

Neighbourhood Planning Update

How to CONTACT us

We are here to support parishes through the neighbourhood planning process.

For further information and advice please contact the neighbourhood planning team:

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All Change at the Top – Planning Bill Update

The recent changes to the government's cabinet have resulted in the appointment of Michael Gove as Secretary of State for the renamed Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Speculation in the national press, including in publications that support the planning profession, suggest that this is likely to mean the government will substantially water down its controversial planning white paper changes. Many observers now expect the long-awaited planning bill to be delayed at least until after Christmas, and possibly longer.

It was reported in the planning press that Clive Betts, chair of the House of Commons housing and communities select committee, has said that Mr. Gove's appointment is "...related to the backlash against the [planning white paper's] exclusion of the public's voice from the consideration of planning applications."

Following his appointment, it was reported that Mr. Gove signalled that he is minded to pause and review the proposed planning bill, in consultation with backbench MPs and industry stakeholders. Commentators have suggested that such a review may mean abandoning the approach proposed in the white paper on land-use zoning while introducing greater opportunities for public engagement in the decision-making process. To this end it has also recently been reported that the government will be considering re-affirming its support for the use of neighbourhood development orders by encouraging local communities to engage in creating these orders that grant permission for development where it is supported by the community through local referendums.

We'll keep an eye on progress and will provide updates when the government makes progress on any changes to the current system.



Northumberland
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What's happening around the County?



Residents of Seaton Valley and Thirston now have more of a say over future development in their parishes, following the adoption of their Neighbourhood Plans.

Following success at referendum, the Neighbourhood Plans will form part of the Statutory Development Plan for Northumberland, meaning that future planning decisions in the areas will be made in accordance with policies in the Plans unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The **Seaton Valley** Plan protects areas of open and green space that are of demonstrable importance to the local community.

The **Thirston** Plan supports business and community services in the context of achieving sustainable development and conserving the special character of the local area.

There are now seventeen made neighbourhood plans in Northumberland.

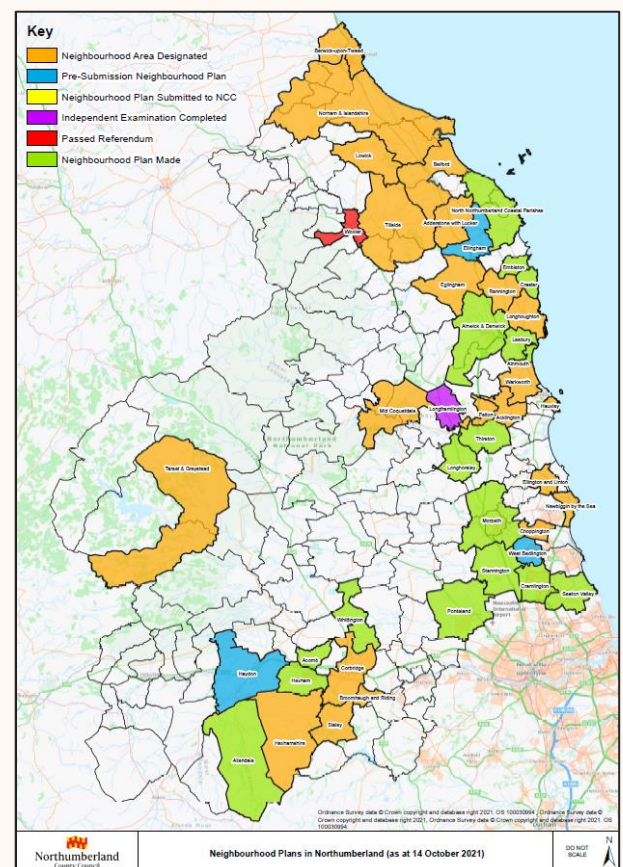
Haydon Parish Council has recently consulted on its pre-submission plan. The Parish Council is seeking to address issues around housing, green space, mobility and transport, design, community facilities, local economy, and flooding and climate change. The neighbourhood plan steering group is currently considering all representations received and making any amendments thought to be necessary to the plan before it is submitted to the County Council.

Longframlington Neighbourhood Plan is currently at examination. The 7 policies set out in the Plan cover the

following issues: housing, economy, community facilities, open spaces, biodiversity, and design. The Plan currently has limited but increasing weight in decision-making.

Slaley Parish is now a designated neighbourhood area.

Twenty-four other parishes are at an earlier stage of plan-making. More information is on our [website](#), where you can also view a larger version of the neighbourhood plan county map.



FIRST HOMES

First Homes is a new affordable home ownership programme which will offer first time home buyers at least a 30% discount on a new-build home.

The discount will be funded by developers through planning obligations. Crucially, the discount will be passed on to all future purchasers in perpetuity, so these homes will keep helping first-time buyers onto the property ladder for generations to come. In future, 25% of all affordable homes delivered by developers as part of their obligatory contributions will be First Homes.

How can neighbourhood plans support the provision of First Homes?

Neighbourhood planning groups will be able to contribute to the delivery of First Homes by:

- identifying suitable sites within neighbourhood plans for these homes, for which planning permission can then be secured.
- Putting in place neighbourhood development orders, able to grant planning permission directly for schemes that can include First Homes.
- Applying a higher minimum discount of either 40% or 50% to First Homes, where the evidence justifies this.

Detailed information on First Homes is in this [Written Ministerial Statement](#) (May 2021).



Northumberland Local Plan

Could Neighbourhood Planning do more?

The Northumberland Local Plan is nearing completion and will soon become adopted as the development plan for Northumberland.

Once adopted, planning decisions in the County should be made in accordance with the new Local Plan, and any other considerations that are relevant to the application.

The Local Plan has been through its final consultation on main modifications. These are modifications the examiner of the Local Plan asked to be made in order to make the Plan “sound”. The County Council are now awaiting a response from the Examiners after making these modifications to the Local Plan.

Parish and Town Councils that are currently preparing a neighbourhood plan for their area or are considering the key issues in their neighbourhood with a view to preparing a neighbourhood plan can see clearly what the Local Plan will do to help manage the future use and development of land in each Parish. In certain Parishes the Local Plan may play a bigger role than in others, depending on the location, and may already be enough to manage development over the next 15 years.

A key message to Parish Councils is to consider whether a neighbourhood plan or neighbourhood development order could go further than the Local Plan and provide some locally specific planning policies for different areas. Where the Local Plan ends could be the start of some new local planning policies in your Parish.

Neighbourhood plans can't plan for less housing than the minimum amounts set out in the new Local Plan. But neighbourhood plans and development orders are a very useful tool to create more locally specific policies which add a new and local layer of planning policy that could be missing from the Local Plan and is relevant to a particular area.

If you would like to understand where the Local Plan ends for your Parish and where a neighbourhood plan or development order could start, please get in touch with the Neighbourhood Planning team who can support you in this interesting next phase of planning at a local level in your Parish



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