

BASIC CONDITIONS STATEMENT

BELFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

(SUBMISSION VERSION 2023 – 2036)

February 2023

Belford Neighbourhood Plan – Basic Conditions Statement – Feb 2023

Contents:

1.0	Introduction.....	3
2.0	Submission Documents	3
3.0	Legislative Requirements.....	4
4.0	Basic Conditions	6
5.0	Conclusions.....	25

APPENDIX A: List of strategic policies in the Northumberland Local Plan (2022)

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Basic Conditions Statement sets out how the Belford Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), hereafter referred to as ‘the Regulations’, and how the basic conditions have been met as prescribed by Paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) (the 1990 Act). The statement has been prepared by Belford Parish Council as the qualifying body for the designated neighbourhood plan area and is submitted alongside the submission version of the Belford Neighbourhood Plan, the Consultation Statement, and other submission documents as set out below.

2.0 Submission Documents

- 2.1 All the documents required by part 5, paragraph 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) are submitted with the Belford Neighbourhood Plan. Those submission documents consist of the following:

i) The proposed neighbourhood development plan

- 2.2 The Belford Neighbourhood Plan (Submission Version 2023 – 2036) is submitted along with this statement.

ii) A map or statement which identifies the area to which the proposed neighbourhood development plan relates

- 2.3 A Policies Map is contained within the main body of the neighbourhood plan, showing detail in relation to relevant policies in the Plan. The Policies Map (which includes a detailed inset map for Belford village) was produced by Northumberland County Council for the Parish Council. It is considered that the maps included within the Neighbourhood Plan give enough clarity to give context to the policies.

- 2.4 The Policies Map covers the Neighbourhood Area and identifies sites in relation to specific policies:

- Settlement Boundary (Policies 1, 2 and 3)
- Community Facilities (Policy 4)
- Recreational Spaces (Policy 5)
- Local Green Spaces (Policy 6)
- Belford Village Centre (Policy 7)
- Belford Industrial Estate (Policy 10)
- Belford Conservation Area (Policy 13)
- Valued Landscapes (Policy 17)

- 2.5 The Northumberland Coast AONB area is also shown on the main policies map for information and an additional map has been produced which identifies the protected areas on the coast within the Neighbourhood Area.

iii) A Consultation Statement

- 2.6 A Consultation Statement is submitted with the Plan, which details the consultation that was

Belford Neighbourhood Plan – Basic Conditions Statement – Feb 2023

carried out throughout the development of the Plan and how this consultation informed the development of policies in the Plan. The document contains details of the persons and bodies consulted about the neighbourhood plan; it also explains how they were consulted. The appendices cover in detail the responses made at the Regulation 14 stage consultation. It also sets out how these concerns have been subsequently addressed in policies and informed any changes to policies in the neighbourhood plan.

2.7 It should be noted that direct consultation with the public in the later stages of the plan was limited due to the Covid-19 pandemic which meant there has been a significant delay between the draft plan being written and the Regulation 14 consultation taking place.

iv) A statement explaining how the proposed neighbourhood development plan meets the requirements of paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act as applied to neighbourhood plans by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act; (otherwise known as the Basic Conditions statement)

2.8 This statement is the Basic Conditions statement. The basic conditions are identified in part 4 of this statement.

v) An environmental report prepared in accordance with paragraphs (2) and (3) of regulation 12 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004; or where it has been determined under regulation 9(1) of those Regulations that the plan proposal is unlikely to have significant environmental effects (and, accordingly, does not require an environmental assessment), a statement of reasons for that determination.

2.9 A screening opinion was sought from Northumberland County Council as to whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment would be required during the Plan preparation period. The draft Plan was screened 'in' and so a full Strategic Environmental Assessment was produced, again with the assistance of Northumberland County Council. A pre-screening opinion was also sought as to whether an Appropriate Assessment would be required under the Habitats Regulations. It was concluded that this would not be required subject to some alterations to wording in the Plan to cover coastal mitigation and nutrient neutrality issues. A copy of both screening opinions and the Environmental Report are submitted with the Plan.

3.0 Legislative Requirements

3.1 Legislative Requirements are set out in the Localism Act (2011), the Town and Country Planning Act (as applied to neighbourhood plans by section 38A and 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act) and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). Each requirement is addressed as follows:

i) The draft Plan is Being Submitted by a qualifying body

3.2 This submission draft Plan is submitted by Belford Parish Council, the qualifying body. The Plan has been prepared by elected members of Belford Parish Council as well as interested residents who formed a Steering Group to administer the progress of the Plan.

3.3 The Parish of Belford (forming the Plan area for the Belford Neighbourhood Plan) is entirely within the Northumberland County area. A Neighbourhood Area application was submitted under the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (part 2 section 6) to Northumberland County Council who approved the application on 22nd September 2015. At that time the

Belford Neighbourhood Plan – Basic Conditions Statement – Feb 2023

Neighbourhood Area comprised the civil parishes of Belford and Middleton, along with the Warenton Ward which together, for the purposes of local government administration, were formally organised and managed as 'Belford and Middleton Parish Council. However, following a local parish boundary review in 2020, the geographic extent of Belford civil parish was extended to include the parish of Easington. A modified Belford Neighbourhood Area was subsequently designated by Northumberland County Council on 20th May 2021 to replace the previous designation. This area now covers the whole of the new parish of Belford. Copies of the Neighbourhood Area designation documents are available on the Northumberland County Council website.

3.4 The Parish of Belford is therefore designated as a Neighbourhood Area for the purposes of section 61(G) of the 1990 Act.

ii) What is being proposed is a neighbourhood development plan

3.5 The Belford Neighbourhood Plan contains policies that relate to planning matters (the use and development of land) and has been prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements and processes set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended).

iii) The proposed neighbourhood plan states the period for which it is to have effect

3.6 The draft Plan identifies a 13-year period to which it relates: 2023 to 2036. This timescale is designed to fit in with the timescales set out in the Northumberland Local Plan which was adopted in March 2022.

iv) The neighbourhood plan does not deal with excluded development such as strategic county matters (mineral extraction and waste development), nationally significant infrastructure or any other matters set out in Section 61K of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

3.7 None of the policies in the Plan relate to excluded development.

v) The proposed neighbourhood plan does not relate to more than one neighbourhood area and there are no other neighbourhood development plans in place within the neighbourhood area.

3.8 The Plan relates to what is now the Belford Parish Neighbourhood Area (see 3.3 for information regarding changes in parish boundaries), which is the designated neighbourhood area consisting of the Parish of Belford. The Plan does not contain policies or proposals that relate to any other area. There are no other neighbourhood plans relating to this designated neighbourhood area.

vi) The Neighbourhood Development Plan only contains policies relating to the development and use of land.

3.9 The Plan contains policies relating to the development and use of land. Other proposals that are not related to the development and use of land will be carried forward by Community Projects, and these are identified in Part 7 'Community Projects' in the Plan.

4.0 Basic Conditions

4.1 A Neighbourhood Plan will be considered to have met the Basic Conditions if:

1. Having appropriate regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood development plan.
2. The ‘making’ of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
3. The ‘making’ of the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area).
4. The ‘making’ of the neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, retained EU obligations; and
5. Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the neighbourhood plan. The following prescribed condition relates to neighbourhood plans: Regulation 32 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) sets out a further Basic condition in addition to those set out in primary legislation. That the making of the neighbourhood plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012) or a European offshore marine site (as defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 2007) (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects). (See Schedule 2 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)).

4.2 Each of the basic conditions is covered next:

Basic Condition 1: Having appropriate regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood development plan

4.3 National Planning Practice Guidance states (Paragraph: 070 Reference ID: 41-070-20140306):

‘A qualifying body is advised to set out in its basic conditions statement how they have had regard to national policy and considered whether a particular policy is or is not relevant. A qualifying body is encouraged to set out the particular national policies that it has considered, and how the policies in a draft neighbourhood plan or the development proposals in an Order take account of national policy and advice.’

4.4 How the Belford Neighbourhood Plan has regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State is contained in Table 1 which sets out those particular national policies and guidance in the NPPF that have a bearing on policies in the submission Belford Neighbourhood Plan.

Basic Condition 2: The ‘making’ of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of Sustainable Development

4.5 The meaning of ‘sustainable development’ in this context is set out in paragraph 8 of the NPPF. Paragraph 8 identifies three objectives (economic objectives, social objectives and environmental objectives), the combination of which, contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The objective of sustainable development can be summarised as ‘meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to

meet their own needs'.¹

- 4.6 There are several objectives set out in the Belford Neighbourhood Plan, the combination of which contribute to the delivery of 'sustainable development'. These objectives cover housing (Objective 1), Community life (Objective 2), the local economy (Objective 3), Transport and Travel (Objective 4), and the natural and built environment (Objective 5). Some of the objectives are cross-cutting (i.e. they deliver on more than one element of sustainable development). Some of the objectives will be delivered through planning policies, and some through a combination of planning policies and community projects.
- 4.7 The Plan contains 17 policies, which in combination, seek to deliver the vision and objectives identified at the beginning of the Plan, as well as addressing the three areas of sustainable development identified in the NPPF; delivering economic objectives, social objectives and environmental objectives. How the policies deliver these objectives is summarised below:

Economic Objectives

NPPF paragraph 8 sets out what is meant by the economic dimension of sustainable development: *'to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure'* [para 8 NPPF]

- 4.8 Policies 7 to 11 in combination seek to support the local economy. Policy 7 is about Belford Village Centre and supporting the role it plays in the local economy; Policy 8 is about Broadband Infrastructure and Telecommunications, which is essential for a strong local business base; Policy 9 is about rural business development and tourism; Policy 10 is about Belford Industrial Estate and supports its role as such, and Policy 11 is about tourist accommodation and the seeks to support the local tourist economy. In combination these policies support economic objectives.

Social Objectives

NPPF paragraph 8 sets out what is meant by the social/community dimension of sustainable development: *'to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being'*

- 4.9 Policies 1, 2 and 3 all support the provision of new housing and seek to direct delivery to meet identified local need. Policies 4, 5 and 6 support community facilities, recreational facilities and identify local green spaces. Policy 7 supports the provision and improvement of pedestrian and cycle routes in the Neighbourhood Area. In combination with other policies, these policies seek to secure a strong, vibrant and healthy community in Belford.

Environmental Objectives

NPPF paragraph 8 sets out what is meant by the environmental dimension of sustainable development: *'to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic*

¹ Resolution 42/187 of the United Nations General Assembly – referred in paragraph 7 of the NPPF

environment; including making effective use of land; helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution and mitigating and adapting to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.'

- 4.10 Policies 13 to 17 support environmental objectives for the natural and built environment. Regarding the built environment, Policy 13 is about the Belford Conservation Area and Policy 14 is about delivery good design in new development. This reflects the government's agenda of securing beautiful places through high quality design. Policies 15, 16 and 17 are about the natural environment and special landscapes and in combination deliver objectives set down in the NPPF about creating and maintaining beautiful places.
- 4.11 In combination, it is considered that this Plan will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development as defined in the NPPF and the Plan therefore meets the second Basic Condition. Table 1 further assesses each policy in the Plan against the objective of delivering sustainable development.

Basic Condition 3: That the Neighbourhood Plan is in General Conformity with Strategic Local Policy

- 4.12 The Belford Neighbourhood Plan area lies entirely within Northumberland County Council. On 31st March 2022, the County Council adopted the Northumberland Local Plan (NLP). This Plan contains strategic and non-strategic policies. A list of strategic policies insofar as they relate to this area is contained in Appendix A.
- 4.13 The neighbourhood plan must be in 'general conformity' with strategic policy. Paragraph 074² of the National Planning Practice Guidance explains what is meant by 'general conformity':
- 'When considering whether a policy is in general conformity a qualifying body, independent examiner, or local planning authority, should consider the following:
- whether the neighbourhood plan policy or development proposal supports and upholds the general principle that the strategic policy is concerned with.
 - the degree, if any, of conflict between the draft neighbourhood plan policy or development proposal and the strategic policy.
 - whether the draft neighbourhood plan policy or development proposal provides an additional level of detail and/or a distinct local approach to that set out in the strategic policy without undermining that policy.
 - the rationale for the approach taken in the draft neighbourhood plan and the evidence to justify that approach.'
- 4.14 Each policy in the plan has been tested against the relevant strategic policies in the NLP and is set out in detail in Table 1. Policies in the neighbourhood plan are also tested against national planning policy and practice guidance as set out in the NPPF.
- 4.15 The information in Table 1 provides the detail required to conclude that there is, are no areas of conflict identified with existing or strategic policy in the NLP, or with national planning policy.

² (Reference ID: 41-074- 20140306)

Belford Neighbourhood Plan – Basic Conditions Statement – Feb 2023

Table 1: Policies in the submission Belford Neighbourhood Plan tested against Basic Conditions 1, 2 and 3.

Policy 1: New Housing Development		
Basic Condition 1 (having regard to national planning policy and advice)	Basic Condition 2 (contributing to the achievement of sustainable development)	Basic Condition 3 (general conformity with strategic planning policy) Northumberland Local Plan (2022)
<p>This policy seeks to support the delivery of housing primarily within the settlement boundary of Belford, although it does identify other situations where housing could be delivered outside the settlement boundary (i.e., within some of the specifically identified small hamlets in the Neighbourhood Area, and by the delivery of ‘exception sites’ on the edge of Belford Village).</p> <p>Chapter 5 of the NPPF is about housing delivery. Paragraphs 78, 79 and 80 are about rural housing. Paragraph 78 states that in rural areas planning policies should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs. Paragraph 79 states that to support sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller</p>	<p>This policy contributes to the achievement of sustainable development by encouraging the development of affordable housing, self-build, and custom build housing, all of which are important to ensure a mix of housing to meet the needs of the population in Belford. The policy also seeks to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside around Belford as part of the overall approach to housing delivery. The approach will give some certainty to developers as to what kind of housing development is likely to be supported and where.</p>	<p>Policy STP1 sets out the strategic policy in relation to delivering sustainable development in the County. Belford is identified as a ‘Service Centre’ which will accommodate housing and services that strengthen its role as a service centre.</p> <p>Policy HOU3 in the NLP identifies a housing requirement for the Belford Neighbourhood Area of 120 dwellings between 2016 and 2036. This figure is entirely met by existing commitments and permissions within the Belford Neighbourhood Area; therefore, the settlement boundary proposed does not prevent this housing requirement being met. Evidence to demonstrate this is provided in the Settlement Boundary evidence base report (see in paragraph 5.2) which identifies a total of 180 commitments for housing in the plan area.</p> <p>Policy 1 (part 2) is in general conformity with the strategic plan, as it seeks to preserve the open countryside around Belford. Policy 1 (part 3) is also in general conformity with policies in the NLP as it supports the delivery of local needs/affordable schemes through rural exception sites</p>

Belford Neighbourhood Plan – Basic Conditions Statement – Feb 2023

Policy 1: New Housing Development		
Basic Condition 1 (having regard to national planning policy and advice)	Basic Condition 2 (contributing to the achievement of sustainable development)	Basic Condition 3 (general conformity with strategic planning policy) Northumberland Local Plan (2022)
<p>settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby. The approach taken in Policy 1 broadly has regard to those relevant sections of the NPPF.</p> <p>Furthermore, Policy 1 particularly seeks to meet a need for affordable housing, self-build and custom build housing, which is also supported in the NPPF and in the government’s housing delivery agenda generally.</p>		<p>which reflects the approach taken in Policy HOU7 in the NLP. Policy 1 (part 4) does conform to strategic policy STP1(part f) which states that development in settlements not identified as Main Towns, Service Centres, Service Villages or Small Villages (i.e. those identified in Policy 1 part 4) will be limited to that within the built form of the settlement, and the conversion, extension or redevelopment of existing buildings’. Policy 1 (part 4) allows single new-build dwellings in several named settlements in the plan area. This approach will clarify Policy STP1 at a local level as it gives clarity as to which settlements are to be considered as such (i.e. as settlements) in decision-making.</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Plan is supported by evidence in the Housing Needs Assessment and consultation responses of individuals during the early stage of plan preparation, which showed a strong support for small-scale development which meets a local need.</p>

Belford Neighbourhood Plan – Basic Conditions Statement – Feb 2023

Policy 2: Affordable and Community Led Housing		
Basic Condition 1 (having regard to national planning policy and advice)	Basic Condition 2 (contributing to the achievement of sustainable development)	Basic Condition 3 (general conformity with strategic planning policy) Northumberland Local Plan (2022)
<p>This policy seeks to support affordable and community-led housing and the delivery of rural exception sites. This is entirely in line with government policy which seeks to secure affordable housing, particularly in rural areas where it will be a local need. The policy supports the delivery of ‘exception sites’ on the periphery of Belford (i.e. outside the settlement boundary). This approach has regard to paragraph 76 of the NPPF which seeks to support the provision of local needs housing in rural areas. It also has regard to advice in NPPG: Paragraph 100 states: ‘Neighbourhood plans can support the provision of affordable homes for sale that meet the needs of local people by including relevant policies and site allocations. Depending on the content of relevant strategic policies in the local plan or spatial development strategy, neighbourhood plans may be able to vary the types of affordable housing that will be expected, or to allocate additional sites that will provide affordable housing, where this will better meet the needs of the neighbourhood area. [’Paragraph: 100 Reference ID: 41-100-20190509]</p>	<p>This policy contributes to the achievement of sustainable development by encouraging an appropriate mix of housing that will benefit the local community and has been identified as being important by the local community in consultations.</p>	<p>This policy is in general conformity with strategic planning policy. Policy HOU7 of the NLP supports the provision of affordable and community led housing (but is not a strategic policy). Policy HOU6 (strategic policy) is about affordable housing provision. It identifies housing viability areas. Policy 2 is overall in general conformity with strategic policies in relation to housing.</p>

Belford Neighbourhood Plan – Basic Conditions Statement – Feb 2023

Policy 3: Accessible and Adaptable Housing		
Basic Condition 1 (having regard to national planning policy and advice)	Basic Condition 2 (contributing to the achievement of sustainable development)	Basic Condition 3 (general conformity with strategic planning policy) Northumberland Local Plan (2022)
Policy 3 supports the provision of accessible and adaptable housing. It is supported by evidence base information on housing needs for older people. It has regard to NPPF housing policies which seek to support the provision of a wide range of housing (see references above to Policies 1 and 2).	This policy contributes to the achievement of sustainable development by encouraging the provision of housing for older people as part of supporting sustainable communities, something that has been identified as being particularly important in Belford.	Policy HOU11 in the NLP is about homes for older and vulnerable people. This policy seeks to support the provision of housing and other residential accommodation which meets the changing needs of older people and vulnerable needs groups. The policy supports residents' wishes as expressed in consultations and is in conformity with Policy HOU11 in the NLP.

Belford Neighbourhood Plan – Basic Conditions Statement – Feb 2023

Policy 4: Community Facilities		
Basic Condition 1 (having regard to national planning policy and advice)	Basic Condition 2 (contributing to the achievement of sustainable development)	Basic Condition 3 (general conformity with strategic planning policy) Northumberland Local Plan (2022)
<p>Policy 4 identifies community facilities which should be recognised and protected. The policy is based on local consultation in the community and has regard to national planning policy which seeks to support sustainable communities. Paragraph 28 states that non-strategic policies should be used by communities to set out more detailed policies for specific areas, neighbourhoods or types of development. This can include allocating sites and the provision of infrastructure and community facilities at a local level. Paragraph 84 states that planning policies should enable the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.</p>	<p>This policy contributes to the achievement of sustainable development by supporting the retention of identified community facilities for the benefit of people living in Belford. The policy supports proposals for new community facilities, seeking to contribute to the sustainability of Belford as a service village.</p>	<p>Policy 4 is in general conformity with overall strategic policies in the NLP. There are no strategic policies specifically related to community facilities (Policy INF2 is about community services and facilities but is not a strategic policy).</p>

Belford Neighbourhood Plan – Basic Conditions Statement – Feb 2023

Policy 5: Recreational Open Space		
Basic Condition 1 (having regard to national planning policy and advice)	Basic Condition 2 (contributing to the achievement of sustainable development)	Basic Condition 3 (general conformity with strategic planning policy): Northumberland Local Plan (2022)
<p>Chapter 8 of the NPPF is about promoting healthy and safe communities. Paragraph 92 states that planning policies should plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments. Part c) of paragraph 93 states that planning policies should guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs. Some of the facilities identified within Policy L1 are essential for people in Belford to meet their day-to-day needs.</p> <p>This policy is in conformity with the aims set out in the NPPF with regard to community and recreational facilities. It is locally specific and identifies those facilities that are particularly valued in the community.</p>	<p>This policy seeks to deliver sustainable development with an emphasis on local communities. The policy supports the retention of two specific identified recreational spaces and is pro-active in supporting the provision of new facilities, as well as improving the existing facilities. This policy approach contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.</p>	<p>There are no strategic policies in relation to community facilities in the NLP. Policy INF2 is about community services and facilities but is not identified as ‘strategic’.</p> <p>Policy INF 5 is about open space and facilities for sport and recreation. It is not identified as a strategic policy. The NLP already identifies 8 protected open spaces in the village of Belford. Some of these spaces are also identified in the Belford Neighbourhood Plan as Local Green Spaces. The Belford Neighbourhood Plan identifies 2 recreational spaces (neither of which are identified in the NLP).</p>

Belford Neighbourhood Plan – Basic Conditions Statement – Feb 2023

Policy 6: Local Green Space		
Basic Condition 1 (having regard to national planning policy and advice)	Basic Condition 2 (contributing to the achievement of sustainable development)	Basic Condition 3 (general conformity with strategic planning policy) Northumberland Local Plan (2022):
<p>NPPF paragraph 101 explains that local communities have the opportunity to identify areas as Local Green Space, providing that the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves, and is demonstrably special to the 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 where it is local in character and not an extensive tract of land. The Local Green Spaces identified in this Neighbourhood Plan meet the requirements set out above, and evidence is provided to demonstrate that in the form of background evidence papers, and information within the Plan itself. The policy states that the management of the Local Green Spaces should be consistent with those for green belts, as required in NPPF paragraph 101.</p> <p>The policy identifies 5 Local Green Spaces in the Neighbourhood Area.</p>	<p>The provision and retention of Local Green Spaces contributes to the achievement of sustainable development and is key to ensuring that the places people live have suitable access to green spaces. The spaces identified are highly valued by the local community.</p> <p>The areas identified are important to sustain a vibrant and healthy community and their designation is consistent with the principles of sustainable development.</p>	<p>The policy is in general conformity with strategic policy in the NLP. Only Neighbourhood Plans can designate Local Green Space, so there is no equivalent strategic policy, although Policy INF5 (non-strategic) in the NLP identifies 8 ‘Protected open spaces’ in Belford, four of which are identified as LGS in the Belford Neighbourhood Plan. One of the LGS identified in the BNP is not identified in the NLP (LGS3 – Belford Jubilee Woodland Park).</p>

Belford Neighbourhood Plan – Basic Conditions Statement – Feb 2023

Policy 7: Belford Village Centre		
Basic Condition 1 (having regard to national planning policy and advice)	Basic Condition 2 (contributing to the achievement of sustainable development)	Basic Condition 3 (general conformity with strategic planning policy) Northumberland Local Plan (2022)
Policy 7 supports Belford Village Centre businesses and particularly seeks to support and retain Class E, Class F1 and Class F2 uses as they are considered important to ensure Belford remains a viable service centre. The policy seeks to restrict the loss of these uses to residential use and holiday let use. It also seeks to support proposals which will enhance the appearance and amenity of the village centre. This approach is in conformity with policy in the NPPF which seeks to support the local economy.	This policy contributes to the achievement of sustainable development by seeking to protect maintain a sustainable local economy and sustain businesses which support the local community. It also seeks to support sustainable modes of transport, and improvements to the public realm in Belford, key to principles of sustainable development.	The policy is in general conformity with strategic planning policy, as it seeks to support the role of Belford as a service centre. There are no specific strategic policies in relation to this matter (although there are non-strategic policies about local village convenience shops, public houses, and community services and facilities).

Belford Neighbourhood Plan – Basic Conditions Statement – Feb 2023

Policy 8: Broadband Infrastructure and Telecommunications		
Basic Condition 1 (having regard to national planning policy and advice)	Basic Condition 2 (contributing to the achievement of sustainable development)	Basic Condition 3 (general conformity with strategic planning policy) Northumberland Local Plan (2022)
<p>This policy is in line with NPPF policy to promote telecommunications and ICT infrastructure for the benefit of businesses and residents, whilst protecting local landscapes from inappropriate/unnecessary infrastructure.</p>	<p>This policy contributes to the achievement of sustainable development by seeking to deliver better broadband which will benefit economic benefits (better broadband for local businesses) and also improve access to ICT for residents and visitors. It also seeks to protect the local environment and landscapes, by supporting the sharing of masts to reduce the visual impact and identifying specific places where mobile communications could be best provided with least environmental cost.</p>	<p>Proposed policy is in overall conformity with the NLP; there are no strategic policies which cover this matter, although there are two policies (ICT1 and ICT2 which are about communications infrastructure).</p>

Belford Neighbourhood Plan – Basic Conditions Statement – Feb 2023

Policy 9: Rural Business Development and Tourism		
Basic Condition 1 (having regard to national planning policy and advice)	Basic Condition 2 (contributing to the achievement of sustainable development)	Basic Condition 3 (general conformity with strategic planning policy) Northumberland Local Plan (2022)
Part 6 of the NPPF is about building a strong and competitive economy. Paragraphs 83 and 84 are about supporting a prosperous rural economy. Policy 9 in the Belford Neighbourhood Plan has regard to the NPPF and these paragraphs cited which are most relevant.	This policy contributes to the achievement of sustainable development by seeking to ensure a good balance between supporting the rural economy and protecting the environment.	Policy 9 is in general conformity with strategy policy in the NLP; in particular, policies ECN1 (Planning strategy for the economy), ECN12 (A strategy for rural economic growth) and ECN13 (Meeting rural employment needs).

Policy 10: Belford Industrial Estate		
Basic Condition 1 (having regard to national planning policy and advice)	Basic Condition 2 (contributing to the achievement of sustainable development)	Basic Condition 3 (general conformity with strategic planning policy) Northumberland Local Plan (2022)
This policy supports the local economy through supporting the expansion of businesses in the existing industrial estate. It however also seeks to protect the amenity of those living close by and seeks to achieve the right balance between ensuring the survival and success of the local businesses situated at the Industrial Estate, whilst protecting residential amenity.	This policy contributes to the achievement of sustainable development by encouraging the retention and expansion of local businesses, whilst protecting the local environment and the amenity of residents.	Proposed policy 10 is in general conformity with the NLP. Policy ECN6 identifies Belford Industrial Estate as a Key Employment Area and ECN7 identifies Belford Industrial Estate as a General Employment Land Allocation. Neither of these policies is strategic, and the policy proposed in the BNP does not conflict with the purposes of the site as an industrial estate or as employment land.

Belford Neighbourhood Plan – Basic Conditions Statement – Feb 2023

Policy 11: Overnight Tourist Accommodation		
Basic Condition 1 (having regard to national planning policy and advice)	Basic Condition 2 (contributing to the achievement of sustainable development)	Basic Condition 3 (general conformity with strategic planning policy) Northumberland Local Plan (2022)
National Planning Policy seeks to support the rural economy (see references in to Policy 9). This policy supports proposals for small scale development which will allow the tourist economy to flourish whilst giving a clear set of criteria which seek to ensure that such developments are sustainable in the longer term in terms of their impacts.	This policy seeks to support economic development proposals whilst being clear about how these must protect the local environment, landscapes and amenity (amongst other things).	<p>The policy is broadly in conformity with strategic policy in the NLP which supports the tourist economy in Northumberland and specifically identifies Belford as an important service centre that supports local communities and the tourism industry. The specific policy in relation to tourism and visitor development in the NLP is not strategic.</p> <p>Policy 11 also seeks to preserve the landscapes in the Plan Area through careful consideration of the location of new tourism development which is in conformity with strategic policy with regard to the environment and landscape (ENV1).</p>

Belford Neighbourhood Plan – Basic Conditions Statement – Feb 2023

Policy 12: Provision and Improvement of Pedestrian and Cycle Routes		
Basic Condition 1 (having regard to national planning policy and advice)	Basic Condition 2 (contributing to the achievement of sustainable development)	Basic Condition 3 (general conformity with strategic planning policy) Northumberland Local Plan (2022)
<p>This policy supports the creation of new walking routes and cycleways and seeks to encourage the provision of specific new routes; in this case, a route between Belford and the coastal areas.</p> <p>Policy 12 is in accordance with NPPF policy in terms of promoting non-car based transport; the policy will also deliver health and tourism benefits in the Neighbourhood Area.</p>	<p>This policy contributes to the achievement of sustainable development by promoting non-car based transport and will offer health benefits to residents and visitors in the NP area by creating safe walking routes.</p>	<p>Policy 12 is in general conformity with strategic policy TRA1 in the NLP.</p>

Belford Neighbourhood Plan – Basic Conditions Statement – Feb 2023

Policy 13: Belford Conservation Area		
Basic Condition 1 (having regard to national planning policy and advice)	Basic Condition 2 (contributing to the achievement of sustainable development)	Basic Condition 3 (general conformity with strategic planning policy) Northumberland Local Plan (2022)
<p>This policy seeks to conserve the Belford Conservation Area and reflects national planning policy set out in Chapter 16 of the NPPF. The policy is locally specific and refers to those features of the historic environment that are of shop fronts, which are considered to be an important part of the character of the Belford Conservation Area. There is currently no Conservation Area Appraisal on which to base a more locally specific policy, but a Community Action seeks to procure one.</p>	<p>This policy contributes to the achievement of sustainable development by seeking to conserve the historic environment; this delivers benefits for residents, businesses and the environment.</p>	<p>Policy 13 is in general conformity with the NLP, and in particular with strategic Policy ENV1 (Approaches to assessing the impact of development on the natural, historic and built environment).</p>

Belford Neighbourhood Plan – Basic Conditions Statement – Feb 2023

Policy 14: Design in New Development		
Basic Condition 1 (having regard to national planning policy and advice)	Basic Condition 2 (contributing to the achievement of sustainable development)	Basic Condition 3 (general conformity with strategic planning policy) Northumberland Local Plan (2022)
<p>This policy supports good design in new housing development and has regard to national planning policy. The policy is broad ranging, and covers design, sustainability, biodiversity and amenity.</p> <p>Chapter 12 of the NPPF is about achieving well-designed places. The proposed policy does not conflict with any of the principles set out in Chapter 12.</p>	<p>This policy contributes to the achievement of sustainable development by seeking to deliver sustainable and high quality design, protect amenity for residents, and deliver biodiversity/landscape benefits.</p>	<p>Policy QOP1 sets out design principles and is the only strategic policy in the NLP in relation to design. The principles in Policy 14 of the Belford Neighbourhood Plan, are broadly aligned with those in QOP1 and other strategic policies in the NLP. Policy 14 seeks to add an element of local specificity to design including seeking to ensure that within the AONB special attention is paid to the AONB Design Guide.</p>

Belford Neighbourhood Plan – Basic Conditions Statement – Feb 2023

Policies 15 and 16: Protected Habitats and Species and Development and Water Quality		
Basic Condition 1 (having regard to national planning policy and advice)	Basic Condition 2 (contributing to the achievement of sustainable development)	Basic Condition 3 (general conformity with strategic planning policy) Northumberland Local Plan (2022)
<p>These policies have been introduced as a result of comments made during the initial screening of the Plan for HRA. Some policies in the Plan were screened ‘in’ due to the impact that some developments could have on the protected species and habitats along the coast, and on water quality in protected areas.</p> <p>Policies 15 and 16 are in conformity with NPPF policy with regard to biodiversity and wildlife and the government’s aims to improve biodiversity generally as set out in emerging legislation in the forthcoming Environment Act.</p>	<p>This policy contributes to the achievement of sustainable development by identifying protected areas in the Plan Area. Preserving the natural environment also supports objectives with regard to health and economic objectives on which a healthy biodiversity and environment are dependent.</p>	<p>Policies 15 and 16 reflect the approach taken in the NLP generally with regard to biodiversity. Policy ENV2 which covers biodiversity and geodiversity is identified as a strategic policy and this policy more or less re-iterates the requirements set out in ENV2 at a local level.</p>

Belford Neighbourhood Plan – Basic Conditions Statement – Feb 2023

Policy 17: Valued Landscapes		
Basic Condition 1 (having regard to national planning policy and advice)	Basic Condition 2 (contributing to the achievement of sustainable development)	Basic Condition 3 (general conformity with strategic planning policy) Northumberland Local Plan (2022)
This policy seeks to identify and conserve valued landscapes. The policy is supported by a robust evidence base provided in the Alison Farmer landscape report, and further by a topic paper provided by the Parish Council (with the help of NCC). The NPPF sets out in paragraph 174 that plan planning policies should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, and recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.	This policy contributes to the achievement of sustainable development by seeking to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside around Belford and in the Plan Area as a whole. This will serve to deliver sustainable development by preserving special landscapes and places which are essential for a healthy tourist economy, and for the well-being of residents in the area.	Policy 17 is in general conformity with the NLP, and in particular with strategic Policy ENV1 (Approaches to assessing the impact of development on the natural, historic and built environment). Policy ENV3 is about landscape, but is not identified as a strategic policy.

Belford Neighbourhood Plan – Basic Conditions Statement – Feb 2023

Basic Condition 4: The ‘making’ of the neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations

- 4.16 The European Withdrawal Act 2018 (EUWA) incorporates EU environmental law (directives and regulations) into UK law and provides for the continuation of primary and subordinate legislation and other enactments in domestic law.
- 4.17 Directive 2001/42/EC requires the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (often referred to as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive).
- 4.18 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the ‘Habitats Regulations’) requires that competent authorities assess the potential impacts of land use plans on the Natura 2000 network of European protected sites. This is to determine whether there will be any ‘likely significant effects’ on any European sites as a result of the plan’s implementation (either alone or ‘in combination’ with other plans or projects); and, if so, whether these effects will result in any adverse effects on that site’s integrity with reference to the site’s conservation objectives. The process by which the effects of a plan or programme on European sites are assessed is known as ‘Habitats Regulations Assessment’ (HRA).
- 4.19 The requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment are therefore set out in separate legislation. The Belford Neighbourhood Plan was screened in for SEA, and a pre-screening under HRA concluded that with some changes to the Plan, it would not require an Appropriate Assessment.
- 4.20 Following some alterations to the plan, and in particular, the addition of two policies to cover Coastal Mitigation and Nutrient Neutrality, the potential impacts identified have been mitigated.

European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)

- 4.21 The Belford Neighbourhood Plan is fully compliant with European Convention on Human Rights. There is no discrimination stated or implied, or threat to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the Convention.

Basic Condition 5: Regulation 32 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended)

- 4.22 Regulations 32 and 33 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) add a basic condition for neighbourhood plans in addition to those set out in the primary legislation. (Regulation 33 applies to Neighbourhood Orders) Regulation 32 applies to Neighbourhood Plans and requires that: ‘the making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.’ Information in the Consultation Statement sets out how the Neighbourhood Plan was amended to take account of statutory requirements through the carrying out of a Strategic Environmental Assessment and the pre-screening opinion sought under the Habitats Regulations. It sets out how the Plan was amended (by the incorporation of Policies 16 and 17) accordingly.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 The evidence provided in this Basic Conditions Statement concludes that this submission version of the Belford Neighbourhood Plan (2023-2036) meets the Basic Conditions as set out in the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012) (as amended).

Belford Neighbourhood Plan – Basic Conditions Statement – Feb 2023

APPENDIX A: LIST OF STRATEGIC POLICIES RELEVANT TO THE BELFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA CONTAINED IN THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL PLAN 2022)

- Policy STP1: Spatial Strategy
- Policy STP2: Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- Policy STP3: Principles of sustainable development
- Policy STP4: Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Policy STP5: Health and wellbeing
- Policy STP6: Green infrastructure
- Policy STP9: Safeguarded land
- Policy ECN1: Planning strategy for the economy
- Policy ECN5: Large-scale windfall employment development
- Policy ECN6: General employment land-allocations and safeguarding
- Policy ECN12: A strategy for rural economic growth
- Policy ECN13: Meeting rural employment needs
- Policy HOU1: Making the best use of existing buildings
- Policy HOU2: Provision of new residential development
- Policy HOU3: Housing requirements for neighbourhood areas
- Policy HOU4: Housing development site allocations
- Policy HOU6: Affordable housing provision
- Policy HOU11: Homes for older and vulnerable people
- Policy QOP1: Design principles
- Policy TRA1: Promoting sustainable connections
- Policy ENV1: Approaches to assessing the impact of development on the natural, historic and built environment.
- Policy MIN1: Environmental criteria for assessing minerals proposals
- Policy MIN2: Criterial for assessing the benefits of minerals proposals
- Policy MIN3: Mineral and landfill site restoration, aftercare and after-use
- Policy MIN4: Safeguarding mineral resources
- Policy MIN6: Safeguarding minerals related infrastructure
- Policy MIN7: Aggregate minerals
- Policy MIN8: Aggregate mineral site allocations – Sand and gravel
- Policy MIN9: Aggregate mineral site allocations – crushed rock
- Policy MIN10: Coal
- Policy MIN11: Clays
- Policy MIN12: Natural building and roofing stone
- Policy MIN13: Conventional and unconventional oil and gas
- Policy MIN14: Peat
- Policy WAS1: Principles for the location of waste re-use, recycling and recovery facilities
- Policy WAS3: Waste disposal
- Policy WAS4: Safeguarding waste management facilities
- Policy INF1: Delivering development related infrastructure

N.B. Site specific strategic policies have not been included in the above list as they do not relate to this Neighbourhood Area (for example, Green Belt Policies and specific strategic site allocations)