tenant Management Organisations, independent local Community Development Trusts and community 'anchors', as well as through co-housing schemes, self-help housing projects to bring empty properties back into use and community self-build schemes.

**Community Right to Build Order:** An order made by the Local Planning Authority (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) that grants planning permission for a site-specific development proposal or classes of development.

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**Comparison shopping:** The provision or purchase of items not bought on a frequent basis and where potential purchasers often wish to compare different goods or providers. Comparison goods are mainly durable and include clothing, footwear, household and recreational goods.

**Conditions (or 'Planning Conditions'):** Requirements attached to a planning permission to limit or direct the manner in which a development is carried out.

**Conservation Area:** Areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character, appearance or setting of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

**Construction and demolition waste:** Controlled waste arising from the construction, repair, maintenance and demolition of buildings and structures.

**Convenience shopping:** The provision or purchase of everyday essential items, such as food, drink, newspapers etc.

**Corporate Plan:** The Corporate Plan sets out the vision, strategic aims and priorities of Northumberland County Council. The current Corporate Plan was approved in February 2018 and covers the period 2018-2021.

**Delivery Area:** An area defined for planning purposes, based on common characteristics or linkages such as housing market areas, social, economic and cultural characteristics, catchment areas or patterns of movement between places.

**Density (of development):** The amount of building within an area of land. For housing it is expressed as the number of dwellings per hectare.

**Designated area:** An area defined by a line on a map which, by virtue of statute, enjoys a degree of protection from development that would impact adversely on the wildlife, landscape or other natural asset within its boundary. There are also built heritage designations such as Conservation Areas.

**Design Code:** Detailed design guidance that is specific to a particular development site. Design codes may vary in terms of how prescriptive they are but will generally set out certain parameters for the the design of buildings and spaces, such as the pattern of development and the choice of materials.

**Design Review:** Independent and impartial evaluation process in which a panel of experts on the built environment assess the design of a development proposal.

**Development:** Defined under the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act as "the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operation in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any building or other land." Most forms of development require planning permission (see also "permitted development").

**Development management:** The process through which a local planning authority considers a planning application and whether it should be given permission.



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

**Duty to Cooperate:** Collaborative working with adjoining authorities, and other public bodies, regarding strategic issues which may have significant cross boundary impacts, during the preparation of Local Plans.

**Ecosystem approach:** An approach to planning that focuses on protecting and restoring the structure, function and processes of ecosystems as a whole, recognising that natural assets and human environments, traditionally planned for and managed separately, interact continually, in numerous ways and with cumulative impacts.

**Ecosystem services:** The benefits obtained from ecosystems, such as, food, water, flood and disease control and recreation.

**Employment land:** Land allocated / reserved for industrial and business use.

**Employment Land Review (ELR):** Study identifying the level of employment land required, considering past levels of employment land take up and other factors. It also identifies parts of the County with an over- or under-supply of employment land.

**Enterprise Zone:** An area where Central Government aided by Local Government wishes to stimulate development and investment through business rate relief, financing and regulation incentives, which may include simplified planning guidance specified in a Local Development Order.

**European Geopark:** A defined area with a particular geological heritage that may also be archaeological, ecological, historical or cultural and where the development of geotourism may take place. The North Pennines AONB has been designated as such.

**European Marine Site (EMS):** A sub-tidal and/or inter-tidal area of European importance for marine and coastal habitats and species, including any area that is the subject of SAC or SPA status that is also covered by tidal water. The whole of the Northumberland coastal area north of Alnmouth forms part of the Berwickshire and North Northumberland EMS.

**Evening economy:** The representation in a town centre of facilities such as restaurants, bars and nightclubs, which would bring spending and vibrancy to the centre after normal shop opening hours.

**Evidence base:** The information and data gathered by local authorities and used to inform policy development.

**Fenestration:** the arrangement of openings in a building, in particular windows and doors.

**Five Year Housing Land Supply:** An identified supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to meet housing requirements over a specified five year period, collated annually.

**Floorspace:** The floor area (on all floors) of a building or set of buildings. Gross floorspace includes areas ancillary to the main use. Net floorspace excludes ancillary areas.

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**Geo-diversity:** The range of rocks, minerals, fossils, soils and landforms.

**Green Belt:** A land designation with the fundamental aim of preventing urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The purposes of the Green Belt as specified in paragraph 134 of the NPPF are: to check the restricted sprawl of large built-up areas; prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and, assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

**Green Infrastructure:** A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

**Greenfield land or site:** Land which has never been built on before or where the remains of any structure or activity have blended into the landscape over time.

**Groundwater:** An important part of the natural water cycle present underground, within strata known as aquifers.

**Gross Value Added (GVA):** An economic measure of the value of goods and services in an area, namely the value of output less the value of intermediate consumption.

**Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities:** (for planning purposes) Communities consisting of persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.

**Habitable areas:** Places that are regularly or continually occupied by people.

**Habitat:** An area or natural environment in which an organism, species or population normally lives. Habitats take many forms and should not be considered in isolation as they are linked and overlap with each other.

**Habitats Regulations:** A set of government regulations (currently the Habitats and Species Regulations 2010), which sets out requirements within England regarding the protection and enhancement of important natural assets, giving expression to various European Directives, international Conventions and national statutes.

**Hazardous waste:** Waste which has the potential to cause harm to human health or the environment, for example contaminated soil.

**Heritage Asset:** A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

**Heritage Coast:** Areas of largely undeveloped coastline which are managed to conserve their natural beauty and, where appropriate, to improve accessibility for visitors. Northumberland's Heritage Coast stretches from Druridge Bay to the Scottish border.

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**Hinterland:** A term used to describe the area which falls within the influence of a town – especially the area from which the town draws most of the people who work there or use its services.

**Household:** A person living alone or a group of people living together at the same address and with common housekeeping.

**Housing – Optional Technical Standards:** An approach for the setting of technical standards for new housing. This rationalises the many differing existing standards into a simpler, streamlined system which will reduce burdens and help bring forward much needed new homes.

**Inclusive Environment:** Buildings and spaces that can be accessed and used by everyone.

**Independent Examination:** The process by which an Independent Planning Inspector publicly examines a Development Plan Document to ensure that it is 'sound' in terms of factors such as the evidence on which it is based, national policy, consultations undertaken Etc.

**Infill development:** Building on a relatively small site between existing buildings.

**Information and Communication Technologies (ICT):** (for planning purposes) Telecommunications networks such as telephone lines, mobile phone masts and broadband infrastructure.

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

**Infrastructure Delivery Plan:** This document will identify the infrastructure needed to support the delivery of the Local Plan and how this will be funded, linked with other programmes and actually provided, as well as examining possible risks and associated contingency measures.

**iNorthumberland:** The iNorthumberland programme relates to the rollout of fibre broadband in Northumberland. The first phase of the programme aims to reach around 90% of homes by December 2015. The programme is being delivered by Northumberland County Council. The programme is funded by Department for Culture Media and Sport via BDUK, Northumberland County Council, European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Defra's Rural Community Broadband Fund and BT.

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

**Internet of Things (IoT):** The interconnection via the Internet of computing devices embedded in everyday objects, enabling them to send and receive data.

**Key Shopping Frontages:** Street frontages within the Primary Shopping Area, where it is sought to keep the majority of the frontage in retail use.

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**Landfill (including land raising):** The permanent disposal of residual waste into the ground, by the filling of man-made voids or similar features. The construction of land forms above ground level is called land raising.

**Landscape Character:** The distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently in a particular type of landscape. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement. The Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) identified 44 landscape character types, and 108 landscape character areas with similar characteristics within the plan area.

**Landscape sensitivity:** Normally refers to the ability of the landscape to absorb development, in relation to valued aspects of its character.

**Legible Environment:** A place that is easy to understand and navigate.

**Lifetime neighbourhoods:** Places where most people would be able (and choose) to live and stay throughout their lives. They are safe places that offer everyone the best possible chance of health, well-being and social, economic and civic engagement regardless of their age, gender, culture or disability. They do not exclude people as they age, their circumstances change, nor as they become more frail, disabled or less mobile.

**Limited infilling:** Development of a small gap in an otherwise built up frontage or other infill development which is particularly small in scale, occupying a small gap between buildings.

**Listed building:** A building of special architectural or historic interest. Graded I (highest quality), II\* or II.

**Local Development Order:** A mechanism to simplify planning guidance to encourage economic growth by allowing certain forms of development to be undertaken without the need for planning permission, subject to specified conditions and design guidance. Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP): A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, established for the purpose of protecting and improving conditions for economic growth in an area. Also see 'North East Local Enterprise Partnership'.

**Local Green Space:** A designation that provides special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities. They can be identified through Local Plans or by communities in Neighbourhood Plans. Local Nature Partnership (LNP): Local partnerships of organisations and communities with the role of helping the management of the natural environment as a system and to embed its value in local decisions, for the benefit of nature, people and the economy.

**Local Nature Reserve:** Non-statutory habitats of local significance designated by local authorities where protection and public understanding of nature conservation is encouraged.

**Local Plan:** The documents and maps that make up the plan for the future development of a local area such as Northumberland. In law, this is described as the statutory development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

**Local Transport Plan (LTP):** The Council's fifteen year strategy for maintaining and improving highways and transport, including key goals and challenges and how these should be addressed through policies, programmes and schemes.

**Local Wildlife and Geological Site (LWGS):** A defined area within which there are habitats, wildlife or geology which is considered, locally, important to protect and manage. Includes sites formerly known as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs) and Sites of Biological Interest (SBIs).

**Low Carbon Energy Generation:** Low carbon energy comes from processes or technologies that produce power with substantially lower amounts of carbon dioxide emissions than conventional fossil fuel power generation. Low carbon energy sources include wind power, solar power and hydropower.

**Main Towns:** Settlements with a key housing, employment and service role, often across wide areas. They are Alnwick, Amble, Ashington, Bedlington, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Blyth, Cramlington, Haltwhistle, Hexham, Morpeth, Ponteland and Prudhoe.

**Main Town Centre Uses:** The uses that should normally be found within defined town centres, i.e. retail development, leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

**Management Plan:** A document setting out goals, methods and a programme of actions over a period of 3 to 5 years, covering areas where management of the environment is essential in order to retain the integrity of the area / assets within it. Areas with management plans include the two AONBs and the Hadrian's Wall WHS.

**Marine Management Organisation (MMO):** A public body established and given powers under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, which brings together key marine decision-making powers and delivery mechanisms. It acts as an "enabling marine regulator" to help marine industries grow wherever possible, while following the principles of better regulation.

**Masterplan:** A detailed plan setting out how a particular area is developed, mapping the phasing of the development, (i.e. the order in which different parts of the development are to be built) and setting out an action plan explaining how, when and by whom different requirements are triggered / funded.

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

**Mineral resource:** A potential mineral deposit where the quality and quantity of material present has not necessarily been tested – see also "Resource Area"

**Minerals reserves:** Mineral deposits which have been tested to establish the quality and quantity of material present and which could be economically and technically exploited.

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**Mineral Safeguarding Areas:** An area designated by the Minerals Planning Authority (i.e. the County Council), which covers known deposits of minerals which are desired to keep safeguarded from unnecessary sterilisation by non-mineral development.

**Municipal waste:** Household waste and any other waste, such as fly-tipped waste, food waste from restaurants etc. collected by the Waste Collection Authority (Northumberland County Council).

**National Character Area (NCA):** A Nationally Defined Landscape Character Area. Nine NCAs fall within Northumberland and form the basis for the defining of the Northumberland LCAs.

**National Nature Reserve (NNR):** Area designated with the aim of securing protection and appropriate management of the most important wildlife habitat, and to provide a resource for scientific research. All NNRs are Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

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

**Neighbourhood Plan:** A plan by a Parish or Town Council – the "qualifying body" – for a particular neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004). Once it has been accepted by the local community through a Referendum, the neighbourhood plan will form part of the Development Plan.

**Network Rail GRIP:** The Guide to Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) describes how Network Rail manages and controls projects that enhance or renew the national rail network. It covers the project process from inception through to the post-implementation realisation of benefits. It divides a project into eight stages and examines the project at critical stages in its lifecycle to provide assurance that it can successfully progress to the next stage.

**North East Combined Authority (NECA):** A legal body that brought together the seven local authorities that serve County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland.

**North East Local Economic Partnership (NELEP):** A business-led strategic organisation, spanning the North East apart from the Tees Valley area, responsible for promoting and developing economic growth and funded by the seven local authorities and Central Government.

**North East Strategic Economic Plan (SEP):** A strategic economic plan for the area of the North-East LEP, with the supplementary title "More and Better Jobs" and dated March 2014.

**North of Tyne Combined Authority:** A new body that brings together Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland Councils

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



**Northumberland County and National Park Joint Structure Plan:** A development plan document prepared by the former Northumberland County Council that covered strategic matters including the definition of the general extent of the Green Belt around Morpeth.

**Northumberland International Dark Sky Park:** A defined area of the borders, encompassing Kielder Forest where efforts are made to prevent any additional light pollution and promote the area for this reason. It is currently the largest area of protected night sky in Europe.

**The Northumberland Line:** This railway line, formerly referred to as the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line, connects Ashington with Tyneside via western Blyth and has a link to Morpeth. It is currently used as a goods-only line but there is a long and widely held ambition to reintroduce passenger services to the line.

**Northumberland National Park:** Designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, the designation seeks to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park, and to promote opportunities for public understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities. The Park sits entirely within the boundary of Northumberland but is a separate local planning authority area.

**Obligation:** A Planning obligation is a legally enforceable obligation, entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

**Open countryside:** Land beyond settlement boundaries, where they are defined on the policies map, and land not within, or immediately adjacent to the built up form of settlements where limits are not defined.

**Open market residential development:** Housing for sale or rent on the open market, without any restrictions regarding occupation or price.

**Open Space:** Usually used in relation to built-up areas. Refers to all open areas of public value, which can offer opportunities for sport, and recreation, as well as a visual amenity and haven for wildlife. Public open space is where public access may or may not be formally established.

**Outstanding Universal Value (OUV):** Cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity.

**Parade of shops:** A cluster of three or more shop front units, not within a defined town centre, that serves a residential area.

**Permitted Development:** Certain limited or minor forms of development that may proceed (under Permitted Development Rights, applying the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order) without the need to make an application for planning permission.

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**Photovoltaics (PV):** A method of generating electrical power by converting sunlight into direct current electricity using certain semiconducting materials. A photovoltaic system employs solar panels composed of a number of solar cells to supply usable solar power. Groupings of solar panels are called solar farms.

**Planning Condition:** A condition imposed on a grant of planning permission (in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) or a condition included in a Local Development Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

**Planning Obligation:** A legally enforceable obligation, entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

**Portfolio of sites:** Normally referring to the range of employment sites across a defined area, covering the range of sizes and qualities of sites, the types of location they are in and what they are capable of accommodating.

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

**Primary Shopping Area:** Defined area where retail development is concentrated and within which it will be sought to locate any new large scale retail development. The Primary Shopping Area can also include other uses appropriate to town centres but may include key shopping frontages, where it is sought to keep the majority of the frontage in retail use.

**Principal residence:** A dwelling that is occupied as the sole or main home of the occupants and where the occupants spend the majority of their time when not working away from home.

**Ramsar sites:** Wetlands of international importance, designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention.

**Regeneration:** The economic, social and environmental renewal and improvement of rural and urban areas.

**Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS):** The former regional tier of the development plan (the RSS for the North-East, 2008), which was abolished in 2013, using powers in the Localism Act 2011. Instead, Councils across the region now have a duty to cooperate on strategic planning issues.

**Registered Battlefields:** An area designated in the English Heritage Register of Historic Battlefields, the purpose of which is to offer them protection and to promote a better understanding of their historic significance.

**Registered Parks and Gardens (Historic Parks and Gardens):** An area designated by English Heritage for its value as a historic planned landscape or garden. As with Listed Buildings they can be graded I (highest quality), II\* or II.

**Renewable and low carbon energy:** Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).

**Repowering:** The replacement of existing, older power sources with newer ones. In the context of wind turbine development this involves replacing existing wind turbines with newer ones.

**Residual waste:** Waste remaining after materials for re-use, recycling and composting have been removed.

**Resource area:** An area within which a particular mineral, or energy resource occurs.

**Rural exception sites:** Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. Small numbers of market homes may be allowed at the local authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.

**Safeguarded land:** Undeveloped land on the outskirts of an inset settlement within the Green Belt. The safeguarded land is not itself designated as Green Belt but, instead, remains as a long term allocation or as "White Land" that is safeguarded for the future expansion needs of the settlement concerned.

**Safeguarding:** The protection of valuable areas of land from disturbance and/or development, due to the presence of natural assets, mineral resource or possible future proposals (such as a bypass line).

**Scenarios:** Different possible outcomes – in this case regarding the growth and health of communities – depending on different 'inputs' – in this case the amount of land allocated for housing and employment and the ability for those houses and workplaces to be delivered on the ground.

**Scheduled Monument:** Sites that contain deliberately created structures, features and remains that are of national importance and for which scheduling is the best means of protecting them.

**Sequential approach:** A planning principle that seeks to identify, allocate or develop certain types or locations of land before the consideration of others. For example, (for housing) low flood risk before higher; or prioritising brownfield land before greenfield; or (for shops and certainty types of services) preferring town centres before out of town locations.

**Service Centres:** The second tier of settlements, below Main Towns, which provide local services to their surrounding areas and have a housing and employment role. They were defined at the previous consultation stage, following an audit of services and facilities within the settlements across the County. They are Allendale, Belford, Bellingham, Corbridge, Haydon Bridge, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Rothbury, Seahouses, Seaton Delaval and Wooler. The term 'service centre' is also used to refer to the cluster of shops and services at the centre of a Service Centre settlement.

**Service Village:** The third tier of settlements with at least one key local service (e.g. a school) and a level of population which may support the retention of these services and the provision of others. An appropriate level of housing in these settlements is supported in the plan.

**Setting:** The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

**Settlement boundaries:** These define a line of demarcation between the built elements and other features of a settlement, and the countryside. They are defined to protect the countryside from adhoc development.

**Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI):** Defined area containing nationally important wildlife or geology designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

**Site thresholds (affordable housing):** The minimum size that a market housing site must be (in terms of its area or the number of dwellings proposed) in order to trigger a requirement for affordable housing to be provided as part of / in association with the development, (assuming that a local need for affordable housing has been identified in an up-to-date assessment). The provision is secured through a legal agreement following negotiation between the Council and the developer, which must take account of viability.

**Smaller village settlement:** A cluster of dwellings and associated buildings which has a recognised name and identity, a definable village centre, and a church or other community building.

**Special Areas of Conservation (SAC):** Areas given special protection under the European Union's Habitats Directive, which is transposed into UK law by the Habitats and Conservation of Species Regulations 2010.

**Special Protection Areas (SPA):** Areas which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds found within European Union countries. They are European designated sites, classified under the Birds Directive.

**Statement of Community Involvement (SCI):** The Council's approach to involving the community in the planning process and development management decisions.

**Sterilisation (minerals):** When development or land use changes prevent the possible future extraction of an underlying mineral resource.

**Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA):** An assessment of sites put forward as having potential for new housing, examining their constraints, marketability etc. and arriving at a possible yield of new houses (if any), with a view to achieving a five year supply of deliverable housing land.

**Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA):** An assessment of the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that an area (in this case Northumberland) is likely to need over the plan period in order to meet household and population projections, taking account of migration and demographic change.

**Strategic Road Network (SRN):** The trunk road network, managed by Highways England (formerly the Highways Agency). In Northumberland, this is the A1, A19 and A69.

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

**Sui generis uses:** Those uses of land and buildings that do not fall into a particular Use Class of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order - i.e. changing to and from those uses would always require planning permission.

**Superfast:** Where this refers to broadband, this refers to speeds of 30M/bits per second or more.

**Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs):** Non-statutory documents which add further detail to the policies in statutory documents such as the Local Plan – e.g. providing guidance on design in general or on the development of specific sites. SPDs are capable of being a material consideration but do not form part of the development plan.

**Supply chain:** The sequence or network (across space and time) of people, businesses or other organisations involved in moving products or services from suppliers to customers. The customers may themselves be manufacturers or service industries supplying consumers with products or services.

**Sustainability Appraisal (SA):** The process of weighing and assessing policies for their global, national and local sustainability implications in relation to the environment, the economy and society, incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to comply with EU Directive 2001/42/EC.

**The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies.**

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**Sustainable development:** Defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". The Government makes clear that sustainable development has economic, social and environmental dimensions which are further explained in the NPPF.

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

**Tenure (housing):** The ownership or rental status of dwellings – i.e. whether they are owner-occupied (owned outright / being bought with a mortgage), privately rented, rented from housing associations or rented from local authorities.

**Town Centres:** The defined areas of town or service centres, within which most town centre uses should be concentrated. Sub-divided into main town centres, for the larger towns (containing a smaller 'Primary Shopping Area' for retail uses); and smaller town centres, for other main towns and some service centres, covering all town centre uses.

**Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order:** The national statutory instrument that allows for certain types of development without the need to apply for planning permission – i.e. Permitted Development Rights.

**Ultrafast:** Where this refers to broadband, this relates to speeds of 300 M/bits per second or more.

**Viability Assessment:** Compares the likely broad value of planned development likely to come forward over the plan period with the likely costs and constraints, in order to understand the deliverability of the plan and provide certainty and sustainability.

**Village green (or town green):** Under the Commons Act 2006, a village or town green is defined as a local space within a village or other settlement that has been used by people over a period of time for recreational activities and has protected status.

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

**Waste streams:** Sub-divisions of waste, such as household waste, commercial waste, hazardous waste etc., which will be dealt with in different ways.

**Water body:** Any mass of water having definite hydrological, physical, chemical and biological characteristics. They may be surface water bodies, such as rivers, estuary waters, coastal waters, lakes or ponds. They may also be underground water bodies.



Water bodies can be natural, entirely artificial and/or modified by human activity. They will normally be permanent or frequent occurrences and would exclude very temporarily occurring puddles etc.

**Wider employment-generating uses:** Land uses generating permanent on-site employment, which may include:

- 'Non-residential institution' uses, where the scale or nature of the operation, or lack of the need for regular public access would make a location in a town centre or central to where people live less necessary - e.g. training facilities of various sorts, creches that serve people working in the employment areas themselves or types of health clinics that provide for specialised needs and are only occasionally visited;
- They may include other uses which typically operate from employment sites such as car garages, taxi firms, home recycling centres and trade counter retail operations, as well as some leisure businesses which may not be suited to town centres;
- They would only include any of main town centre uses where the proposal is small scale and the employment area is centrally located in a main town or service centre;
- They would not include any residential-type uses.

**Windfall:** A site proposed for development without having first been identified or allocated through a local plan. Assumptions can be made as to how much these will contribute to overall development requirements and criteria-based policies can be set out to deal with them.

**Wireless telecommunications:** For the purposes of the Local Plan, this is a broad term intended to cover cellular (3G, 4G and 5G), fixed wireless (microwave etc), low power Internet of Things (IoT) technologies and WiFi, as well as future technologies.

**World Heritage Site (WHS):** A cultural or natural site of outstanding universal value, designated by an international council of experts, Hadrian's Wall being the only example falling within Northumberland.

## Appendix A: Neighbourhood Plan Housing Site Allocations

### Neighbourhood plan housing site allocations

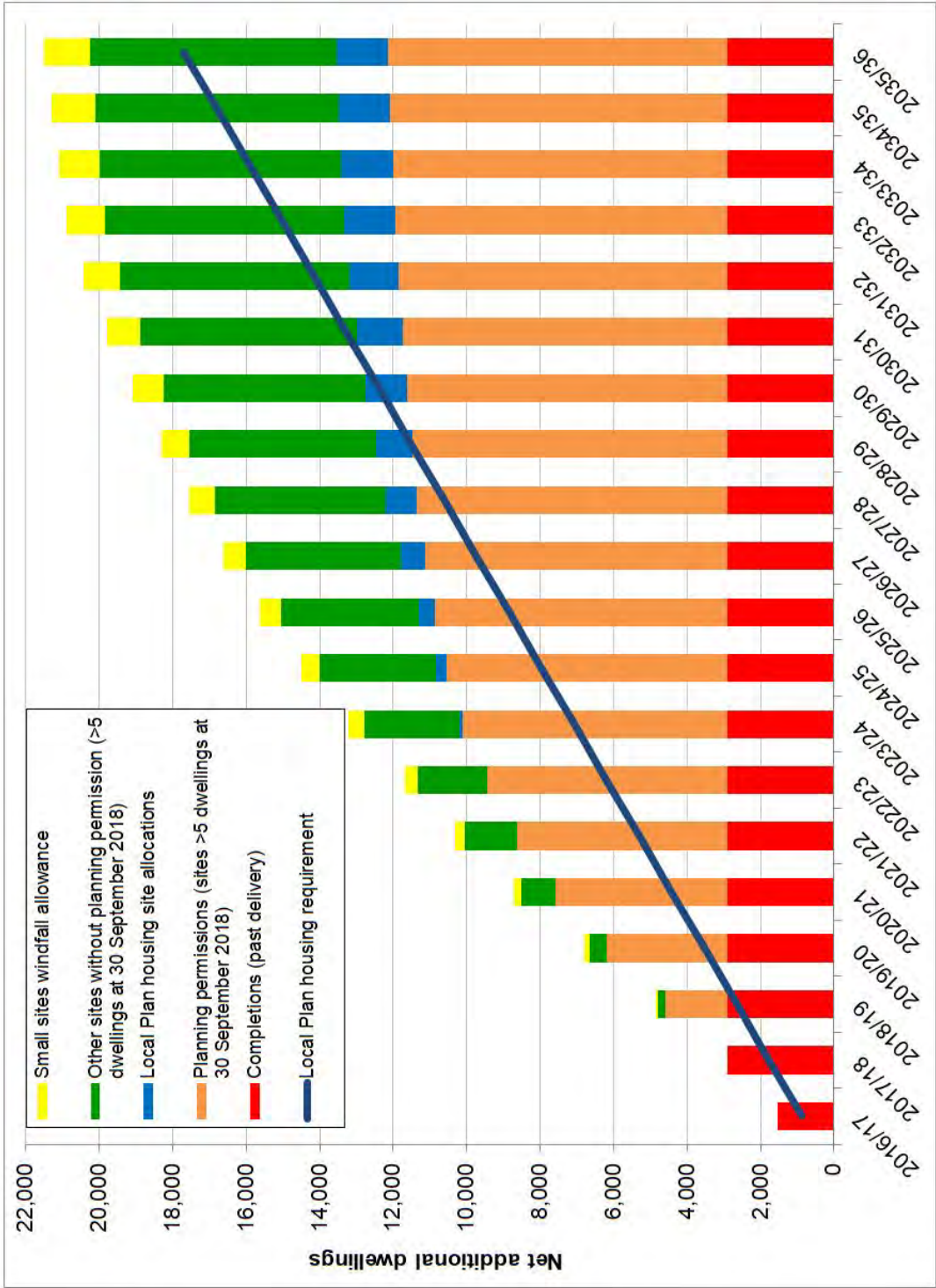
Neighbourhood plan area	Site name	Indicative net additional dwelling capacity	Status (as at December 2018)
<b>Central Northumberland Delivery Area</b>			
<b>Longhorsley</b> (‘Made’ - October 2018) (Allocations for 67 dwellings)	Shoulder of Mutton site, East Road, Longhorsley	55	Permitted
	Normandy Terrace, Longhorsley	12	Permitted
<b>Morpeth</b> (‘Made’ - May 2016) (Allocations number not indicated)	North Morpeth, former St. George’s Hospital	Not indicated in NP	Permitted
	North of Longhirst Road, Pegswood	Not indicated in NP	Permitted
	North of Hebron Avenue, Pegswood	Not indicated in NP	Permitted
<b>North Northumberland Delivery Area</b>			
<b>Alnwick and Denwick</b> (‘Made’ - July 2017) (Allocations for 482 dwellings)	Land east of Allerburn Lea, Alnwick	270	
	Land south west of Ravensmount and Alnmouth Road, Alnwick	70	
	Duchess’s High School, Howling Lane, Alnwick	60	
	Allerburn House, Denwick Lane, Alnwick	20	Permitted (under construction)
	Land at former Thomas Percy School, Blakelaw Road, Alnwick	15	Completed
	Former Fire Station, South Road, Alnwick	15	
	Former bus garage, Lisburn Terrace, Alnwick	10	Permitted (under construction for an 88-bed care home)
	Land adjoining Old Vicarage, Ratten Row, Alnwick	6	
	Roxburgh Place, Alnwick	10	
	Bank Top, Rugley Road, Alnwick	6	
<b>West Northumberland Delivery Area</b>			
<b>Whittington</b> (‘Made’ - November 2018) (Allocations for 19 dwellings)	Rose Hill, Great Whittington	9	Permitted
	Land west of the village hall, Rose Hill, Great Whittington	10	Permitted

**The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies.**

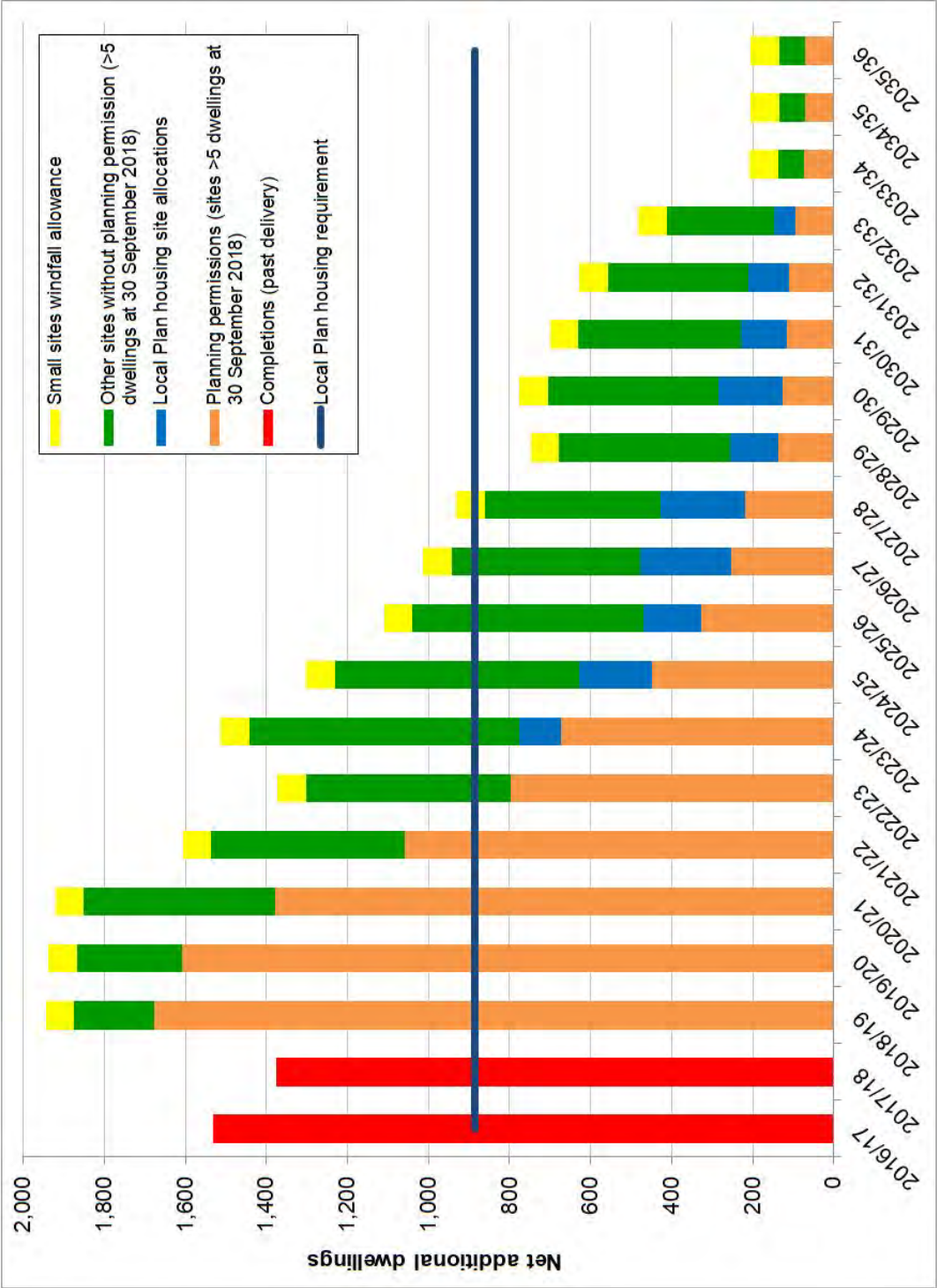
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Appendix B: Housing Trajectory

Housing trajectory: Cumulative Delivery 2016 to 2036



Housing trajectory : Annual delivery 2016 to 2036



**Notes:**

The Local Plan Housing Trajectories set out house building since the start of the plan period (1 April 2016) and forecasts future delivery over the plan period (up to 31 March 2036) based upon the latest evidence<sup>(114)</sup>.

The delivery outlined in the trajectories includes that from the following categories of site:

- Past Delivery – completions in the first two years of the plan period 2016/17 and 2017/18;
- Permitted Sites at 31 March 2018 (of 5 units or more) – delivery is directly informed by that set out in the latest Five-Year Supply of Deliverable Housing Sites report;
- Large sites without planning permission at 31 March 2018 (of 5 units and above) - Includes sites permitted from 1 April 2018 to 30 September 2018 and sites 'minded to approve'. Some of these sites were included in the latest Five Year Supply of Deliverable Sites report.
- Housing Allocations - sites allocated for housing in Policy HOU 4 of this Local Plan or allocated in 'made' Neighbourhood Plans;
- Small Sites Windfall Allowance – delivery based on analysis of past trends using the methodology outlined in the latest Five Year Supply of Deliverable Sites report.

The figures include all current delivery as set out in the above categories. Over the course of the plan period it is anticipated that sites not identified in any of the above categories will continue to come forward as 'windfall' sites. There are a significant number of other potentially developable sites within the SHLAA. Should sites within the above categories not deliver as anticipated, there is considered to be sufficient capacity in the identified supply of land to enable delivery of the Plan's housing requirements on alternative sites if required.

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114 Including the Council's planning applications database, the latest Net Additional Homes report, Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and Five-Year Supply of Deliverable Housing Sites.



## Appendix C: Existing Waste Management Facilities

Site Name	Facility Type	Easting	Northing	Site Postcode
Cockle Park Anaerobic Digestion Plant	Anaerobic digestion	420300	591350	NE61 3EA
Hexham Anaerobic Digester	Anaerobic digestion	395023	564221	NE46 4JR
Anick Grange Farm Composting Facility	Composting facility	395778	565383	NE46 4LP
Codlaw Farms	Composting facility	395400	567600	NE46 4HF
Ellington Road Composting Facility	Composting facility	425800	589200	NE63 9XS
Harecrag Composting Site	Composting facility	417400	608000	NE66 2JD
Lane End Farm	Composting facility	424800	581100	NE22 6AA
Allendale Household Waste Recovery Centre	Household waste amenity site	384300	556000	NE47 9LQ
Bebside Household Waste Recovery Centre	Household waste amenity site	427926	581369	NE24 4HN
Haltwhistle Household Waste Recovery Centre	Household waste amenity site	371200	563800	NE49 0ET
Kirkley West Thorn Household Waste Recovery Centre	Household waste amenity site	413866	575948	NE20 0AG
Morpeth Household Waste Recovery Centre	Household waste amenity site	421066	586877	NE61 3AB
North Seaton Household Waste Recovery Centre	Household waste amenity site	429172	585868	NE63 0YB
North Sunderland Household Waste Recovery Centre	Household waste amenity site	420960	631610	NE68 7UP
Prudhoe Household Waste Recovery Centre	Household waste amenity site	410654	563502	NE42 5EJ
Wooler Household Waste Recovery Centre	Household waste amenity site	399970	627780	NE71 6QG
Former Shadfen Park Drift Mine	Inert landfill	422106	585629	NE61 6NT
Hollings Hill Quarry Landfill	Inert landfill	409549	557290	DH8 9JQ
Merryshields Quarry	Inert landfill	406477	561783	NE43 7NS
Lynemouth Power Station Ash Lagoons	Landfill	430400	589700	NE63 9NW



West Sleekburn Composting & Recycling Centre	Materials recycling and composting facility	427960	584670	NE22 7LQ
West Sleekburn Materials Recycling Facility	Materials Recycling Facility	427700	584700	NE22 7LQ
Howford Quarry Recycling Facility	Materials recycling facility - inert wastes	391900	566300	NE46 4RY
Longhoughton Quarry	Materials recycling facility - inert wastes	423100	615300	NE66 3AE
Steven Arkle Groundworks	Materials recycling facility - inert wastes (soils)	428594	582096	NE24 4RT
As New Auto Recyclers	Metal recycling / end of life vehicle facility	429687	575927	NE25 0PP
Barrington Auto Salvage	Metal recycling / end of life vehicle facility	426331	583650	NE22 7DQ
Battle Bridge	Metal recycling / end of life vehicle facility	411600	612000	NE66 2BB
Hancock Scrapyard	Metal recycling / end of life vehicle facility	427000	583400	NE22 7AW
Haugh Head	Metal recycling / end of life vehicle facility	400211	626274	NE71 6QP
K C Forrest Scrapmetal Merchan	Metal recycling / end of life vehicle facility	428000	584800	NE22 7LQ
Orchard Car Dismantlers	Metal recycling / end of life vehicle facility	393612	564529	NE46 3PU
Portland Industrial Estate	Metal recycling / end of life vehicle facility	426203	588408	NE63 8TU
Robinson Scrapyard	Metal recycling / end of life vehicle facility	427820	584830	NE22 7LQ
West Sleekburn Autos	Metal recycling / end of life vehicle facility	427746	584802	NE22 7LQ
Yard 3 & 4	Metal recycling / end of life vehicle facility	427878	584818	NE22 7LQ
Ellington Road Landfill	Non-hazardous landfill	426220	589280	NE63 9XS
Blyth Valley Skips	Transfer station	429330	582046	NE24 4RF
Cowley Road Depot	Transfer station	429850	582200	NE24 5TF
Low Prudhoe Waste Reclamation & Transfer Station	Transfer station	410100	564000	NE42 6PL
Moscrop Bros	Transfer station	427700	584700	NE22 7LQ
R Thornton & Co Ltd	Transfer station	426200	591400	NE61 5SD

<a href="#">Berwick</a> Recycling Centre	Transfer station	399200	654900	TD15 1UN
Sanders Plant & Waste Management Limited	Transfer station	423347	587602	NE61 6UU
Alnwick Transfer Station and Household Waste Recovery Centre	Transfer station and household waste amenity site	419860	611640	NE66 2HT
Amble Skips	Transfer station and materials recycling facility	426537	604080	NE65 0PE
GS Skip Hire	Transfer station and materials recycling facility	410100	563931	NE42 6PL
Hadston Recycling Centre	Transfer station and materials recycling facility	425035	600509	NE65 9YG
Stephenson Way	Transfer station and materials recycling facility	426430	583660	NE22 7DG
Coopies Haugh - Clark	Transfer Station and materials recycling facility -inert wastes	421323	585306	NE61 6JN
Lynefield Park - Clark	Transfer Station and materials recycling facility -inert wastes	429169	590141	NE63 9YH
Old Stone Road	Transfer Station and materials recycling facility -inert wastes	428696	575967	NE23 6XW
Scotts Yard	Transfer Station and materials recycling facility -inert wastes	398280	627820	NE71 6PB
Thornbrough Quarry	Transfer Station and materials recycling facility -inert wastes	400870	563700	NE45 5LX
Unit 9 - West Sleekburn Ind Est	Transfer Station and materials recycling facility -inert wastes	427772	584747	<del>NE45 5LX</del> <a href="#">NE22 7LQ</a>
Former Four Rivers Site	Transfer Station and materials recycling facility -inert wastes	429180	585050	NE22 7DB
<del>Prestwick Pit Waste Facility</del>	<del>Transfer Station and materials recycling facility -inert wastes</del>	<del>417600</del>	<del>571100</del>	<del>NE20 9TS</del>
Berwick Transfer Station and Household Waste Recovery Centre	Waste transfer station and household waste amenity site	399300	655300	TD15 1UN
Hexham Transfer Station and Household Waste Recovery Centre	Waste transfer station and household waste amenity site	394458	564881	NE46 4DL

## Appendix D: Parking Standards

- D.1** This appendix provides further information and guidance to interpret and support Local Plan Policy TRA 4 and contains the standards that will apply to all development other than in the circumstances described in the policy.
- D.2** Advice on site-specific works that are necessary to facilitate access to the development are not included and these must be considered separately. These matters will be covered in the Highways and Transportation Design and Delivery Guidance Supplementary Planning Document. Consistency with these standards alone is not in itself, therefore, sufficient to demonstrate that a proposal is acceptable either in transportation or planning terms.

### Parking design

- D.3** The scale, location and functionality of parking for occupiers, visitors, service and delivery vehicles is important to the safe and efficient use of any development. These factors must be an integral element of the design of all development and must be considered at the outset of the design process.
- D.4** It is expected that parking to serve occupiers and residents will normally be provided off-street. This will normally be within the curtilage of a dwelling for residential developments, or within the development site for other uses. Parking for visitors and other vehicles need not be provided within the curtilage of dwellings or within a development site, but must be accounted for in the design of all schemes. This is reflected in the parking requirements described below.
- D.5** Developers should consider a range of approaches to car parking and will need to demonstrate that the most appropriate solution has been provided. Any on-street parking should be laid out so that it does not obstruct or make access to private driveways difficult.

### Parking space dimensions

- D.6** A minimum standard car parking space will be 2.5 metres x 5.0 metres. For disabled car parking spaces, additional clearance of 1.2 metres will be required along all sides.

### Domestic garages

- D.7** Domestic garages are often used for storage of cycles and various household articles. For garages to form part of the parking provision, they must have minimum internal dimensions of:
- 6.0 metres x 3.0 metres for a single garage; or
  - 6.0 metres x 6.0 metres for a double garage.

- D.8** These dimensions allow garages to accommodate the car and the storage of cycles and other items. Where these requirements are not met, the garage(s) will not be considered to form part of the parking provision for the purposes of assessing whether adequate provision is made.

### Driveways

- D.9** Driveways are short sections from the public road to the house. Driveways shall be at least 3.0 metres wide for a single parking space or 3.3 metres if the driveway also provides the main pedestrian access or forms part of the wheelie bin route to the dwelling. Adjacent car parking spaces shall add 2.5 metres to these dimensions.
- D.10** For a standard 'up and over' garage door, the face of the garage should be a minimum of 5.6 metres from the back of the footway or from the edge of a shared footway. Driveways with gates should be 5.6 metres in length to enable the inward opening of gates. Driveways with no gates or garage door considerations, or with garage doors of a roller shutter type, must be no less than 5.0 metres in length.

### Visitor parking

- D.11** Public parking shall be independently accessible and be available in perpetuity.
- Perpendicular parking bays (90 degree to aisle/road) shall measure 2.5 metres x 5.0 metres (6.0 metre aisle width or reversing distance);
  - Inline parking bays (bays run parallel to aisle/kerb line) shall measure 2.4 metres x 6.0 metres;
  - Echelon parking bays (bays run 45 degrees to aisle/road) shall measure 2.5 metres x 5.0 metres.

### Parking standards

- D.12** Car parking needs to be considered as an important part of any scheme. The Council will seek to ensure car parking provision is at an appropriate level to cater for the development and visitors, whilst taking into account the location, circumstances in the surrounding area, highway safety and the availability of public transport.
- D.13** The following minimum car parking standards apply to Class C3 development countywide:

Class C3 minimum parking requirements		
Number of bedrooms	In curtilage parking	Visitor parking
1	1	1 per 4 units
2/3	2	
4/5	3	
6+	4	

**D.14** The following car parking standards for other developments, other than Class C3, are an indication of appropriate parking levels for these developments, which will then be considered against the policy and on a site-by-site basis:

Indicative parking requirements (except Class C3)		
Use Class	Parking Requirement	Notes
A1 Shops	<p>Shops up to 1000 square metres: 1 space per 50 square metres</p> <p>Shops over 1000 square metres: 1 space per 15 square metres</p> <p>Non food retail over 1000 square metres: 1 space per 20 square metres</p>	Additional staff and delivery vehicle parking to be agreed.
A2 Financial and Professional Services	1 space per 30 square metres	
A3 Food and Drink	1 space per 10 square metres	
A4 Drinking Establishments	1 space per 10 square metres	
A5 Hot Food Takeaways	1 space per 25 square metres	
B1 Office	1 space per 30 square metres	
B2 General Industry	1 space per 50 square metres	
B8 Storage and Distribution	1 space per 200 square metres	
C1 Hotels	1 space per bedroom, 1 space per 3 staff	
C2 Residential Institutions	<p>Residential care home/sheltered housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 space per unit, warden's accommodation or resident staff.</li> <li>• 1 space per non resident staff</li> <li>• 1 space per 3 rooms for visitors</li> <li>• 1 space per 4 residents for residents</li> </ul> <p>Retirement homes:</p>	

Indicative parking requirements (except Class C3)		
Use Class	Parking Requirement	Notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 space per dwelling</li> <li>1 space per full time member of staff/residential staff</li> </ul>	
C4 Houses in Multiple Occupation	1 space per bedroom	
D1 Non Residential Institutions	<p>Clinics/surgeries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 space per doctor</li> <li>1 space per 3 staff</li> <li>Patients: 4 spaces per consulting room</li> </ul> <p>Day care services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 space per 1 staff</li> <li>1 space per 10 clients</li> </ul> <p>Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 space per 1 staff</li> <li>Students who may drive: 1 space per 5</li> </ul>	Visitor, bus and maintenance vehicle parking and pickup/drop off arrangements to be agreed
D2 Assembly and Leisure	<p>Places of worship: 1 space per 10 seats</p> <p>Sports halls and pitches: 30 spaces per hall or pitch</p>	
<i>Sui Generis</i>	<p>Car showrooms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 space per 5 sales vehicles</li> <li>4 spaces per MOT bay</li> <li>1 space per member of staff</li> </ul>	Valet and breakdown truck arrangements to be agreed.