

# Lesbury Neighbourhood Plan 2019 - 2036 Submission Draft Plan

## LESBURY NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2019 -2036



Submission Draft Plan – Revised November 2019

Lesbury Parish Council

## Lesbury Neighbourhood Plan 2019 - 2036 Submission Draft Plan

### FOREWORD

This Submission Draft version of the Lesbury Neighbourhood Development Plan has been prepared by a Steering Group comprising members of Lesbury Parish Council and other residents of the Parish. A great deal of consultation took place to produce the earlier Lesbury Parish Plan in 2009 and this document was our starting point. Many of the issues raised then are still relevant and, over the last two years, we have listened to the views of the people who live here today, by holding community events, performing a housing needs survey and a questionnaire for young people

Some of the key issues identified were concerns that any new development should be small in scale and complementary to the existing settlements; new housing should be affordable for young people and for local people who want to live in the area; and new housing should be suitable for older people wanting to “downsize”. Other key issues included problems with parking at the railway station, the desire to support our local school (Hipsburn Primary) and to protect and promote the special landscapes around the settlements of Lesbury, Hipsburn and Bilton.

Once ‘made’, this Plan will become part of the Development Plan and will be used in making planning decisions for our Parish. We are required, therefore, to follow a strict process in the preparation of the Plan. We have been fortunate to be able to count on expert advice from Chris Anderson and David English (NCC Planning Department) and from Jenny Ludman, the independent planning consultant who has helped us to prepare the necessary documentation to the required standard.

The first formal consultation on the Lesbury Neighbourhood Plan (under Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (general) regulations 2012 (as amended)) was completed in February 2019. During the consultation period, we were told that a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Plan would be required and, following from this, that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Plan would be necessary. These assessments were required because there are a number of highly protected areas within Lesbury Parish, such as the Northumberland Shore SSSI, the Alnmouth Saltmarsh and Dunes SSSI and the Northumbria Coast RAMSAR (wetlands of international importance).

This Submission Draft Plan incorporates a number of changes made to the Plan following the comments we received from statutory consultees, residents and other respondents after the first consultation on the Plan and following the consultation on the SEA report. The next stage is the Regulation 15 consultation which will be carried out by NCC. Following this, the Plan will be examined by an independent examiner to ensure that it meets the requirements set out in legislation. Finally, there will be a referendum in the Parish for you to decide whether or not you support the Plan.

David Knowles  
Chair, Lesbury Parish Council

Pamela Allen  
Chair, Lesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

25<sup>th</sup> November 2019

# Lesbury Neighbourhood Plan 2019 - 2036

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# Lesbury Neighbourhood Plan 2019 - 2036

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### INTRODUCTION

The Localism Act 2011 introduced new powers to allow local communities to shape development in their areas by preparing a neighbourhood development plan. This Plan is the Lesbury Neighbourhood Plan and policies in this Plan will be used to determine planning applications in the Neighbourhood Plan Area [Neighbourhood Area], alongside other policies in the Development Plan.

The Lesbury Parish Neighbourhood Area, designated for the purposes of 61G(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, comprises the Parish of Lesbury which includes the settlements of Lesbury, Hipsburn and Bilton. Northumberland County Council formally designated the Parish as a Neighbourhood Area on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2017. The Neighbourhood Plan relates only to the Parish of Lesbury, and to no other Neighbourhood Area and is the only Neighbourhood Development Plan in the designated area.

The Lesbury Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) has been prepared by a Steering Group comprising members of Lesbury Parish Council, and other residents in the Neighbourhood Area. There has been input from Northumberland County Council planners and other stakeholders, and the group have commissioned a chartered planning consultant to support the group with the technical aspects of writing the Plan. This is the Submission Draft version of the Plan.

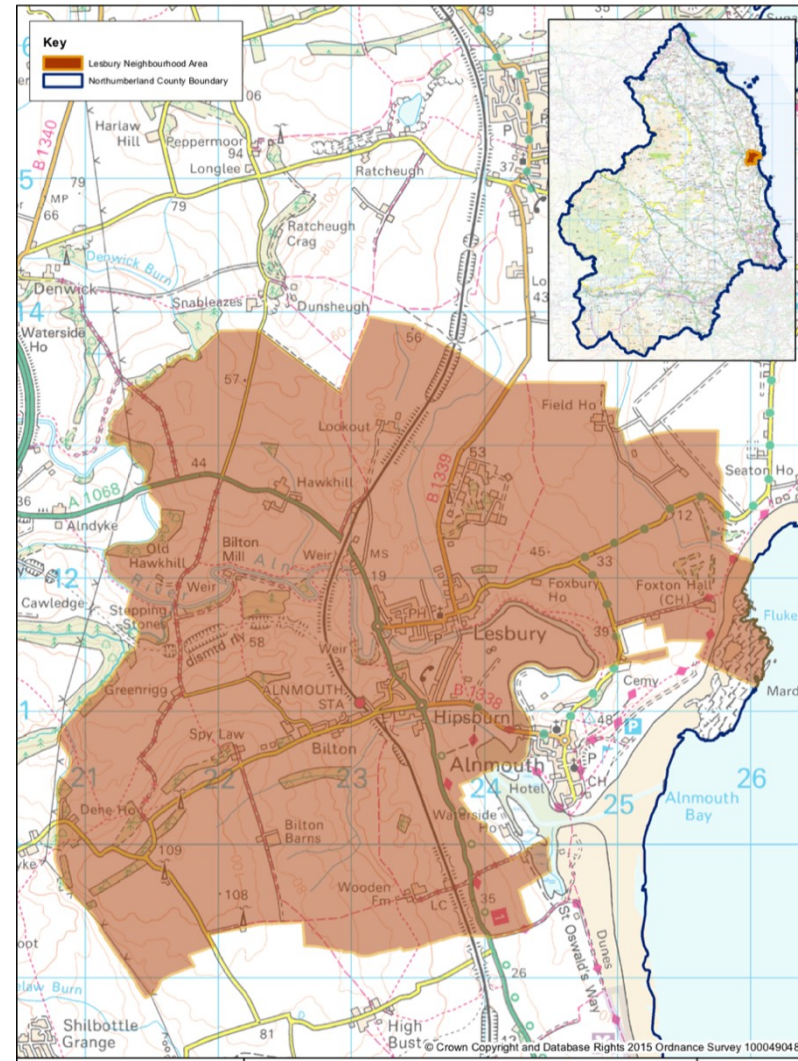


Figure 1: Lesbury Neighbourhood Area



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### Why have a Plan for Lesbury?

The Lesbury Neighbourhood Plan contains locally specific planning policies which provide clear guidance as to what kind of development will be supported in the Plan area, and what development will not. It will give spatial clarity for development, by defining settlement boundaries and identifying where development will and will not be supported.

### What evidence have we used to prepare the Plan?

The community have been consulted about the issues that are important to them. The consultation that has taken place has built on detailed consultation that was undertaken in the production of the Lesbury Parish Plan in 2009. Many of the issues identified then are still of importance to people who live in the Parish now. Some of the key issues identified were to protect and promote the special landscapes around the settlements of Lesbury, Hipsburn and Bilton and, in particular, in parts of the Neighbourhood Area that are within, or adjacent to the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

There were concerns that new housing should be affordable for young people, and for local people who want to live in the area. A detailed Housing Needs Survey was commissioned to quantify the housing need in the Neighbourhood Area.

Community consultation also revealed a strong desire to ensure that new development is of high-quality design and sympathetic to the local environment. These, and other comments made during a series of consultations, have resulted in a set of planning policies that seek to ensure that future development in the Neighbourhood Area will reflect the views of the local community.

Other sources of evidence have come from evidence produced by Northumberland County Council to support their emerging Local Plan. This evidence can be found on their website; there is detailed evidence in relation to landscapes, housing, recreational space and the local economy. A list of this evidence is included in Appendix A. All these documents, as well as the results of the public consultation, form the Evidence Base for the Plan.

### What consultation has taken place?

Throughout the process, the Steering Group has engaged with the local community, through consultation events, questionnaires and newsletters, and has consulted and engaged with local residents, local businesses, major landowners and other local groups and organisations. The results of the consultation have led the Steering Group to produce a Neighbourhood Plan that contains policies that effectively respond to the needs of the community.

More detail on the consultation undertaken is provided in the evidence documents listed in Appendix A.

### What happens next?

The Steering Group and Parish Council have reviewed all the comments made following the Pre-Submission consultation and the consultation on the Strategic Environmental Assessment report and have made amendments to the Plan, as necessary. The Plan will now be submitted to Northumberland County Council, who will consult on the Plan for a further 6 weeks. Following this, an Examiner will be appointed and the Plan will undergo a rigorous examination process. Following recommendations from the Examiner, the Plan may be further modified before proceeding to referendum.

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### 1.0 PLANNING POLICY BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Neighbourhood Plans must pass a series of tests prescribed in legislation through the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations. These tests are collectively known as 'The Basic Conditions'. The basic conditions require that Neighbourhood Plans:
- Are prepared having regard to national policy and guidance;
  - Are in general conformity with strategic policies in the Development Plan;
  - Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development; and
  - Are compatible with European Union obligations on environmental impact and human rights.
- 1.2 How the Plan meets these requirements is set out in detail in the Basic Conditions Statement which will be submitted with the Plan to Northumberland County Council.
- Alnwick District LDF Core Strategy DPD (2007) and Alnwick District Wide Local Plan (1997)
- 1.3 One of the Basic Conditions is that the Plan must be in general conformity with strategic policies contained in the Development Plan. The Development Plan consists of policies in the Alnwick District LDF Core Strategy Development Plan Document (October 2007) and 'saved' policies in the Alnwick District Wide Local Plan (April 1997).
- 1.4 The saved strategic policies in these Plans are therefore the policies with which the Lesbury Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity. The Basic Conditions Statement provides an assessment of the extent to which the Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with those policies.

#### Northumberland County Council Local Plan [emerging]

- 1.5 Work has commenced on the preparation of a Local Plan for Northumberland. It is expected that this Plan will come into force in Spring 2020. The Lesbury Neighbourhood Plan seeks to work alongside this emerging Northumberland Local Plan, to ensure consistency in policy making throughout the process. The emerging Northumberland Local Plan allocates settlement boundaries for those villages that are not in the process of producing a Neighbourhood Plan. As Lesbury Parish is producing a Neighbourhood Plan, settlement boundaries for Lesbury, Hipsburn and Bilton will be defined through policies in this Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.6 A number of evidence-based reports have been commissioned to assist with the production of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan. Some of these evidence-based reports have also been used to inform the Lesbury Neighbourhood Plan. These reports are referred to in Appendix A.

#### National Planning Policy

- 1.7 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (February 2019) and National Planning Practice Guidance provide the most up to date planning policy and advice from central Government. Some policies contained in the Alnwick District LDF Core Strategy DPD and the Alnwick District Wide Local Plan are in conflict with this more recent national policy and guidance. In such circumstances, the more recent national policy and guidance will take precedence in plan making and decision taking. This will be explained further in the Basic Conditions Statement.

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### Sustainable Development

- 1.8 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The meaning of sustainable development for planning purposes is contained in paragraph 8 of the NPPF. In essence, the aim is to secure net gains across economic, social and environmental objectives. The promotion of, and support for, sustainable development is at the heart of the community aspirations in Lesbury Parish.
- 1.9 Support for sustainable development is reflected in the vision for the Neighbourhood Area. This is further expressed in the objectives for the Area. The vision and objectives for the area are set out later in the Plan.

### Environmental Impact and EU Obligations

- 1.10 Directive 2001/42/EC relates to the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. This is often referred to as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive. This directive is transposed into UK law through the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the 'SEA Regulations') and it is these regulations that the plan must be compatible with to meet the Basic Conditions.
- 1.11 The results of the screening opinion performed on the Plan by Northumberland County Council determined that a Habitats Regulation Assessment and a Strategic Environmental Assessment are required.



*Photograph 1: St. Mary's Church, Lesbury village*



*Photograph 2: Lealands Garden, Lesbury village*

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### 2.0 ISSUES AND THEMES

#### Population and Housing

- 2.1 Lesbury Parish has a population of 1007 people (at 2011 census). 30% of the population in this area are over the age of 65 (compared with a County wide average of 23.1%), with just over 13% being between the ages of 0 -15 (compared with a County wide average of 17%).
- 2.2 Most of the population is concentrated within the settlements of Lesbury, Hipsburn and Bilton. There are a number of isolated dwellings and farmsteads in the countryside around.
- 2.3 Alnmouth, with a significant number of services and facilities, is on the boundary of the Neighbourhood Area. Alnmouth is not producing a Neighbourhood Plan, and the emerging Northumberland Local Plan proposes to define a settlement boundary for Alnmouth.
- 2.4 The emerging Local Plan for Northumberland has carried out an assessment of the indicative housing requirements for all designated Neighbourhood Plan Areas. The indicative requirement for Lesbury Parish (including Lesbury, Hipsburn and Bilton) is 45 dwellings over the 20-year plan period (2016 – 2036). This figure is contained in Annex A of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.
- 2.5 A detailed Housing Needs Survey has been carried out by Community Action Northumberland<sup>1</sup>, and the data gained from that survey provides useful evidence for further potential projects to deliver affordable housing within the Neighbourhood Area.
- 2.6 The survey found that there was not a significant local affordable housing need (i.e. enough to justify a departure from current County Council affordable housing policy with the Plan) within the Parish (whilst accepting the limitations of the survey), but a number of other housing needs were identified.
- 2.7 The main conclusions were that people in the Parish are in favour of small pockets of development to bring additional homes to Lesbury Parish, especially where affordable homes and social housing are priorities for people with a local connection to the Parish. Housing needs are largely reflected in the need for older people looking to ‘downsize’ to smaller houses; young people requiring their own accommodation, and households requiring larger accommodation to grow. The largest demand appeared to be for two and three bedroomed houses and bungalows, indicating a need for smaller dwellings in the Neighbourhood Area.
- 2.8 There was a strong desire in surveys to limit the number of 5 bedroom ‘executive’ style dwellings in the Neighbourhood Area.
- 2.9 The ‘proposals map’ from the Alnmouth District Wide Local Plan (April 1997) shows the insets for the settlements of Lesbury, Hipsburn and Bilton. The Lesbury Neighbourhood Plan proposes to re-define these settlement boundaries, to accommodate existing planning permissions and recently approved housing development. More information on this is contained in the background ‘housing report’ which forms part of the evidence base for the Plan.

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<sup>1</sup> Lesbury Parish Housing Needs Survey Final Report (February 2018)



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### The Local Economy

- 2.10 The local economy consists mainly of small businesses and agriculture/tourism enterprises. The Steering Group has undertaken thorough research into the local economy and has produced a list of all known local businesses including the number of employees of each business as well as an assessment of business aspirations where they exist.
- 2.11 The Hawkhill Business Park managed by Northumberland Estates is located to the north of Lesbury and is the main base for a number of small businesses in the parish. It is allocated for 'flexible employment uses' in the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.
- 2.12 Tourism is clearly a large part of the economy, due to the proximity of the beaches and beautiful landscapes of the Northumberland Coast. There are a number of holiday homes and businesses running tourism accommodation. Local businesses such as the local pub, shop and the golf course and other recreational facilities rely on tourism as well as the business of people living locally. Lesbury Parish provides opportunities for people with diverse interests including cyclists, walkers, ornithologists, archaeologists, geologists and artists. Significant housing development would damage the environment these people have travelled to visit.
- 2.13 The proximity of Alnmouth Railway Station makes it easy for people living locally to commute as far as London to the south and Edinburgh to the north, for work. There is also convenient access to both Newcastle and Edinburgh airports.
- 2.14 The future Aln Valley Railway which is expected to link Alnwick to Alnmouth within the Plan period, will provide an additional influx of visitors and potentially commuters, to the area.
- 2.15 The villages of Lesbury, Hipsburn and Bilton have a number of small businesses, many of which provide a service to the community.

### Heritage

- 2.16 There are a number of listed buildings and places of historic interest within the Neighbourhood Area. Lesbury village has a Conservation Area within which are a number of listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets. A detailed Conservation Area appraisal document which gives guidance on design, important views, and the special character of the Lesbury Conservation Area provides a valuable evidence base for any policies related to the Conservation Area in Lesbury village.
- 2.17 Part of the Neighbourhood Area lies in the Northumberland Heritage Coast, an area defined for its heritage interest. There are a number of buildings in the area which are not listed but which are considered to be of local historic interest. These are described in the background paper, Non-designated Heritage Assets in Appendix A and listed in Appendix B.

### Environment

- 2.18 There are a number of protected areas in the Plan area. These areas have the highest level of protection and consist of the Northumberland Shore SSSI, the Alnmouth Saltmarsh and Dunes SSSI, the Northumbria Coast SPA (Special Protection Area under the Birds Directive) and the Northumbria Coast RAMSAR (wetlands of international importance) site. These designations are of national and international importance.
- 2.19 On 31<sup>st</sup> May 2019, the government announced a series of new Marine Conservation Zones around the UK. One of these, the St. Mary's to Berwick Marine Conservation Zone is partially within the Neighbourhood Area. This MCZ holds nationally important numbers of breeding common eider which can be seen along the coastal sections of the Parish.

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2.20 A Screening Opinion under the Habitats Regulations as to whether a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) would be required in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan was sought and it was concluded that a Habitats Regulations Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Plan would be required. This assessment examines the likely impact of the possible effects of the Neighbourhood Plan's policies on the integrity of the Natural 2000 sites (SACs and SPAs) and the findings are reflected in updated planning policies in the Plan.

### Landscape and Settlement Boundaries

2.21 Lesbury and Hipsburn are both located within landscape character area 2a Lower Aln, within the wider Coastal Incised Valley LCT 2. The AONB boundary follows the A1068 south of Hipsburn and the B1339 to the north of Lesbury, taking a line between the two along the Steppey Lane cul-de-sac which becomes a footbridge over the River Aln.

2.22 Most of Hipsburn and all of Bilton lie outside the AONB apart from twenty properties on the eastern side of Steppey Lane. Similarly, the main built up part of Lesbury lies outside the AONB apart from properties to the east of the B1339 along Bridge End and small housing developments at Croftlands and Meadowlands comprising some sixteen properties. The settlement assessment (map extract below) considers implications for future housing growth on sites within the AONB only in the context that the majority of any new housing development would be prioritised in areas outside the AONB. Within the AONB, one area of 'less sensitivity' was identified on land to the east of Lesbury, and this site has now been developed for housing.

2.23 The landscape around Lesbury is highly valued. To the east of Lesbury village is the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the boundary of which can be seen on the Policies Map, for information). In addition, and contiguous with the same boundary, is the Northumberland Heritage Coast. There is more information about landscape types in the

Northumberland Coast AONB Landscape Sensitivity & Capacity Study (2013), some of which was based on earlier landscape characterisation work carried out by Land Use Consultants in 2010.

2.24 Further evidence from the AONB Landscape Sensitivity & Capacity Study in relation to the built form of Lesbury and Hipsburn has been used to assist in defining settlement boundaries.



Photograph 3: The Coach Inn, Lesbury village

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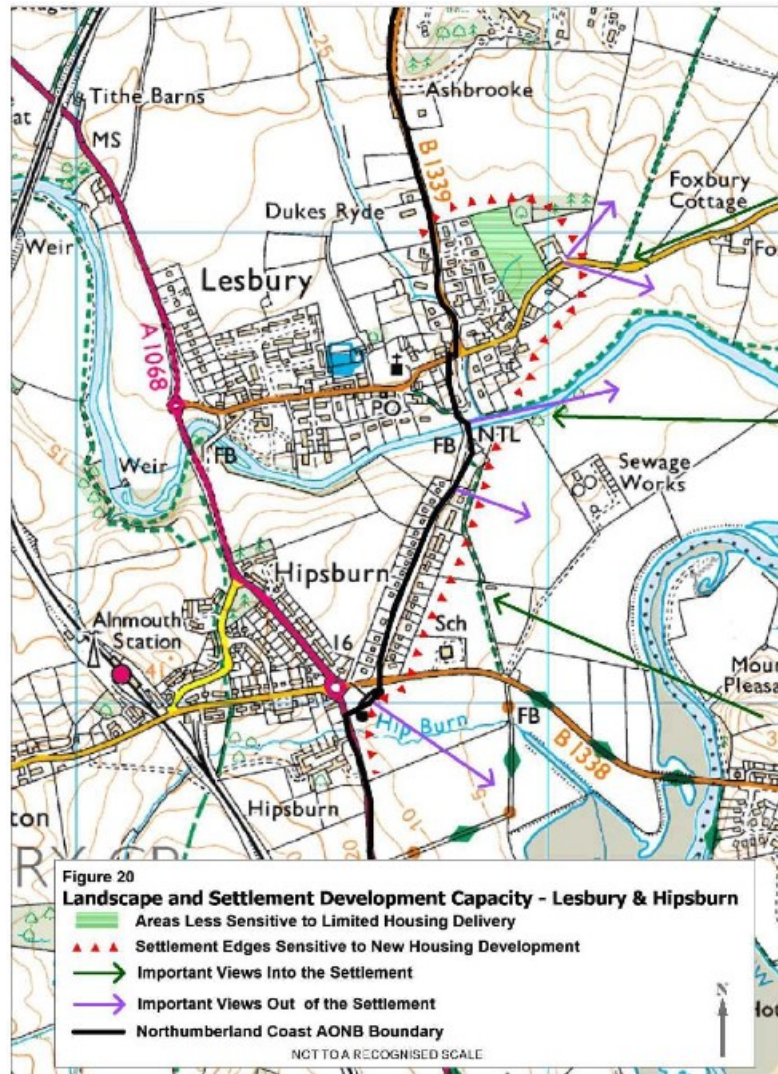


Figure 2: Extract map from AONB Landscape Sensitivity & Capacity Study, August 2013

### Design and Landscaping

- 2.25 Good design should reflect the local vernacular and contribute to a 'sense of place'. Good landscaping is considered to be fundamental to improving sense of place in the Parish.
- 2.26 Part of good design is using vernacular, locally significant materials. In addition, there is support for more sustainable design to be incorporated into development, to reduce the carbon footprint of new development.

### Community Facilities

- 2.27 Lesbury is recognised as a 'sustainable village centre' in the Alnwick District LDF Core Strategy DPD (October 2007). Sustainable village centres are defined as: 'settlements with public transport and a strong service base usually comprising school, shop, post office, pub, church, community hall, sports and recreation facilities and where development will be well-related to the scale and function of the settlement.'
- 2.28 Lesbury village has a number of services and facilities that are highly valued by the community. These have been identified through an audit of facilities, and through community consultation, and are listed in a specific policy to protect those facilities.
- 2.29 Hipsburn Primary School serves the parish and beyond, and is highly valued by the local community, both for education, but also as a venue (and potential venue) for a number of other community activities. It is located within the Northumberland Coast AONB. There is a strong desire to support the school should it need to grow, and to allow the provision of more recreational facilities at the school.



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- 2.30 Lesbury, Hipsburn and Bilton have a number of valued green spaces within the settlements which are worthy of designation as Local Green Spaces, Recreational Spaces or Allotments. The Neighbourhood Plan also has an aspiration to identify a community orchard.
- 2.31 The ideas of young people from the Parish on leisure facilities for young people in the Parish were surveyed and are reported in Appendix A.

### Transport

- 2.32 There are regular bus services which connect the villages in Lesbury Parish with Alnmouth and Alnwick, as well as Berwick to the north and Morpeth, Ashington and Newcastle to the south.
- 2.33 Alnmouth Railway Station and the parking issues associated with it have been, and continue to be, a key concern for the local community. This issue is likely to become more significant once the Alnmouth to Alnwick Heritage Railway is implemented (currently the railway line is 'safeguarded' from development in the emerging Northumberland Local Plan).
- 2.34 However, the Railway Station and potential improvements also present significant opportunities, and the local community are keen to support further development at the railway station, which could be a hub for community and visitor facilities, as well as a business hub.
- 2.35 There are opportunities to improve public rights of way and potentially cycle ways, to better connect the settlements to the surrounding countryside and coast. In particular, Steppey Lane pedestrian bridge needs upgrading in order to make access into and out of Lesbury village easier for pedestrians, wheelchair users and cyclists. It forms the main pedestrian access to the school from Lesbury village.
- 2.36 The vision for the Neighbourhood Area reflects the importance placed on the environment, people, and our thriving communities, by placing an emphasis on sustainable communities.



*Photograph 4: Lesbury Village Hall*



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### 3.0 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Our Vision:

‘By 2036 we will have **retained and improved our community facilities, protected our valued green spaces and special landscapes**; preserved the **distinctiveness of each of the separate settlements** of Lesbury, Hipsburn and Bilton and preserved our **unique historic environment**. New housing will sustain our community over the Plan period and **meet locally identified housing needs across the generations**, from older people, to young families and new households. All new development will be **well designed**, having paid special attention to our unique sense of place, the **historic environment** and to incorporating the latest in **high quality design and sustainable building technology**, to contribute to making the Neighbourhood Area an **attractive, well connected, healthy and safe** place to live, visit and work.’

3.1 To deliver the Vision, a number of Objectives have been identified.

#### OBJECTIVE 1: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Our Objective is to preserve the special landscapes in our parish, by seeking high quality sustainable design in new development, protecting the special qualities of the Northumberland Coast AONB, and ensuring our settlements remain distinct and separate from each other.

3.2 The following Policies seek to deliver the Objective of ‘sustainable development in our Parish’, along with other Policies in the Plan. Policy 1 gives an overview of the types of development that will be supported in the Neighbourhood Area in order to deliver sustainable development. Policy 2 defines the Settlement Boundaries for Lesbury, Hipsburn and Bilton. Policy 3 is a design policy that will be applied to all development that comes forward in the Neighbourhood Area.

*Policy 1: Sustainable Development*

*Policy 2: Northumberland Coastal Mitigation Service*

*Policy 3: Settlement Boundaries*

*Policy 4: Design in New Development*

#### OBJECTIVE 2: HOUSING

Our Objective is to ensure any new housing meets the Parish’s housing requirement defined in the emerging Local Plan for Northumberland and focuses on providing housing for younger families and older people wishing to downsize.

3.3 In order to achieve the Objective of providing affordable and social housing to meet local needs, we propose to support ‘infill’ development on sites within the settlements, and to support the delivery of rural ‘exception’ sites, to ensure that affordable, social and local needs housing is a key component of new development in the Parish.

*Policy 5: Rural Exception Sites and Community Led Housing*

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### OBJECTIVE 3: OUR COMMUNITY

Our Objective is to protect and improve the facilities we have and, where needed, support the provision of new community facilities. We will protect important and highly valued green spaces in each of the settlements.

3.4 In order to achieve this Objective, we propose to

- support the provision of new community facilities and have identified Alnmouth Railway Station as a hub and focus for new community and visitor facilities
- support the development of Hipsburn Primary School and its engagement with members of our community
- protect existing community facilities identified in the Neighbourhood Area
- allocate land which is highly valued by the community for recreation, historic and/or biodiversity value, as Local Green Space, in line with paragraph 100 of the NPPF
- support the provision of a community orchard should a site become available in the Neighbourhood Area.

*Policy 6: Community, Recreational and Visitor Facilities*

*Policy 7: Local Green Spaces, Recreational Spaces and Allotments*

### OBJECTIVE 4: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Our Objective is to ensure that all new development preserves or enhances the special character or appearance of the Lesbury Conservation Area and pays special attention to the conservation of non-designated heritage assets identified in the Plan.

- 3.5 Using the Conservation Area Character Appraisal, we have identified a Policy that is specific to the key issues identified in the Lesbury Conservation Area. We also have a Policy to protect our locally valued heritage assets that have already been identified through previous work on the Lesbury Parish Plan.

*Policy 8: The Lesbury Conservation Area*

*Policy 9: Non-designated Heritage Assets*

### OBJECTIVE 5: WELL-CONNECTED, HEALTHY AND SAFE PLACES

To ensure the Neighbourhood Area remains a well-connected, healthy and safe place to live, visit and work

- 3.6 In order to achieve this Objective, the following policies are proposed which will support schemes that would solve some of the most pressing problems identified by the local community:

*Policy 10: Parking and Highways Improvements at Alnmouth Railway Station*

*Policy 11: Improvements to Walking and Cycling Routes*

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### 4.0 READING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- 4.1 It is essential that this Neighbourhood Plan is read as a whole document. All policies should be read alongside all other relevant policies in this Plan and the Development Plan. This means that any proposal should be assessed and considered in accordance with the Plan and the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 The Development Plan (until such time as the Northumberland Local Plan is 'made') consists of saved policies in the Alnwick District Wide Local Plan (1997), and the Alnwick District LDF Core Strategy DPD (2007). When the emerging Northumberland Local Plan is made, the Neighbourhood Plan will be read alongside policies in the Northumberland Local Plan as part of the Development Plan. The old Alnwick Plans will then no longer be part of the Development Plan.
- 4.3 There is very limited 'cross-referencing' within the policies because the Plan has been written to be read as a whole document. Although the Plan is to be read as a whole, policies 1, 3 and 4 are likely to apply to all development in the Neighbourhood Area.
- 4.4 Before each policy, is explanatory text. This text consists of descriptive and explanatory matter in respect of the policies. The text is relevant to the interpretation of each policy to which it relates. Although the supporting text is not policy, it does assist with clarifying what the policy is trying to achieve, and the intention of that policy.

### 5.0 PLANNING POLICIES

#### PLANNING POLICIES TO DELIVER OBJECTIVE 1: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Our Objective is to preserve the special landscapes in our parish, by seeking high quality sustainable design in new development, protecting the special qualities of the Northumberland Coast AONB, and ensuring our settlements remain distinct and separate from each other.

#### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1 This policy outlines what kind of development will be supported in the Neighbourhood Area. The policy seeks to secure affordable and social housing to help re-build sustainable communities in the Neighbourhood Area, and to support the provision of housing to allow more young families to be able to afford to live and work here.
- 5.2 Community facilities and services are considered to be an important part of the local economy as well as essential for the local community, so the policy supports the provision and enhancement of more community facilities. More specific policies later in the plan cover each of these areas in more detail.
- 5.3 Some of the Neighbourhood Area is in the Northumberland Coast AONB and Heritage Coast, and the policy clarifies that major development will not be supported except in exceptional circumstances, to reflect national planning policy guidance. Major development in the context of the AONB is defined in the glossary.

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- 5.4 To ensure that the impact arising from increasing levels of recreational disturbance on coastal European sites and SSSIs can be addressed, all developers whose developments will result in a net increase in the number of residential or tourism units will be required to contribute to the Northumberland Coastal Mitigation Service or provide alternative mitigation of demonstrable effectiveness.
- 5.5 Small-scale housing development means between 1 and 9 houses. However, small-scale housing development is likely to be considered 'major' development if it is within the AONB, depending on the impact.

### POLICY 1: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Within the Neighbourhood Area, unless material considerations indicate otherwise, development will be supported which provides:

- a) small-scale housing development within the settlement boundaries of Lesbury, Hipsburn and Bilton, including affordable and social housing and self-build units;
- b) small-scale affordable and social housing development on rural exception sites on the built-up edges of settlements except where this leads to 'major' development in the AONB;
- c) new and expanded social, community, leisure, recreational and educational facilities which contribute to the maintenance of sustainable communities in Lesbury, Hipsburn and Bilton;
- d) small-scale rural business and economic development proposals involving conversion of existing buildings, and/or sensitively designed new buildings where landscape and other impacts can be adequately mitigated.

Major development in the Northumberland Coast AONB and Northumberland Heritage Coast will not be supported except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated to be in the public interest.

Small-scale development with regard to housing is defined as proposals for up to 9 housing units.

### NORTHUMBERLAND COASTAL MITIGATION SERVICE

- 5.6 In response to recommendations set out in the Lesbury Neighbourhood Plan Habitats Regulations Assessment Report (2019), it is necessary to ensure that all development in the Neighbourhood Area which is likely to result in a net increase in visitors to designated areas along the coast be required to contribute to the Northumberland Coastal Mitigation Service, or provide alternative, effective mitigation for the increase in visitors.
- 5.7 New development can have a range of impacts on protected areas, but one that is likely to arise from all new housing or tourist accommodation is an increase in visits to the coast which will result in increased disturbance to the bird species that are the special features of the designated coastal sites along the Northumberland Coast.



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- 5.8 It is the responsibility of the developer to provide the required mitigation for their development. However, this can be difficult for developers to achieve because sites that suffer potential damage from recreational activity are almost always outside the developer's control. Northumberland County Council has determined that the only realistic way to address the impacts of recreational activity on designated sites on the coast is through a strategic scheme funded by developers and implemented by the Council. This will enable mitigation to be provided within the designated sites themselves, in a consistent manner along the whole of the Northumberland Coast. The approach also provides clarity and certainty for developers, as they will make a known financial contribution to the Mitigation Service, which is set out in 'The Northumberland Coastal Mitigation Service' Strategy Document published by Northumberland County Council in December 2018.

### **POLICY 2: NORTHUMBERLAND COASTAL MITIGATION SERVICE**

To ensure that the impact arising from increasing levels of recreational disturbance on coastal European sites and SSSIs can be fully addressed, all developers whose developments will result in a net increase in the number of residential or tourism units will be required to contribute to the Northumberland Coastal Mitigation Service or provide alternative mitigation of demonstrable effectiveness.

### **SETTLEMENT BOUNDARIES**

- 5.9 The local community want to see settlement boundaries retained for all three settlements in the Neighbourhood Area in order to preserve the special sense of place, the setting of the Northumberland Coast AONB and Heritage Coast, and to retain the sense of 'separation' between the three settlements. This has been an objective for a long time and was originally identified in the Lesbury Parish Plan (2009).
- 5.10 Settlement boundaries have therefore been defined and are shown on the Policies Map. These settlement boundaries accommodate enough land to meet the housing requirement for the Neighbourhood Area, as set out by Northumberland County Council in the emerging Northumberland Local Plan. The housing requirement has largely been met, with a shortfall of 6 housing units to be provided over the Plan period up to 2036.
- 5.11 Settlement boundaries include all land with planning permission and are drawn relatively tightly round the built edge of the settlements in order to prevent encroachment and merging of settlements and to protect the valued landscapes around them.
- 5.12 Settlement boundaries were drawn in the Alnwick District Wide Local Plan, and those boundaries have been used as the basis for the revised boundaries, whilst allowing for enough land to meet the housing requirement for the Neighbourhood Area, which has largely been met by existing planning approvals.
- 5.13 Land outside the settlement boundaries will be treated as 'open countryside' in planning terms, and this policy defines those types of development that are likely to be acceptable in the open countryside subject to other policies in the Plan.

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### POLICY 3: SETTLEMENT BOUNDARIES

Outside the settlement boundaries defined on the Policies Map, development which complies with policies elsewhere in the Plan will be supported as follows:

- a) small-scale rural business and economic development proposals involving conversion of existing buildings, or sensitively designed new buildings where landscape and other impacts have been given careful consideration, and mitigated where necessary;
- b) proposals for affordable and social housing delivered through rural exception sites;
- c) re-use of redundant buildings where these buildings were originally of substantial construction and where the scheme would improve the appearance of the site and/or where the proposal secures the optimum viable use of a heritage asset;
- d) housing to meet the essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;
- e) proposals where design is of exceptional quality that is truly outstanding and innovative design, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help raise standards of design in the Neighbourhood Area and would also significantly enhance the immediate setting of the site and be sensitive to the characteristics of the area;
- f) proposals for tourism development where these are small-scale and can be sensitively accommodated in the landscape.

Great weight will be given to the conservation of landscapes around the settlements and, in particular, to the Heritage Coast and the scenic beauty of the coast including views across the AONB to the coast from Hipsburn, Lesbury and Bilton.

### DESIGN IN NEW DEVELOPMENT

- 5.14 One of the aims of the Neighbourhood Plan is to achieve well designed places. This aim is reflected in the NPPF, which states, in paragraph 125, that design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics.
- 5.15 This policy applies to all proposals and is not restricted to housing design. It seeks to ensure that local vernacular and design are at the heart of new development proposals, both through this policy, and through other policies elsewhere in the Plan. High quality design is expected in the whole Neighbourhood Area.
- 5.16 Traditional materials here are stone, with a mixture of slate and pantile roofs.
- 5.17 There is a desire to see more sustainable building taking place in the Neighbourhood Area in order to mitigate the impacts of climate change and improve biodiversity and habitat provision. Schemes which incorporate high levels of energy efficiency and sustainable design will be given support, providing they comply with other relevant policies in the Plan.

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- 5.18 National planning policy now places significant emphasis on the need to secure a net gain for nature and wildlife. There are various ways that 'net gain' can be secured; through providing new footpaths through development and linking into existing rights of way, restoring neglected hedgerows and habitats, creating ponds, planting trees characteristic to the local area to make a positive contribution to local landscape as well as to provide additional habitat to support red squirrels (present in the Neighbourhood Area, but few in number), using native plants in landscaping schemes for better nectar and seed sources for bees and birds, incorporating swift boxes and bat boxes into the design of new buildings and adding a green roof to buildings.
- 5.19 The Northumberland AONB Design Guide contains detailed information about vernacular design in the Neighbourhood Area.

### **POLICY 4: DESIGN IN NEW DEVELOPMENT**

All new development in the Neighbourhood Area, including extensions and conversions, should incorporate high quality design and demonstrate how:

- a) local context and character has been respected in terms of scale, density, height, massing, layout, materials, hard and soft landscaping, means of enclosure and access; and
- b) features including windows, doors, roof lights, chimneys, flues, roofs, and boundary treatments have regard to surrounding character and materials used locally; and
- c) appropriate landscaping has been incorporated into the scheme including the retention of trees and hedgerows and the planting of new trees characteristic to the local area; and

- d) a Sustainable Urban Drainage system has been incorporated which takes opportunities for improving biodiversity in its design, or demonstrate why such a system would not be practicable; and
- e) measures have been incorporated to limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation; and
- f) in terms of the massing, height, scale and proximity, of the proposed development does not result in an unacceptable loss of light or overshadowing, or other adverse amenity impacts on existing or future residents; and
- g) opportunities have been taken where possible to incorporate embedded renewables, such as solar panels, heat pumps and other measures to reduce the carbon footprint of the building; and
- h) opportunities have been taken in the layout and building orientation to minimise energy consumption and maximise passive solar gain; and
- i) the proposal secures a 'net gain' for biodiversity.

Permission will be refused for development of poor design that fails to take opportunities for improving the character and quality of the area.

For areas within the Northumberland Coast AONB, this will include incorporating the principles contained in the most recent version of the Northumberland Coast AONB Design Guide.

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### PLANNING POLICIES TO DELIVER OBJECTIVE 2: HOUSING

Our Objective is to ensure any new housing meets the Parish's housing requirement defined in the emerging Local Plan for Northumberland and focuses on providing housing for younger families and older people wishing to downsize.

- 5.20 The emerging Northumberland Local Plan proposes that an additional 45 houses should be built in Lesbury Parish during the Plan period (1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2036) in order to meet the housing requirement for the Parish. Since April 2016, planning permissions for 39 properties have been granted. The Plan has identified scope for further development through windfall and infill sites or the allocation of Rural Exception Sites.
- 5.21 The Neighbourhood Plan does not therefore allocate land for housing. Instead, it supports the provision of 'infill' housing within the settlement boundaries, and the provision of affordable and social housing to meet identified local need. This can best be provided either within the settlements or through the delivery of Rural Exception Sites on the edges of our settlements.
- 5.22 Rural Exception Sites are defined in the NPPF (2019) and in the glossary of this plan. It may be acceptable to build some market housing as part of a Rural Exception Site where this is required to cross-subsidise the development. Rural Exception Sites should meet a locally identified need.
- 5.23 In the Housing Needs Survey conducted by Community Action Northumberland (CAN) for Lesbury Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group, a small amount of need for new affordable and social housing was identified. A total of 274 questionnaires were returned representing a response rate of 56% - a high response rate.
- 5.24 Key messages from the survey were that most people in the Parish are in favour of small pockets of development to bring additional homes to the Neighbourhood Area, especially where these are affordable and social homes with a priority for people with a local connection to the Parish (80% of respondents).
- 5.25 33 households were identified as having some form of housing need (not necessarily affordable or social housing). This largely related to the need for young people requiring their own accommodation in the future, and households requiring larger accommodation as they have grown. There was also an issue relating to age, with people wishing to downsize.
- 5.26 The largest demand was for 2 and 3 bedroomed houses and bungalows. A total of 12 households were identified as being on an annual income of less than £25,000 and in need of housing.
- 5.27 **Rural exception sites** are defined in the NPPF as: '**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**. A **proportion of market homes** may be allowed on the site at the local planning authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable or social units without grant funding'.
- 5.28 **Community Led Housing** is the provision of affordable or social housing through community led housing projects led by community groups which are set up to make sure that new homes are built and empty homes and buildings can be brought back into use to meet local housing needs.



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5.29 The policy seeks to restrict the provision of rural exception sites on sensitive settlement edges as defined on the Policies Map, and from key views (which are all linked with the sensitive settlement edges). The Northumberland Coast AONB Landscape Sensitivity Character Assessment contains more detail on why these edges are so important to the setting of the villages of Lesbury and Hipsburn and an extract of the Map is shown in Figure 2 on page 11.

### **POLICY 5: RURAL EXCEPTION SITES AND COMMUNITY LED HOUSING**

Proposals for the delivery of housing on Rural Exception Sites and/or through Community Led Housing schemes which meet an identified local need will be supported on the edge of the settlements where they are well related to existing development, have suitable and safe highways access, incorporate high quality landscaping and do not impact unacceptably on the local landscape or the amenity of local residents.

Proposals for rural exception sites will not be supported on sensitive settlement edges, as defined on the Policies Map, or where they affect key views into and out of the settlements as identified on the Policies Map.

By definition, rural exception sites will be small-scale developments of between 1 and 9 dwellings.

### **PLANNING POLICIES TO DELIVER OBJECTIVE 3: OUR COMMUNITY**



*Photograph 5: Lesbury Village Shop and Post Office*

Our Objective is to protect and improve the facilities we have and, where needed, support the provision of new community facilities. We will protect important and highly valued green spaces in each of the settlements.

5.30 In order to achieve this Objective, we propose to support the provision of new community facilities and have identified Alnmouth Railway Station as a hub and focus for new community and visitor facilities. We will also support the extension and/or provision of additional facilities at Hipsburn Primary School.

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5.31 We also propose to protect existing community facilities, and these are identified in the supporting text to the policy. We also propose to allocate land which is highly valued by the community for recreation, historic and/or biodiversity value, as Local Green Space, in line with paragraph 100 of the NPPF. We also propose to support the provision of a community orchard should a site become available in the Neighbourhood Area.

### COMMUNITY AND VISITOR FACILITIES

5.32 The local pub, shop, school and other community facilities are highly valued by residents in each of the three settlements. Where a proposal would lead to the loss of any of these facilities, it is considered that this would not be sustainable development, as it would result in the further erosion of sustainable communities, meaning a greater need for travel, and less community cohesion.

5.33 Community facilities identified in the Neighbourhood Area are:

- St. Mary's Church
- Hipsburn Primary School and Pre-school
- The Coach Inn
- Lesbury Village Shop and Post Office
- Lesbury Village Hall
- Alnmouth Railway Station

5.34 Recreational facilities (some of which are designated as Local Green Spaces) identified are:

- Alnmouth Golf Club (Foxton Hall)
- Alnmouth and Lesbury Cricket Club
- Alnmouth Croquet Club
- Lesbury Bowls Club
- Alnmouth Football Club Playing Fields

5.35 The policy applies to registered Assets of Community value as well as community facilities that have not been registered. All the facilities named above have been identified by the local community as being of value, and therefore contribute to the sustainability and cohesion of the villages.

5.36 Community consultation revealed that there is a desire in the community to have more recreational facilities. The policy seeks to support the provision of further recreational facilities.

5.37 There is also support for the provision of new facilities for visitors and the community, and potentially for small scale business/retail use in the vicinity of Alnmouth Railway Station, which will in the future become an important local 'hub' once the Alnmouth to Alnmouth Heritage Railway reaches Alnmouth mainline station.

5.38 A site-specific allocation for such uses is not proposed and the policy seeks to support the provision of a 'hub' that could benefit visitors and the community on land in the vicinity of Alnmouth Railway Station.

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### **POLICY 6: COMMUNITY, RECREATIONAL AND VISITOR FACILITIES**

Proposals that will enhance the viability and/or the community value of existing community and recreational facilities will be supported.

The provision of the following facilities identified by the local community will be supported:

- a) A new 'hub' in the vicinity of Alnmouth Railway Station, to include a tourist information centre, community uses, business uses and/or small-scale retail uses;
- b) Development and infrastructure required to support the Aln Valley Railway;
- c) New and expanded facilities at Hipsburn Primary School;
- d) New and improved recreational facilities;
- e) A community orchard

Proposals for development resulting in the loss of existing community facilities identified in this Plan will not be supported unless there is robust evidence to demonstrate that there is no longer a need for that facility in the community or that the facility is no longer viable.

### **LOCAL GREEN SPACES IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA**

- 5.39 Paragraphs 99 and 100 of the National Planning Policy Framework give local communities the opportunity to identify and protect areas of green space which are special to the local community. A number of criteria must be met, and most green spaces will not be suitable for allocation as Local Green Space.

- 5.40 In order for land to qualify as Local Green Space it must meet the following tests:
- Be in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
  - Be demonstrably special to a local community and hold 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
  - Be local in character and not an extensive tract of land.
- 5.41 The green spaces identified in the policy below are considered to be particularly important by the local community. Background reports have been produced to further explain their significance. Some of the spaces identified are valued as recreational areas, for instance the Lealands play area, the Pond Field play area and the bowling green behind the village hall, as well as the Alnmouth Football Club playing fields and the Alnmouth and Lesbury Cricket Club grounds. All of these areas are accessible to the public, and highly valued by the community.
- 5.42 Other spaces are valued for their historic and landscape significance; for example, the VE Memorial Garden, Lealands Garden, The Wynd by Steppey Lane Bridge and the corner of Lesbury Road and Curly Lane. The Wynd by Steppey Lane and the corner of Lesbury Road and Curly Lane are also valued for their biodiversity and habitat provision.
- 5.43 The allotments are important for recreation, biodiversity and to our sustainable communities where local food growing is becoming increasingly popular.
- 5.44 LGS1 and LGS3 are in areas that are prone to flooding. For this reason, any development proposals in these areas which involves the raising of ground will not be supported as it is likely to increase flooding on-site and could increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

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### **POLICY 7: LOCAL GREEN SPACES, RECREATIONAL SPACES AND ALLOTMENTS**

The sites listed below and shown on the Policies Map are designated as areas of Local Green Space (LGS1-8) which will be protected in a manner consistent with the protection of land within Green Belts. Proposals which involve the loss of the Recreational Spaces or Allotments identified in this policy will only be approved where a replacement of equivalent quality and size is made within the Plan area.

- LGS1: Lesbury Village, VE Memorial Garden
- LGS2: Lesbury Village, Lealands Garden
- LGS3: Lesbury Village, The Wynd, by Steppey Lane Bridge
- LGS4: Lesbury Village, Lealands play area
- LGS5: Lesbury Village, bowling green behind the Village Hall
- LGS6: Hipsburn, at the corner of Lesbury Road and Curly Lane
- LGS7: Hipsburn, Pond Field play area
- LGS8: Hipsburn Green, on South View
- RS1: Hipsburn, Alnmouth Football Club playing fields
- RS2: Hipsburn, Alnmouth and Lesbury Cricket Club grounds
- Allotment 1: Hipsburn, behind Station Cottages, off South View
- Allotment 2: Bilton, on Bilton Road, just after the railway station

Ground raising activities within sites LGS1 and LGS3 must not be undertaken as this may increase the risk of flooding within these sites.

### **PLANNING POLICIES TO DELIVER OBJECTIVE 4: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT**

Our Objective is to ensure that all new development preserves or enhances the special character or appearance of the Lesbury Conservation Area and pays special attention to the conservation of non-designated heritage assets identified in the Plan.

#### **THE LESBURY CONSERVATION AREA**

- 5.45 There is a wealth of history in the Neighbourhood Area and more information is provided about this in the preceding chapter.
- 5.46 This Plan does not seek to apply policy to designated heritage assets (listed buildings), as it is considered that national planning policy and legislation set out in the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1972 provides the necessary protection to these designated heritage assets.
- 5.47 Policy 8 specifically relates to the Lesbury Conservation Area which was designated in 1972 (there have since been some alterations to the boundary) and includes much of the historic core of the village. A detailed Conservation Area Character Appraisal (CACA) has been written which identifies key features of townscape character, and a summary of management recommendations.
- 5.48 Some of the key issues identified in the CACA have been incorporated into Policy 8, in order to make it locally relevant to Lesbury Conservation Area.



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### **POLICY 8: THE LESBURY CONSERVATION AREA**

Development proposals within or affecting the setting of the Lesbury Conservation Area must not harm the character of the conservation area and should make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness through the careful use of materials and design.

In particular, the assessment of proposals will consider the following:

- a) the impact of any new development on the skylines to the north and south of the village;
- b) the need to retain open pedestrian areas at the bridges and by the churchyard,
- c) the need to retain stone walls, mature trees and hedges and, where possible, plant new trees;
- d) give special consideration to the impact of development on historic buildings in the conservation area including designated and non-designated heritage assets;
- e) the use of traditional materials of natural local sandstone, Welsh slate, stone chimneys and clay pots.

Development proposals that fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance and quality of the Lesbury Conservation Area will be refused.

### **NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS**

- 5.49 The Lesbury Parish Plan (2009) identified a number of buildings and structures that are of local historic interest. These have been described in the background paper, Non-designated Heritage Assets in Appendix A and are listed in Appendix B. Proposals for development affecting non-designated heritage assets will be considered to be against the policy below.

### **POLICY 9: NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS**

The background paper in Appendix A identifies a set of non-designated heritage assets in the Plan Area. Development, including renovation or alteration, affecting any non-designated heritage asset or its setting, whether listed in this Plan, or identified subsequently as a non-designated heritage asset, should be sensitively designed having regard to the significance of the heritage asset including archaeological, historic and architectural interest and its setting.

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### PLANNING POLICIES TO DELIVER OBJECTIVE 5: WELL-CONNECTED, HEALTHY AND SAFE PLACES

To ensure the Neighbourhood Area remains a well-connected, healthy and safe place to live, visit and work.

5.50 In order to achieve this Objective, the following policies are proposed:

#### PARKING AND HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENTS AT ALMOUTH RAILWAY STATION



Photograph 6: Parking at Alnmouth Railway Station

5.51 Focus meetings with residents showed a 94% support for the provision of additional car parking spaces at the railway station. This should be alongside other measures to reduce the impact on the highway and could include restrictions to on-street parking, charging for car parking, etc. Some of these management matters are not land use planning matters and so are not included as planning policy. However, they are listed as Community Projects at the end of the Plan. This Policy supports a new car

park, or extension of the existing car parks to alleviate the on-street parking problems that are suffered by residents in the area surrounding the station.

5.52 Following consultation with local residents, Northumberland County Council has recently introduced new trial parking arrangements in and around Alnmouth Railway Station. These include restrictions to on-street parking in Hipsburn, parking charges and a maximum 72-hour stay restriction in the Council-owned car park at the station. The effects of these measures will be monitored and reviewed at the end of the 12-month trial period.

#### POLICY 10: PARKING AND HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENTS AT ALNMOUTH RAILWAY STATION

Extension to the existing car parks at Alnmouth Railway Station, and/or the creation of additional parking spaces at the station will be supported, if required. Any scheme should include appropriate landscaping to mitigate the visual impact of additional car parking and incorporate improved pedestrian and cycle access as well as electric charging points for cars.

The introduction of measures to improve highway safety at the access and in the vicinity of Alnmouth Railway Station will be supported.

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### IMPROVEMENTS TO WALKING AND CYCLE ROUTES

- 5.53 There are a number of routes in the Neighbourhood Area that could be improved for walkers and cyclists. The most important of these, identified by the community during this stage of consultation, and previous stages, is the need to upgrade the footbridge from Steppey Lane into Lesbury Village. This is a vital pedestrian link for residents and was restored in 2009 after flood damage in 2008. The current bridge does not provide disabled access due to the steps. Many people use the bridge when walking to the local school. Also, it is a particularly valued 'off road' route in the local area as it connects to the riverside walk to Foxton on one bank of the river and provides access to the riverbank for people with fishing rights on the opposite bank of the river. It has the potential to provide a viable Greenway from Alnmouth, Warkworth and Amble to the railway station.



Photograph 7: Steppey Lane footbridge

- 5.54 The Aln Valley Railway Project is underway and involves the restoration and operation of the railway between Alnmouth and Alnwick which will, in the future, provide an additional tourist attraction for the area. It is being promoted by the Aln Valley Railway Trust and the project aims to develop the railway corridor as a sustainable transport link as well as a recreational and educational resource for the local community and visitors to the area.
- 5.55 Provision of new cycle and pedestrian routes could have a potential impact on designated sites in the Neighbourhood Area. For this reason, it will be important to assure that appropriate mitigation is included in any such proposal.

### POLICY 11: IMPROVEMENTS TO WALKING AND CYCLE ROUTES

The following proposals to improve walking, cycling and disabled access in the Plan Area will be supported:

- Proposals to improve Steppey Lane footbridge to allow disabled access;
- Proposals to provide cycle and pedestrian routes alongside the Aln Valley Railway Line (known as the Alnwick to Alnmouth Greenway);
- Proposals to provide and improve safe routes between Alnmouth Railway Station and Steppey Lane into Lesbury.

Other improvements to existing, and provision of new, cycle and pedestrian routes in the Neighbourhood Area will also be supported where it can be demonstrated that any negative impacts on European designated sites as a result of these proposals can be adequately mitigated through a strategy to mitigate against recreational disturbance to be submitted alongside any planning application.

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### 6.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 6.1 Effective monitoring by Lesbury Parish Council is essential to ensure the Neighbourhood Plan is truly achieving sustainable development in the Neighbourhood Area. It also provides information to establish whether policies are effective, and whether there are changes needed to policies in the longer term.
- 6.2 The Lesbury Neighbourhood Plan sets out the long-term spatial vision for the area with objectives and policies to deliver that vision in the period up to 2036.
- 6.3 Decision making on planning applications still rests with Northumberland County Council who have their own monitoring procedures in place. The Parish Council will, however, undertake its own monitoring to evaluate the level of progress being made towards delivering the vision of the Plan.

#### Review

- 6.4 The Lesbury Neighbourhood Plan will, in all likelihood be 'made' before the new Local Plan for Northumberland is adopted. It may therefore be necessary to review the Neighbourhood Plan in light of any significant policy shifts. However, the Plan has been developed in close partnership with Northumberland County Council, and it is anticipated that the emerging Local Plan will be well aligned with the Neighbourhood Plan.

#### Community Projects

- 6.5 Proposals have been identified in Section 7 of the Plan. These proposals will be taken forward by the relevant bodies together with the Parish Council and are matters that were outside the remit of planning policy in a Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.6 Monitoring will also seek to ascertain whether the Community Projects within the remit of the Parish Council are being implemented.

### 7.0 COMMUNITY PROJECTS

The Community Projects (CP) that have emerged through consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan are listed below:

#### ACTIVE:

- CP1: Renovation of the Village Hall
- CP2: Improvements to parking at and in the vicinity of the railway station: working together with Northumberland County Council
- CP3: Upgrade Steppey Lane Bridge to allow disabled access: working together with Northumberland County Council

#### WISH LIST:

- CP4: AIn Valley Railway: cycle route; footpaths; community hub; business opportunity within a station building for café, car and cycle hire, tourist information.
- CP5: Alnmouth and Lesbury Cricket Club: improvements to access and parking, in particular for people with disability
- CP6: Recreational Facilities, including Youth Club
- CP7: Community Orchard



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### APPENDIX A: Evidence Based Documents

- National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019)  
National Planning Practice Guidance (as updated)  
Alnwick District LDF Core Strategy DPD (2007)  
Alnwick District Wide Local Plan (1997) (saved policies)  
Northumberland Coast AONB Management Plan (2014 – 2019)  
Northumberland Coast AONB Design Guide for the Built Environment (2009)  
Northumberland Coast AONB Landscape Sensitivity & Capacity Study (August 2013)  
Northumberland County Council Landscape Character Assessment (August 2010)  
Northumberland County Council Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2018)  
Northumberland County Wide Housing Needs Survey Final Report (updated 2015)  
Dark Skies - Exterior Lighting Master Plan (2013) Northumberland National Park Authority  
DEFRA Berwick to St. Mary's Marine Conservation Zone (May 2019)  
Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Lesbury Neighbourhood Plan [NCC, October 2019]  
Strategic Environmental Assessment (Environmental Report) of the Lesbury Neighbourhood Plan [NCC, October 2019]  
Lesbury Parish Plan (2009) <http://www.lesbury-pc.org.uk/parishplan.php>  
Lesbury Conservation Area Character Appraisal [Alnwick District Council] (2006)  
Northumberland Coastal Mitigation Service Strategy Document (NCC 2018)  
Background paper: Settlement Boundaries for Lesbury, Hipsburn and Bilton  
Background paper: Local Green Spaces  
Background paper: Non-designated Heritage Assets  
[www.lesbury-pc.org.uk/ndp-finaldocs.php](http://www.lesbury-pc.org.uk/ndp-finaldocs.php)  
Background paper: Housing and Housing Needs Survey (Community Action Northumberland, February 2018)  
Background paper: Community Facilities Audit (November 2017)  
Background paper: Lesbury Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan – Leisure. Young Peoples' Views (March 2018)  
<http://www.lesbury-pc.org.uk/ndp-workingdocs.php>  
Summary of comments made at various Consultation Events (2017/18):  
Focus Meeting 1 - Final Report on Car Parking at the Railway Station  
Focus Meeting 2 - Housing & Development  
Focus Meeting 3 - Leisure & Environment  
<http://www.lesbury-pc.org.uk/ndp-workingdocs.php>

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### APPENDIX B: List of Non-designated Heritage Assets

Alnmouth (Foxton Hall) Golf Club – Club House  
Townfoot Steading  
The Lodge  
Townfoot Farmhouse  
Azalea Cottage  
Townfoot Fam Cottage  
Tide View, Mount View, Primrose Cottage  
Holme House  
Lilac Cottage, No. 3, Bridge End Cottage  
Rose Cottage, Burn Cottage  
Bridge End, Woodbine Cottage  
Church Cottages 1 and 2  
Stepping Stones and Steppey Lane ford  
Alnview Cottage  
School House  
Post Office Cottage & extension, River Bank Cottage  
The Cottage  
Garden Cottage  
Garden Terrace  
The Coach Inn  
Jasmine Cottage, Rose Cottage, Box Cottage  
Crescent Cottage, Maple Cottage  
The Square  
The Reading Room (1 & 2)

Mill Cottages  
Cherry Tree Cottage, Alnside Cottage  
Birney-Knowe field (east of Deep Dene cottages)  
Lookout Farm (off Alnwick Road)  
The 'old' Lesbury Station (off Alnwick Road)  
Deep Dene Cottages (Alnwick Road)  
Hawkhill (near Hawkhill Business Park)  
Hawkhill Farm and Hawkhill Business Park  
Old Hawkhill – stepping stones and abandoned village  
Land to the north-east of Alnmouth Station  
Hipsburn Farmhouse  
Hipsburn Farm Cottages  
Railway Terrace (South Road, Hipsburn)  
Bilton Farm Cottages  
Bilton Mill (located by River Aln near Old Hawkhill)  
Bilton Common  
Greenrigg Farm  
Wooden Farm

## Lesbury Neighbourhood Plan 2019 - 2036 Submission Draft Plan

### Glossary of Terms

**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** - 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** - 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.

**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 and opportunities for recreation.

**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. The extent of the Northumberland Coast AONB is shown on the Policies Map.

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

**Basic Conditions:** The Localism Act (the Act) sets basic conditions that neighbourhood development plans or orders must meet. These are that the plan or order must: a) have appropriate regard to national policy and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, b) must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development c) must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area and d) must not breach, and be otherwise compatible with, EU and Human Rights obligations

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**Biodiversity:** The variety of plant and animal life in the world or in a particular habitat, a high level of which is usually considered to be important and desirable.

**Community Facilities:** Local services and facilities that benefit the community, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

**Conservation (for heritage policy):** The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.

**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 Site:** In this document, reference to Designated Sites should be taken to include European Sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), and Special Protection Areas (SPAs); Ramsar sites, European Marine Sites (EMS's) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

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

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

**European site:** This includes candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas, and is defined in regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

**Environmental report:** The report that documents the assessment of the draft Plan and accompanies the draft Plan for pre-submission consultation. The environmental report needs to contain certain information as set out in Schedule 2 to the SEA Regulations 2004.

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

**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 Assessments (HRA):** This is a general term which describes the full step-wise process required in making assessments of the impacts on European sites under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, including the steps of screening for likely significant effects and making appropriate assessments.

**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).



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**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, and therefore encompasses the whole Plan area.

**Historic Environment:** All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

**Independent Examination:** The process by which an independent person examines a plan document to ensure that it is 'sound' (in the case of a Local Plan) or meets Basic Conditions (in the case of a Neighbourhood Plan).

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

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

**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.

**Landscape Sensitivity:** Normally refers to the ability of the landscape to absorb development, in relation to valued aspects of its character.

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

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

**Major Development:** Small-scale development can still be classed as 'major' in the policy context of AONBs. Within the AONB, 'major development' is development which has the potential to have a serious adverse impact on the natural beauty and recreational opportunities provided by the AONB by reason of its scale, character or nature. As a matter of planning judgement, the decision maker must consider the application in its local context. What could be 'major development' in one place, may not be in another. The local context is a key consideration in assessing whether a development is 'major'. A small-scale development (see definition above) can still be a 'major' development, if its impacts are such that they have a serious adverse impact on the AONB. Relevant considerations in determining whether an application is 'major' will be whether the development is EIA development, whether it falls within Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999 (as amended), whether it is "major development" for the purposes of the 2010 Order, or whether it requires the submission of an appraisal/ assessment of the likely traffic, health, retail implications of the proposal. But, this will not determine the matter. The matter will be determined by local impacts.

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

**National Nature Reserve:** Designated by Natural England as key places for wildlife and nature features in England, they were established to protect the most significant areas of habitat and geological features.

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**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. Most recent version February 2019.

**National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG):** The Government published the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in February 2019 and the National Planning Practice Guidance is regularly updated. Together, the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance set out what the Government expects of local authorities.

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

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

**Permitted Development:** Certain limited or minor forms of development that may proceed without the need to make an application for planning permission.

**Planning obligation (policy):** Planning obligations assist in mitigating the impact of development which benefits local communities and supports the provision of local infrastructure. Local communities should be involved in the setting of planning obligations policies in a Neighbourhood Plan.

**Planning obligation (Development Management):** (Also known as Section 106 agreements) Obligations attached to land that is the subject of a planning permission. Planning obligations may only constitute a reason for granting planning permission if they meet the tests 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.

**RAMSAR:** The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as a Waterfowl Habitat is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands.

**Rural Exception Sites (RES):** 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. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site at the local planning authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.

**Setting of a Heritage Asset:** 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.

**Significance (for heritage policy):** The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

**Social Housing:** Housing provided for people on low incomes or with particular needs by government agencies or non-profit organizations. Limits to rent increases are set by law.

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**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 2017.

**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 Bird Directive.

**Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI):** Sites designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

**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.

**Superfast Broadband:** Superfast broadband speeds are headline download speeds of greater than 24 Mbps.

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

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