



STANNINGTON PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2017 - 2031

REFERENDUM PLAN – July 2018

Stannington Parish Council



FOREWORD

The Stannington Parish Neighbourhood Plan (SPNP) is a new type of planning document which gives us a unique opportunity to shape the future of our Parish. It is part of the Government's new approach to planning which aims to give local people more say about how their area develops, a matter that was enshrined in the Localism Act in 2011.

The Stannington Parish Neighbourhood Plan creates a vision for the future of Stannington Parish. It has a series of objectives to achieve that vision. Some of these objectives will be achieved through planning policies, and some will be delivered through Community Projects, which will be overseen by the Parish Council.

The planning policies form the main part of the Neighbourhood Plan, and will be used by Northumberland County Council to determine planning applications and proposals for development in our area.

The SPNP has been produced by a Steering Group consisting of Parish Councillors, the local County Councillor, local residents, farmers and business people. Through government funding we have also had support from an independent Planning Consultant, as well as assistance from Planning Officers at Northumberland County Council, and Newcastle University planning students.

We have tried hard to make sure the Plan reflects the views of residents in the Parish as well as local businesses. We have undertaken a significant amount of consultation to produce this Plan. The Plan has now been examined by an independent person who made a number of recommendations for modification to the policies. Those recommendations have been incorporated into this version of the Plan which will now be put to a local referendum. Everyone registered to vote in the Parish will now be given the opportunity to vote at that local referendum which will be organised in the near future by the County Council.

Stannington Parish Council would like to thank the members of the SPNP Steering Group and pay tribute to their work since November 2013. The Parish Council is also grateful for the help and the engagement of many others in the parish without which it would not have been possible to produce this Neighbourhood Plan.

You can follow the plan's journey on the website <http://www.spnp.co.uk/>.

Karen Carins

Chair, Stannington Parish Council

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INTRODUCTION

Stannington Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group was appointed by the Parish Council to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Parish of Stannington (the Plan area).

The Parish Council was designated as a qualifying body entitled to prepare a neighbourhood plan for the area. Northumberland County Council formally designated the whole of the Parish of Stannington as a Neighbourhood Plan Area on 18th October 2013, in accordance with the relevant legislation.

The Stannington Parish Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) has been prepared by a Steering Group supported by neighbourhood representatives, with input from Northumberland County Council.

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

A neighbourhood plan is a document containing planning policies. Once adopted, a neighbourhood plan becomes part of the statutory development plan for the area. This is the document, or set of documents, used to make decisions on planning applications. The Stannington Parish Neighbourhood Plan will sit alongside other parts of the statutory development plan. Currently, that is: the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan (2003); and the Northumberland County Structure Plan (2005). The County Council is preparing a new Local Plan covering the whole of Northumberland. When that new Local Plan is adopted, the policies in the Stannington Parish Neighbourhood Plan will be considered alongside the new Local Plan when decisions are made on planning applications. Policies in the Stannington Parish Neighbourhood Plan must be used by Development Management Officers at the County Council to determine planning applications in the Plan area once the Plan comes into force.

Why have a plan for Stannington?

For the first time, our community can have a real say in how our Parish develops as a living, working, sustainable community. The series of consultation events we have held have clearly shown that there are issues that are important to our local community, and to our local businesses. In order to address as many of the issues raised by the local community, the Plan also contains a series of 'Community Actions'. These are not planning policies, but are matters that are important to the local community so have been included within the Plan, and will be implemented by identified parties over the lifetime of the Plan. They are listed in Part 6 of the Plan.

What evidence have we used to prepare the plan?

First of all, we asked the local community what they wanted in the Plan. We have had a number of events over the last three years, during which we have received feedback. We have also used advice from statutory bodies, and other evidence produced by the County

Council to support their emerging Northumberland Local Plan. All our evidence documents are included in the Evidence Base for the Plan.

What consultation has taken place?

The Steering Group has engaged throughout the process with the local community, through consultation and newsletters, and the provision of information on the website (www.snp.co.uk/), and with a range of consultation bodies who have an interest in the Parish. More detail on the consultation undertaken is provided in the Consultation Statement which supports the Plan.

Following the results of an initial questionnaire, a 'Vision' and set of 'Objectives' were formulated, with suggested planning policy areas. A series of Topic Papers were produced for each topic area, and these were consulted on in the summer of 2015.

A Pre-Submission Draft Plan was prepared to reflect the outcomes of all earlier consultation and engagement. Consultation took place on that Pre-Submission Draft Plan for a six week period between April and June 2017. The outcomes from that consultation and modifications to the Plan are described in the Consultation Statement. The Plan submitted to the County Council reflected the feedback received from the local community, local businesses and other consultation bodies during all of these consultation events.

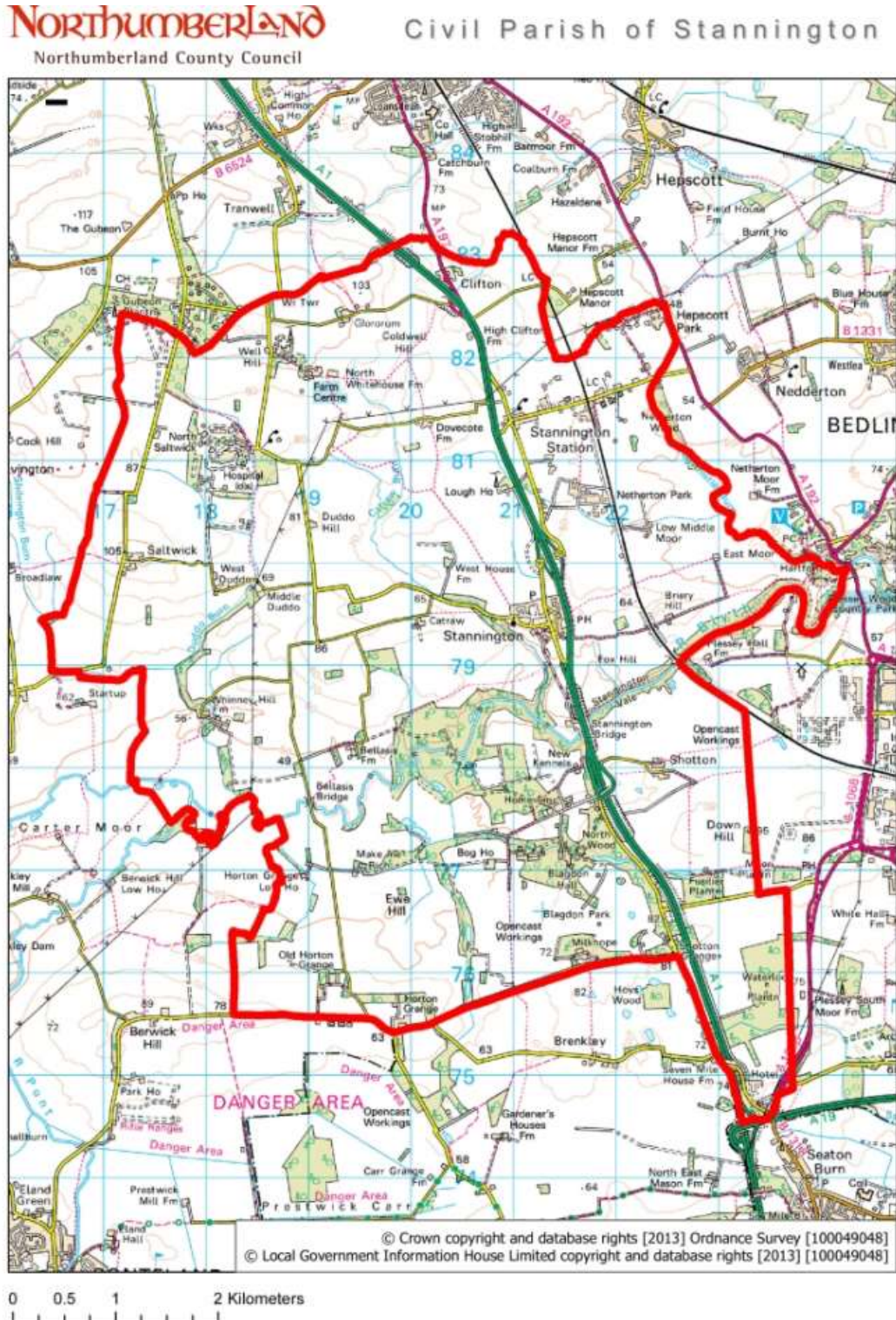
What happens next?

The Plan was subject to further consultation at the start of 2018 and has now been examined by an independent person. The Independent Examination resulted in a number of recommendations to modify policies in the Plan so that they meet the 'Basic Conditions'. The Parish Council has agreed with the County Council to accept those modifications. The Plan will now be put to a local referendum. Everyone registered to vote in the Parish will now be given the opportunity to vote at that local referendum which will be organised in the near future by the County Council.

In addition to the Plan, background supporting documents are available on the local community website: www.snp.co.uk/. This includes supporting documents setting out the context for development in the Plan area along with reports into consultation and engagement activity undertaken in developing the draft Plan. It also includes minutes of all the meetings that have been held by the Steering Group during the production of the Plan.

Part 1: THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA

The Stannington Neighbourhood Plan area (the Plan area) is shown on the map below. The Plan area lies entirely within the administrative area of Northumberland County Council (previously part of Castle Morpeth District).



Stannington Neighbourhood Plan Area - A Snapshot Today:

The Settlements and Housing:

Stannington Parish is a predominantly rural area. There are a number of settlements in the Plan area, the main settlement being Stannington Village, which gives the Parish its name. Stannington Village has a school, church, a Post Office (within the church building), a pop-up café in the church building and a public house (The Ridley Arms), as well as a number of small businesses.

Stannington Station is a rural settlement but is growing, and has Moorhouse Farm Shop, a Garage/Shop and an Indian Restaurant (Char Mausum). Other settlements in the Parish include Clifton, Blagdon, and the 'newer' settlements of St Mary's Park and Netherton Park which have seen significant amounts of housing development over recent years. There are also a number of smaller hamlets, including Glororum, and farmsteads dotted around the Plan area.

The Plan area has a growing population with a significant amount of new housing already having been provided. There has been significant growth at St. Mary's Park, and further development is proposed at Netherton Park and Hepscott Park, both large brownfield sites in the Plan area.

Economy:

The Plan area, although predominantly rural, and therefore largely based on agriculture, has seen significant opencast coal mining activity on its fringes. It has a vibrant local economy, with a number of small retail, and business units. Over 100 businesses have been identified in the Plan area. Many of these businesses are located at a range of 'business hubs' which are also visitor attractions in their own right such as: the Milkhope Centre; Horton Grange at Blagdon; the Whitehouse Farm centre; and New Kennels. The Blagdon Estate is a significant local employer, landowner and housing provider in the Plan area.

Green Belt:

The southern half of the Plan area is in the longstanding Tyne and Wear Green Belt. Policy S5 of the Northumberland County Structure Plan (2005) defines the general extent of a Green Belt extension around Morpeth. The northern half of the Plan area is in the general extent of the proposed Green Belt extension. In effect, for planning decision-making purposes, with the exception of Stannington Village for which a settlement boundary is defined in the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan (2003), the whole of the Plan area is within the Green Belt.

Precise boundaries of the outer extent of the Green Belt, as modified by Structure Plan Policy S5, and any associated inset settlement boundaries for places intended to be excluded from the Green belt will be defined, in due course, in the Northumberland Local Plan. This may affect settlements in the Plan area, but this matter will not be determined

until a new Northumberland Local Plan is adopted.

Development Sites

There are a number of redundant buildings and brownfield sites within the Plan area that either have planning permission or may be suitable for development. Most notably, development is currently taking place at St Mary's Park and at Hepscott Park, and planning permission has been granted for housing development at Netherton Park.

Heritage/Environment

There are a number of listed buildings and places of historic interest within the Plan area. Stannington Village has the highest concentration of listed buildings. A Conservation Area was proposed for the village in the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan in a policy that continues to be 'saved' (see Appendix A). There are two parklands at parts of Blagdon Hall Estate, and at St. Mary's Park which are listed on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest.

Landscape and Biodiversity

The Plan area comprises a largely rural farming landscape. The Landscape Character Areas defined in the Northumberland Landscape Character Assessment (2010) are 'Coalfield Farmland' and 'Lowland Rolling Farmland'. There are no formal habitats or species designations within the Plan area although both landscape and biodiversity are highly valued by residents and there will inevitably be protected species in the Plan area although there are no international, national or locally designated sites.

Transport

The A1 runs through the middle of the Plan area. This means that this area is popular as it is easily accessible, but also provides an attractive, countryside location, close to Morpeth, the local market town. There are regular public transport services to Stannington, Stannington Station and Clifton, linking those settlements with Morpeth and beyond. Elsewhere, public transport provision is limited. There are no evening/late night bus services, meaning younger people and older people can be isolated.

Part 2: PLANNING POLICY BACKGROUND

National and Local Planning Policy Context:

The Plan must be in general conformity with strategic policies contained in the development plan. Northumberland County Council provided a list of 'strategic policies' with which the Plan must be in general conformity. Further detail on this is contained in the Basic Conditions Statement.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides the most up to date planning policy from Central Government. Policy set out in NPPF takes precedence in decision making over older development plan policy where that conflicts with NPPF.

Sustainable development is at the heart of planning. It is about positive growth that supports economic, environmental and social growth for current and future generations. NPPF describes what is meant by sustainable development indicating that a presumption in favour of sustainable development should be seen as a 'golden thread' running through both plan-making and decision-taking. Sustainable development is at the heart of the community aspirations in Stannington.

The NPPF states that neighbourhood plans should: *"provide a practical framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made with a high degree of predictability and efficiency"*. The NPPF also advises that local plans should give *"a clear indication of how a decision maker should react to a development proposal"*¹¹.

This Plan seeks to give clarity to developers and to the local community, about what kind of development will be supported in the Plan area, and important considerations that must be taken into account when determining applications.

Local Planning Policy

The current statutory development plan covering the Plan area consists of the saved policies in the adopted Castle Morpeth District Local Plan (2003); and Policy S5 of the Northumberland County Structure Plan (2005). The Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies in those plans. The Plan will be subject to independent examination. The purpose of the independent examination is to provide an independent informed recommendation on whether the Plan meets the Basic Conditions which includes the need to be in general conformity with those relevant strategic policies.

Northumberland County Council was in the process of preparing a draft Core Strategy during the period that The Stannington Parish Neighbourhood Plan was being prepared. The Core Strategy was intended, in part, to replace the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan and add detail to the requirements of Policy S5 of the Structure Plan. The Core Strategy had

¹¹ NPPF Paragraphs 17 and 154

reached an advanced stage of preparation and was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in April 2017. However, following a change in political administration at the County Council in May 2017, the County Council withdrew the draft Northumberland Core Strategy in July 2017. That document now has no relevance to this neighbourhood plan and it does not form part of the development plan for the purposes of considering whether the Stannington Parish Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions.

Part 3: VISION AND OBJECTIVES

The Vision for the Neighbourhood Plan area is as follows:

"To improve the economic and community sustainability of Stannington Parish for the benefit of residents and businesses, whilst maintaining and enhancing the unique characteristics of the individual settlements within the Plan area."

To support the vision, a number of objectives were identified:

Objective 1 - Community Sustainability

'To identify, register and protect Assets of Community Value, and support future provision of community facilities within the Plan area'.

This objective will be achieved through a positively worded policy to protect Assets of Community Value (when listed) and to provide future community facilities (Policies 1 and 2). There is a Community Action proposed for the Parish Council to register Assets of Community Value. Policies in the Plan support the creation of new community facilities (Policy 2).

Objective 2: Natural Environment

'Ensure the countryside, wildlife and important open spaces are maintained to retain the rural feel of the area, whilst recognising that the countryside is a living, working, place'.

This objective is closely linked to Objective 3, and the support of rural businesses. The policy proposed in the Plan relevant to this objective, is the allocation of a Local Green Space in Stannington Village (Policy 4). There is also a policy which seeks to ensure that design in new development takes into account the rural setting of an area where relevant (Policy 10).

Objective 3: Local Economy

'Provide a positive framework for local business, agriculture, rural enterprise (including tourism) and local employment.'

The Plan proposes a positive policy to encourage expansion of rural businesses, and the creation of new businesses in the rural area, whilst respecting the purpose of Green Belt designation across much of the Plan area (Policy 5), as well as a policy to ensure the infrastructure is provided in new development to allow broadband to be provided (Policy 6). The lack of suitable broadband came through strongly from the business community as a barrier to business growth in the Plan area.

Objective 4: Transport

'Reduce the detrimental effect that road traffic has on residents and businesses in the Plan area, whilst seeking improvements to local highway networks, including pedestrian and cycle routes, and public transport provision'.

The Plan proposes a number of Community Actions, whereby the Parish Council will seek to work closely with Northumberland County Council on key transport and highways issues that are of concern to the residents in the area. The Plan proposes policies that support safety improvements on the road network (Policy 7); the protection and provision of safe cycling and walking routes (Policy 8); and a policy to secure appropriate investment in highway safety and infrastructure improvements associated with new development (Policy 9).

Objective 5: Design and Character

'Ensure each settlement in the Plan area seeks to maintain local identity, with a recognition in the Plan of the differences between the settlements, and the need to reflect local character in design'.

There was strong support in the local community for maintaining local character, and ensuring that new development is carefully designed to fit in with surrounding character. The Plan recognises the different characteristics of settlements in the Plan area. A planning policy promotes careful attention to design in new development (Policy 10).

A community action is proposed to ensure the Parish Council works closely with The County Council on pre-application discussions where major developments are proposed in the Plan area.

A community action is proposed to work with Northumberland County Council to designate a Conservation Area in Stannington Village and to produce a Conservation Area Character Appraisal to support that proposed designation.

All community actions are listed in Part 6 of the Plan.

Part 4: PLANNING POLICIES

This section of the Stannington Neighbourhood Plan contains planning policies. These policies have been listed under each objective. Planning policies are highlighted in blue boxes for clarity. Beneath each policy is a 'policy explanation', which explains what the policy is trying to achieve, and how it is envisaged by Stannington Parish Council that the policy will be implemented. Any related Community Actions are identified in this supporting text and are set out in detail in Part 6 of the Plan.

The impact of development on the Green Belt is a particularly important consideration across the Plan area. The way in which the Plan is intended to be applied in the context of Green Belt designation, having regard to general support for certain forms of business development and the provision of community services and facilities is set out below:

Green Belt and the application of Policies 2, 3 and 5

With the exception of Stannington Village, all the settlements identified and referred to in Policies in the Plan and identified on the Policies Map are within the general extent of the Green Belt as defined in 'saved' Policy S5 of the Northumberland County and National Park Joint Structure Plan (2005).

Within that general strategic context, Policies 2 and 5 support proposals for new and improved community facilities and new and expanding rural businesses. Policy 3 supports future proposals to re-locate Stannington First School should the need arise.

Most new building is regarded by the NPPF as 'inappropriate development'. Paragraphs 87 and 88 state: '...inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. When considering any application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.'

In applying this balancing exercise to proposals for inappropriate development, its contribution to community cohesion and to the local economy are important local considerations that may weigh in favour of individual proposals.

Our Sustainable Community

Objective 1: 'To identify, register and protect Assets of Community Value, and support future provision of community facilities within the Plan area'.

Policy 1: Assets of Community Value

Proposals that involve the loss of any registered Assets of Community Value, or any part of that asset, will not be supported unless alternative equivalent provision is made, or it can be demonstrated that the continued use of the existing asset for its current use is no longer viable.

Policy Explanation:

This policy will apply to any registered Assets of Community Value.

A community action is proposed to list Assets of Community Value (ACVs) under the 'Right to Bid' legislation contained in the Localism Act 2011. It is expected that the ACVs proposed by the Parish Council will be registered where they meet the criteria set out in the relevant Regulations. A list of all community actions is contained in Part 6 of the Plan. As part of this community action, the Parish Council propose to undertake further consultation to establish which community assets to propose as Assets of Community Value. Once this consultation has been conducted, and Community Assets have been registered, then Policy 1 will be applied to any proposals involving the loss of a registered ACV.



Photo 1: Stannington Village Hall - a much valued Community Facility

Policy 2: New and Extended Community Facilities

The provision of new community facilities and extensions to existing community facilities, including businesses which have a community benefit, will be supported in areas excluded from the Green Belt.

Within the Green Belt, proposals for such development will be subject to Green Belt policy. In the case of inappropriate development, the contribution of the development to community cohesion and to the local economy are important local considerations that may weigh in favour of individual proposals.

In all cases:

- a) it should be demonstrated that the proposed facilities will make a positive contribution to a sustainable pattern of development and travel; and**
- b) the development should respect local character, residential amenity and highway safety.**

Policy Explanation:

There was significant local feedback from consultation, suggesting that the settlements in the Plan area would be more vibrant if there were more provision of local services to meet people's day to day needs. There was particular support for the provision of a pharmacy, as well as a local convenience shop and café. This policy seeks to provide support for proposals that come forward for new community facilities in areas not subject to Green Belt policy. At present, this is limited to Stannington Village for which an inset to the Green Belt has been defined. However, the policy will also apply to any other insets that may be defined in the future Northumberland Local Plan. Elsewhere, proposals will be subject to Green Belt policy as summarised in the box on page 13. The contribution of development to community cohesion and to the local economy are important local considerations that may weigh in favour of individual proposals.

Policy 3: Stannington First School

Proposals to extend or re-locate Stannington First School to accommodate increased pupil numbers will be supported. Proposals to provide new play areas at or near the school will be supported. Any re-located school must include safe access for vehicles, and good cycle and pedestrian access to Stannington Village.

Any proposals to re-locate the school to another site within the Green Belt will be subject to policy relating to development in the Green Belt.

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Policy Explanation:

Although Stannington First School is not currently at capacity, due to the large number of approvals for new housing in the Plan area, there is likely to be pressure on the school to provide additional spaces over the coming years.

The Neighbourhood Plan therefore seeks to support the expansion, or if necessary, re-location of Stannington First School, to ensure that sufficient spaces are available at the school for the anticipated increase in pupils living in the Plan area. The policy also seeks to provide a positive framework to support proposals which will benefit the school, such as the provision of safe parking areas, and safe cycle and pedestrian access to the school, as well as support for the provision of new play areas.

If proposals come forward to build a new school in the Green Belt weight should be given to the need for a new school once the existing school is at capacity when assessing whether very special circumstances exist to justify support for such a proposal.

Natural Environment, Biodiversity and Open Space

Objective 2: 'Ensure the countryside, wildlife and important open spaces are maintained to retain the rural feel of the area, whilst recognising that the countryside is a living, working place'.

Policy 4: Local Green Space and recreational provision

Stannington Playing Fields identified on the Stannington Neighbourhood Plan Policies Map are designated and protected as Local Green Space.

Within this Local Green Space no development will be allowed except that of small scale that is consistent with the designation of the land for community recreational purposes. All other development is considered inappropriate and will not be approved except in very special circumstances. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Local Green Space by reason of inappropriateness, and other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

The provision of recreational facilities will be supported in areas excluded from the Green Belt. The provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation in the Green Belt will be supported as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

Policy Explanation:

Stannington Playing Fields have been used for many years, and are of significant recreational value to the local community. They provide a much needed open space within the village of Stannington. The Castle Morpeth District Local Plan (2003) currently designates this area as Protected Open Space under Policy SNC3.

There is an opportunity for Neighbourhood Plans to designate Local Green Spaces under the provisions of paragraph 77 of NPPF. The intention of the Neighbourhood Plan is to afford greater protection to this site as a valued community space through this designation as Local Green Space.

The policy restricts new development on the designated Local Green Space, except where it is required to enhance the community and/or recreational value of that space.

The policy additionally supports the provision of recreational facilities in defined insets to the Green Belt, presently only Stannington Village, but potentially elsewhere if defined in the future Northumberland Local Plan. Facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation are also supported in the Green Belt subject to national policy.



Photo 2: Stannington Playing Fields and play area - designated as Local Green Space

Green Belt

With the exception of Stannington Village, all the settlements identified in the Plan and on the Policies Map are within the general extent of the green belt as defined in Policy S5 of the Northumberland County and National Park Joint Structure Plan (2005). There is strong feeling in the local community that Stannington Station should retain its 'rural feel' and the sense of openness within the Green Belt.

It is therefore proposed, as part of the Monitoring and Review section of the Plan, to investigate the potential for additional policies related to Stannington Station once a new Northumberland Local Plan is in place which will define new Green Belt boundaries.

Biodiversity

There was strong support from the local community for protecting and enhancing local biodiversity. Paragraph 109 of NPPF expects that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural environment by minimising development impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible. It is not the purpose of the neighbourhood plan to repeat national policy, and no specific policy is proposed in the plan in relation to biodiversity. However, separate community actions related to biodiversity are included in Part 6 of the Plan.

Local Economy

Objective 3: 'Provide a positive framework for local business, agriculture, rural enterprise (including tourism) and local employment.'

Policy 5: New and Expanding Rural Businesses

To create and retain a sustainable local economy in the Plan area, small-scale proposals for new business uses or the opportunity to expand existing uses, will be supported in areas excluded from the Green Belt.

Within the Green Belt, proposals for such development, including those for farm diversification, will be subject to Green Belt policy. In the case of inappropriate development, the contribution of the development to community cohesion and to the local economy are important local considerations that may weigh in favour of individual proposals.

In all cases:

- a) it should be demonstrated that the proposed development will make a positive contribution to a sustainable pattern of development and travel; and
- b) the development should respect local character, residential amenity and highway safety.

Policy Explanation:

Extensive consultation has taken place with local businesses as well as residents. There is clear support for a positive framework towards the local economy in the area. Main concerns cited by businesses in the consultation were in relation to restrictions on growth due to the Green Belt designation, and lack of broadband provision. Policies are therefore proposed to support rural businesses in the Plan area, and to ensure that all new development incorporates adequate broadband infrastructure.

To maintain a sustainable local economy, it is important that small businesses in rural areas have the opportunity to become established and to expand. This policy seeks to provide support for proposals that come forward for business development in areas not subject to Green Belt policy. At present, this is limited to Stannington Village for which an inset to the Green Belt has been defined. However, the policy will also apply to any other insets that may be defined in the future Northumberland Local Plan. Elsewhere, proposals will be subject to Green Belt policy as summarised in the box on page 13. The contribution of development to community cohesion and to the local economy are important local considerations that may weigh in favour of individual proposals.



Photo 3: The Milkhope Centre, one of a number of 'rural business centres' in the Parish

Policy 6: Broadband

All new dwellings and business premises proposed in the Plan area should be provided with the infrastructure necessary to allow the property to be served by a superfast broadband connection which can be installed on an open access basis, unless it can be demonstrated through consultation that this would not be either possible, practical or economically viable.

Policy Explanation:

Comprehensive business surveys, as well as respondents in residential surveys, highlighted the lack of high quality broadband as being a barrier to business growth. This policy therefore seeks to ensure that proposals for the expansion of high speed broadband improvements are supported, and to ensure that where new development takes place, it includes infrastructure to accommodate broadband connection in the future.

Transport and Access

Objective 4: ‘Reduce the detrimental effect that road traffic has on residents and businesses in the Plan area, whilst seeking improvements to local highway networks, including pedestrian and cycle routes, and public transport provision’.



Photo 4: Entrance to Stannington Village - traffic speed is key issue in Stannington and Stannington Station

Policy 7: Safety improvements on the road network

Proposals for speed reduction measures and safety measures for pedestrians, cyclists and other users of the road network will be supported.

Policy Explanation:

This policy seeks to provide a positive framework for any proposals to reduce speeds and increase safety on the road network for motorists, cyclists, pedestrians and public transport users.

Transport and traffic impacts are major issues that have been identified at all stages of consultation. Particular concerns around safety along Stannington Station Road; new development exacerbating existing traffic problems; lack of public transport and concerns about the railway crossing, were some of the key transport issues raised.

Many of the concerns expressed by residents and businesses in relation to traffic and transport are outside the scope of planning policies for the Neighbourhood Plan. In addition, many of the impacts of traffic are related to other developments and highways issues outside the Plan area.

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Traffic Speeds/Safety

This was a key concern, particularly along Stannington Station Road. Many of the problems of through traffic could be helped by the construction of a link road to the south of Morpeth between the residential estates at Stobhill and Loansdean and the construction of a four-way junction at Clifton or Whalton Road onto the A1. Stannington Parish Council, Morpeth Town Council and Northumberland County Council are looking for appropriate solutions to traffic issues to the south of Morpeth. These proposals are outside the Plan area, and some comprise strategic infrastructure which is beyond the scope of neighbourhood planning. However, the Parish Council intends to work closely with Northumberland County Council and neighbouring parishes to push for this infrastructure which would reduce the impact of traffic in the Plan area. This is covered as a community action in Part 6 of the Plan.

Public Transport

The lack of adequate public transport was frequently cited in responses from residents to the initial questionnaires. In particular, a lack of evening/night buses, meaning that young people who are not yet old enough to drive, find it difficult to get into and back from Morpeth or further afield. Negotiations with bus service providers and the County Council could assist in adding later services onto current timetables, particularly given the amount of new development that has come forward in the Plan area.

For instance, developers Bellway now provide a bus service linking the new housing at St. Mary's Park to other parts of the Parish (the 'Rural Link' service). Improvement to this service and the provision of new services linking other areas will be encouraged through the community actions identified in Part 6.

Walking/Cycling in the Plan area

Policy 8: Safe cycling and walking routes

The development of safe cycling and walking routes will be supported across the Plan area. Support will be given to:

- a) Routes which link the settlements in the Parish;**
- b) Routes which link existing cycling and walking routes; and**
- c) The creation of new pavements or a public footpath along Stannington Station Road.**

Improvements to, and creation of new pavements and public footpaths were considered important by residents. In particular, along Stannington Station Road, the lack of adequate pavements, lighting and bus shelters was raised as being an important issue. A community action is also proposed, whereby the Parish Council will work with the Highways Authority and bus providers, to seek improvements to this local infrastructure.

Provision of Highway Safety Infrastructure

Policy 9: Provision of Highway Safety Infrastructure

Direct provision, or financial contributions sufficient to secure the provision of additional infrastructure associated with highway safety improvements and the development or expansion of safe cycling and walking routes will be sought using planning obligations or planning conditions as appropriate where it can be demonstrated that securing such provision can be demonstrated as being necessary, reasonable and directly related to the development for which permission is being granted and where their provision will not threaten the viability of the development.

Policy Explanation

This policy seeks to ensure that new development adequately provides for any necessary highways infrastructure to make the development acceptable and sustainable. This could mean providing additional links between the development and other highways infrastructure, for instance, improved pavements, cycle routes to link up with other pavements and cycle routes in the Plan area. Policy 8 identifies specific instances where improvements would be supported. To comply with planning legislation, the policy clarifies that any contributions or conditions must be necessary, reasonable and directly related to the development for which permission is being granted, and their provision must not make the development unviable.

Design and Character

Objective 5: "Ensure each settlement in the Plan area maintains its identity, with a recognition in the Plan of the differences between the settlements, and the need to reflect local character in design".

Policy 10: Design and Character

Development proposals will be expected, where relevant, to demonstrate how they will:

- a) respect the context of the site and its surroundings, rural character, historic setting and context; and**
- b) demonstrate high quality design and where appropriate, innovative design; and**
- c) where appropriate, incorporate sustainable design measures including SuDS; and**
- d) integrate access for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport into the development; and**
- e) provide suitable landscaping and open space, including, play provision; and**
- f) secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.**

Policy Explanation:

Design of new development and preserving the setting of the settlements in the countryside was considered to be highly important to people in the Plan area. Different settlements have different 'characters':

Stannington Village has a 'proposed' Conservation Area, with a high concentration of listed buildings. This 'proposed Conservation Area' is defined in the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan (2003) proposals map, and is included in Appendix A of this Plan for information. This area has been identified as historically significant, but has not been formally designated. A community action is therefore proposed to work with Northumberland County Council to bring about the designation of the Conservation Area. This community action is in Part 6 of the Plan. The designation and associated Conservation Area Character Appraisal will give additional evidence about the historic significance of this part of Stannington Village.



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Photo 5: Part of the proposed Conservation Area in Stannington Village

Stannington Station has a different character to Stannington village. It is a dispersed, rural settlement, with open views across to the countryside. It will be important to maintain these open views to retain the agricultural feel of the settlement, something which was considered to be highly important to people living in that area. This rural context will be an important factor to consider in the design of any future development proposals. Stannington Station is in the Green Belt.

St. Mary's Park, which has recently been developed for housing, has a specific character related to the history of the site, and the Registered Park and Garden (Registered Grade II under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 for its special historic interest). The area is in the Green Belt.

Blagdon Estate is also largely within a Registered Park and Garden (Registered Grade II under the HBAMA 1953) and has a strong historic context including the remains of early 18th century gardens, with 20th century additions by Edwin Lutyens and gardens designed by Gertrude Jekyll. It is entirely in the Green Belt.

High quality design which contributes to local character does not necessarily mean that it has to be 'traditional', or replicate design in the immediate area. Modern design proposals, particularly those incorporating sustainable design principles, can still contribute to local character.

There are a number of large housing schemes either approved, or in the pipeline in the Plan area. The Parish Council wish to ensure that they can play an active role in shaping these developments. Therefore, early communication with the Parish Council on large schemes and pre-application enquiries is strongly encouraged, and Community Action is proposed, to ensure that the Parish Council liaises with Northumberland County Council, to facilitate active input into any larger scale schemes coming forward in the Plan area, such as Hepscott Park, and any further development likely to come forward at St. Mary's Park.

Part 5: MONITORING AND REVIEW

Local authorities are required to produce an annual monitoring report (AMR) to ensure that their development plan policies are being implemented as intended. Neighbourhood plans also need to be monitored and reviewed as part of the overall process. The Neighbourhood Plan area is relatively small so AMRs will not be required. Nevertheless, the process can be used as good practice and the main mechanism by which policies are monitored and assessed.

Policies and projects in the Plan will be monitored to determine their performance and relevance and to review whether or not objectives are being met. The results of the monitoring process will determine where policy review and change are needed.

Key tasks are:

- Review progress on a regular basis;
- Assess the extent to which policies are being implemented;
- Determine why policies are not being implemented and set out steps to be taken to ensure policies are implemented as intended or whether any need to be amended or replaced;
- Identify whether policies need adjusting or replacing because they are not working as intended;
- Identify whether policies need changing to reflect changes in national and local planning policy.

A trigger for review will be when the Northumberland Local Plan is adopted. At this point, it may be necessary to review policies in the Neighbourhood Plan for compatibility with strategic policies in a new Local Plan, and identify whether additional policies may be needed, particularly in relation to the definition of Green Belt boundaries.

Part 6: COMMUNITY ACTIONS

Community Actions	Partners	Delivery
Community Action 1: Liaise with Local Education Authority with regard to new school	NCC Education Department Stannington Parish Council NCC Planning Department	Monitor school places – delivery when school is approaching capacity
Community Action 2: In consultation with the local community, list Assets of Community Value in the Plan area	Stannington Parish Council	2018
Community Action 3: Set up and manage Red Squirrel protection areas where there is local support to do so	Stannington Parish Council Local Wildlife Trust	2018/19
Community Action 4: Parish Council to monitor Core Strategy and Green Belt revisions in relation to insets for Stannington Station	Stannington Parish Council NCC Planning Department	Ongoing – dependant on Core Strategy timeline
Community Action 5: Work with NCC to improve broadband connectivity to rural businesses	Stannington Parish Council Northumberland County Council	2018 onwards
Community Action 6: Liaise with NCC Highways Authority to provide additional bus shelters, improve bus services and address safety concerns in Stannington Station and around the school.	Stannington Parish Council NCC Highways Department NCC Planning Department	2018 onwards
Community Action 7: Work with Highways England and developers to ensure that when the A1 section is re-surfaced or new roads are required in the parish, that they use 'low noise' technologies.	Stannington Parish Council Highways England NCC Planning Department NCC Highways	Ongoing – dependent on timescales of A1 surfacing
Community Action 8:	Stannington Parish Council	2018 onwards

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<p>Work with NCC Public Rights of Way Officers to improve footpaths and bridleways in the Plan area</p>		
<p>Community Action 9: Liaise with Morpeth Town Council and NCC to support a link road between Stobhill-Loansdean and collaborate with neighbouring Parishes to look for an appropriate solution to the traffic issues in South Morpeth</p>	<p>Stannington Parish Council NCC Highways Neighbouring Parishes and Morpeth Town Council</p>	<p>ongoing</p>
<p>Community Action 10: To liaise with NCC to ensure that the Parish Council is involved in pre-application discussions on major developments in the Plan area.</p>	<p>Stannington Parish Council NCC Planning Department</p>	<p>2017 onwards</p>
<p>Community Action 11: To liaise with NCC to bring forward the designation of the Stannington Conservation Area (currently 'proposed' Conservation Area) along with a Conservation Area Appraisal to support the designation.</p>	<p>Stannington Parish Council NCC Conservation Department</p>	<p>2018</p>

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Glossary of Terms

Amenity: A positive element or elements that contribute to the positive character of an area, such as lack of noise and disturbance, openness, landscape, townscape, opportunities for recreation etc.

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.

Biodiversity: The whole variety of life encompassing all genetics, species and ecosystem variations, including plants and animals.

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

Core Strategy: A Development Plan Document setting out the spatial vision, objectives and key strategic policies for an area.

Density (of development): The amount of building within an area of land. For housing it is expressed as the number of dwellings per hectare.

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.

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.

Green Belt: A land designation with the fundamental aim of preventing urban sprawl by keeping the land permanently open. The purposes of the Green Belt as specified in paragraph 80 of the NPPF are: to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land. The whole Plan area is in the green belt, apart from those areas 'inset' within the green belt [see definition of 'inset']

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.

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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. The Local Plan comprises either the whole or part of the statutory development plan for the whole or parts of the area of a Local Planning Authority.

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

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.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG): The Government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012 and the National Planning Practice Guidance in March 2014. Together, the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance set out what the Government expects of local authorities.

Neighbourhood Plan: A plan prepared 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 statutory development plan and has the same status in planning law as an adopted Local Plan.

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

Previously Developed Land (PDL) or Brownfield Land: Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.

Registered Parks and Gardens (Historic Parks and Gardens): An area designated by English Heritage for its value as a historic planned landscape or garden.

Setting: The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

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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 on Environment and Development in 1987 as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. NPPF states in paragraph 7 that 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.

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

Morpeth Inset maps

Environment & Conservation policies

- MC1 Settlement Boundary
- MC2 Area of High Landscape Value
- MC3 Landscape Corridor
- MC4 Site of Nature Conservation Importance
- C9 Local Nature Reserve
- R10 Potential Local Nature Reserve
- MC5 Site of Local Conservation Interest
- MC6 Wildlife Corridor
- MC7 Protected Open Space
- MCB Proposed Conservation Area
- MC9 Existing Conservation Area (See also C28-34, T10)
- * C39 Scheduled Ancient Monument

Housing policies

- MH1 Housing Site
- H8 Affordable Housing

Employment & Tourism policies

- ME1 Employment Land
- ME2 Office Development
- ME3 Special Employment Site

Roads & Transportation policies

- MT1 Major Road Improvement
- MT2 Minor road improvement & traffic management proposals
- MT3
- T6 Cycle Routes

Resources

- MPS1 Extension to Sewage Works
- RE5 Area liable to risk of flooding. (Data supplied by the Environment Agency)

Recreation & Leisure

- MR1 Informal Country Park
- MR2 Playing Fields
- MR4 Allotments
- MR5 Footpath
- MR6
- MR7 Picnic Site
- MS1 Back Riggs Opportunity Site
- MS2 Extent of Town Centre Shopping Area
- MS3 Primary Shopping Area
- MS4 Manchester Street & Dacre Street Policy Area
- MMD1 Mixed Use Development Site (See also ME2, MR3)
- MT3 Traffic Management Proposals

The following policies also apply to Morpeth Town Centre:- MT4.

The following policies are plan-wide and need no identifying notation.

RESOURCES RE1, RE2, RE4, RE5, RE7, RE8, RE9	ENVIRONMENT & CONSERVATION C2, C11, C12, C13, C14, C15, C16, C17, C18, C19, C20, C21, C22, C23, C24, C25, C26, C27, C28, C29, C30, C31, C32, C33, C34, C35, C36, C37, C38, C39, C40, C41, C42, C43, C44, C45, C46	EMPLOYMENT & TOURISM ME4, ME5, ME6, ME7, ME8, ME9, ME10, ME11, ME12, ME13, ME14, ME15	RECREATION & LEISURE MR3, MR6, MR7, MR8, MR9, MR10, MR11, MR12, MR13, MR14, MR15, MR16, MR17, MR18, MR19, MR20, MR21, MR22, MR23, MR24, MR25, MR26, MR27, MR28, MR29, MR30, MR31, MR32, MR33, MR34, MR35, MR36, MR37, MR38, MR39, MR40, MR41, MR42, MR43, MR44, MR45, MR46, MR47, MR48, MR49, MR50, MR51, MR52, MR53, MR54, MR55, MR56, MR57, MR58, MR59, MR60, MR61, MR62, MR63, MR64, MR65, MR66, MR67, MR68, MR69, MR70, MR71, MR72, MR73, MR74, MR75, MR76, MR77, MR78, MR79, MR80, MR81, MR82, MR83, MR84, MR85, MR86, MR87, MR88, MR89, MR90, MR91, MR92, MR93, MR94, MR95, MR96, MR97, MR98, MR99, MR100, MR101, MR102, MR103, MR104
HOUSING H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, H7, H8, H9, H10, H11, H12, H13, H14, H15, H16, H17, H18, H19, H20, H21, H22, H23, H24	SHOPPING S2, S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S8, S9, S10, S11, S12	ROADS & TRANSPORTATION T4, T5, T7, T8, T9, T10, T11, T12	IMPLEMENTATION I1, I2

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