

A photograph of Warkworth Castle, a large stone fortress with multiple towers and battlements, situated on a grassy hill. The castle is reflected in a calm river in the foreground. The sky is a clear, pale blue. Bare tree branches are visible in the lower-left corner, and some residential buildings are nestled at the base of the hill to the right.

# WARKWORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2023-2036

SUBMISSION DRAFT  
NOVEMBER 2023

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## Foreword

This submission draft Warkworth Neighbourhood Plan proposes planning policies which, if agreed, will be used to guide new development in Warkworth Parish. It also contains community actions which include projects to improve the area. The neighbourhood plan does not need to repeat policies contained within the Northumberland Local Plan; it can however add important local detail. For the policies contained within our neighbourhood plan to be used by Northumberland County Council to inform decisions on planning applications, it must pass an independent examination and be supported by the local community in a referendum.

The draft planning policies and community actions contained within the plan have been informed by engagement with the local community and other stakeholders, particularly the feedback received from the residents and business surveys which took place in Autumn 2021. During May and July 2022 residents were then asked for feedback on areas for possible planning policies and community actions. This feedback informed a pre-submission draft plan on which comments were invited between November 2022 and January 2023. This submission draft plan has been revised to take account of comments, where appropriate.

The vision for the plan is:

*“In 2036 the Parish of Warkworth will continue to be an attractive place to live and grow with a community that is sustainable, cohesive and thriving. We will have retained and improved our community facilities; protected and enhanced our valued green spaces and special landscapes; and conserved our unique historic environment. Warkworth will aspire to be a carbon neutral parish.*

*New development will minimise environmental harm by employing high quality design and sustainable building technology. Developments will be designed to be resilient to the effects of climate change.*

*The diverse needs and wellbeing of the existing and future residents will be provided for, and the community will be sustainable in relation to the facilities and infrastructure available to residents. Residents will have good access to facilities and be well connected by safe roads, cycle ways and footpaths.*

*All people who live in the parish will have the opportunity to participate in shaping their surroundings and feel proud of where they live.”*





The vision is supported by six aims which clearly relate to the issues identified through early engagement:

- Sustainability – the special character of Warkworth and the vibrancy of the community will be conserved and enhanced;
- Housing – any new housing development will meet local needs as well as reflecting the distinct character and built heritage of Warkworth;
- Environment – the natural, built and historic environment will be conserved and enhanced;
- Community – key community facilities and infrastructure will be protected and developed;
- Economy – appropriate and sustainable levels of commerce across the parish will be supported. Tourism will be managed to protect the charm of the village in a way that does not detract from the needs of permanent residents;
- Transport and access – access to services and facilities for residents and visitors will be maintained and enhanced.

Six planning policies are designed to support the delivery of these aims:

- Design (page 18) – the policy seeks to ensure that any new development will conserve and enhance local distinctiveness. The policy includes several considerations for new development, including: scale, heritage, materials, sustainability, protecting amenity, parking and accessibility, natural environment and pollution;
- Meeting housing needs through rural exception sites (page 20) – whilst the plan does not propose any specific sites for new housing development, the policy would support the limited development of housing outside the settlement boundary where it would deliver affordable housing that meets locally identified needs;
- Local green space (page 26) – the policy proposes the allocation of 16 sites as local green space to be protected from development;
- Warkworth Conservation Area (page 29) – the policy requires development within or affecting the setting of the conservation area to preserve or enhance its character or appearance. It identifies key considerations to be used when assessing the impact of development on buildings and structures which contribute to the importance of the area;
- Community facilities (page 32) – the policy identifies six facilities which have great importance to the local community to be protected. The policy also provides support for development which would sustain or protect existing shops, facilities and services;
- Sustainable transport network (page 34) – the policy supports development that would improve and extend the rights of way network as well as protecting the existing network from inappropriate development.

The submission draft plan includes 18 community actions covering a wide variety of projects, including: energy efficiency and renewable energy, enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, the development of a new community centre and other sport and recreation facilities, the creation of a business hub, enhancement of accessibility, improvements to car parking and pedestrian safety.

Comments on this submission draft plan should be made to Northumberland County Council and will be considered by an independent examiner, who will assess whether the plan meets the various legal requirements. When the plan passes examination there will be a referendum where all of those on the electoral register in the parish will be able to vote on whether the plan should be used by Northumberland County Council to inform decisions on planning applications.

# 1. Introduction

## Background to neighbourhood planning

- 1.1 Neighbourhood planning is a right for communities introduced through the Localism Act 2011. Neighbourhood plans are community-led, prepared by parish councils and in areas without parish councils they are prepared by neighbourhood forums. Neighbourhood plans set out guidance on how new development will be managed. They do this by creating land use 'planning policies'. Plans can deal with a wide range of issues like housing, employment, heritage and transport. In some cases, they may only focus on one or two issues that are of particular importance in a local area. Policies within neighbourhood plans cannot block development or support less than already committed in the statutory development plan. What they can do is help shape where that development will go and what it will look like.
- 1.2 Neighbourhood plans can also cover issues which are not related to the use and development of land. They can provide a useful document in which a parish council can establish priorities for action to improve their area. These are often referred to as 'community actions'. The main purpose of a neighbourhood plan, however, is to set policies for the use and development of land.
- 1.3 Once a neighbourhood plan has been examined by an independent examiner, agreed at the referendum stage by the local community and 'made' (brought into legal force) by the local planning authority, it becomes part of the statutory development plan. Planning law requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise.

## Planning context

- 1.4 As they are part of the development plan, neighbourhood plans must be prepared in accordance with legal requirements. The way in which neighbourhood plans are prepared and the policies they contain are tested by an independent examiner who assesses whether the plan meets the 'basic conditions' to ensure they are legally compliant. Neighbourhood plans must:
  - Have regard to national planning policy and guidance;
  - Be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan;
  - Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development; and
  - Be compatible with legal obligations.

### National planning policy and guidance

- 1.5 National planning policy and guidance is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) respectively.

### Development plan

- 1.6 The development plan for Warkworth Parish comprises the Northumberland Local Plan which was adopted by the Northumberland County Council (NCC) in March 2022. The Warkworth Neighbourhood Plan ('the plan') has been informed by the planning policies contained within the local plan and its evidence base.

### Sustainable development

- 1.7 The purpose of the planning system is to help achieve sustainable development as defined by the NPPF. This specifies that the presumption in favour of sustainable development should be the basis for every plan and every planning decision. The most recognised definition of 'sustainable development' is that which meets the needs of the present without compromising

the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The basic conditions statement, that will accompany the submission plan, will explain how the implementation of the plan is expected to contribute to sustainable development.

#### Legal obligations

- 1.8 Neighbourhood plans must be compatible with legal obligations, specifically strategic environmental assessment regulations and conservation of habitats and species regulations. A strategic environmental assessment (SEA) is a way of ensuring that the environmental implications of policies are taken into account before plans are brought into force. The habitats regulations assessment (HRA) process aims to ensure that the plan will not result in significant damage to internationally important nature conservation sites. Where the potential for likely significant effects cannot be excluded an appropriate assessment (AA) must be undertaken.
- 1.9 NCC provided a screening opinion on whether a SEA and/ or AA was required for the plan. The conclusion of the screening opinion for the SEA was that based on the characteristics of the draft neighbourhood plan and the area characteristics, in the opinion of NCC, the plan is unlikely to have significant effects on the environment and SEA is therefore not required. The HRA screening opinion was that the draft plan would not have a likely significant effect on European Sites within 10km of the plan boundary, either alone or in combination.

### **Background to the Warkworth Neighbourhood Plan**

- 1.10 The parish council held a number of early engagement events with the local community in 2019 and early 2020 to gauge support for a neighbourhood plan. Warkworth Parish (figure 1) was designated as a neighbourhood area, for the purposes of neighbourhood planning, on 21 February 2020. As a result of the Covid19 pandemic there was a delay in the formation of a steering group until December 2020.

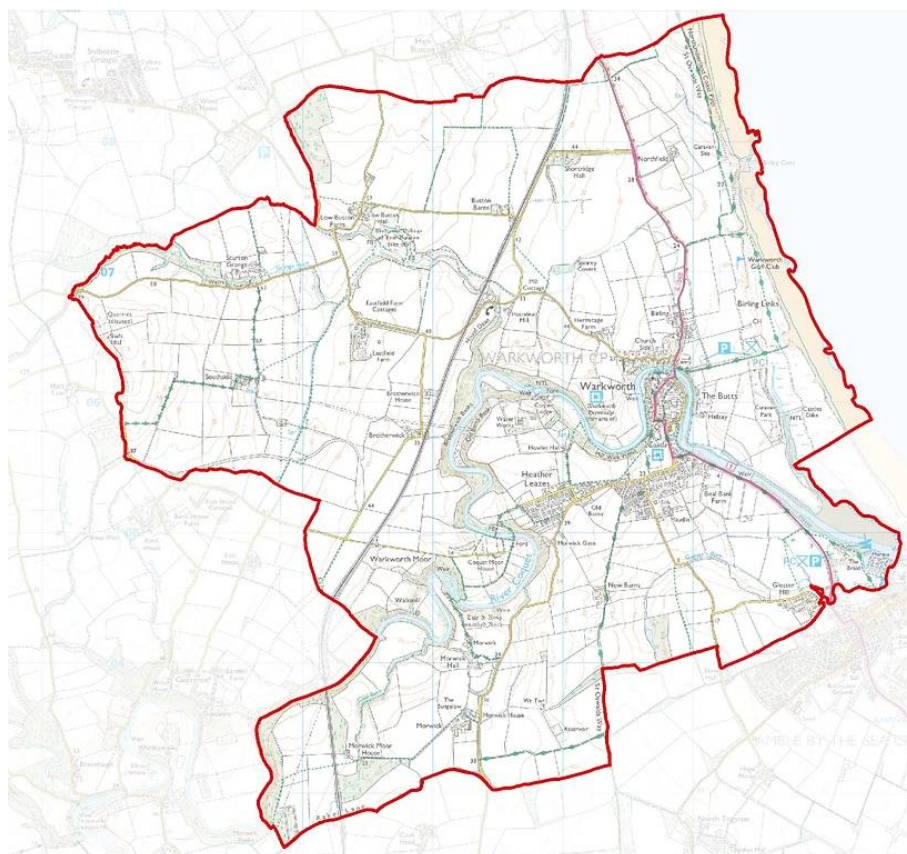


Figure 1: Neighbourhood area

- 1.11 To inform the preparation of the neighbourhood plan the following engagement activities have taken place:
- Parish residents survey – Autumn 2021;
  - Business survey – Autumn 2021;
  - Consultation on possible planning policies and community actions informed by responses to the residents and business surveys - May to July 2022.
- 1.12 The early engagement and evidence work informed the preparation of a pre-submission draft plan. This was subject to consultation from November 2022 to January 2023. This submission draft plan is the result of the engagement and evidence work. It identifies:
- The context in which the plan has been prepared – an overview of Warkworth Parish, the **opportunities and challenges** for the plan to address;
  - A **positive vision** for the future of the parish;
  - How the vision of the plan will be **delivered through planning policies** i.e. the policies that **will be used to determine planning applications** within the plan area – providing a framework for sustainable development; and
  - How the vision of the plan will be **delivered through community actions** i.e. measures which are **intended to encourage action and influence decisions** taken by relevant bodies.
- 1.13 The plan covers the period to 2036. This aligns with the Northumberland Local Plan (the local plan). During this period, the neighbourhood plan will be reviewed and updated where required. This submission plan is a revised version of the pre-submission draft plan (November 2022). It has been amended to take account of comments received. A consultation statement has been prepared which sets out how engagement has informed the preparation of the plan. This, alongside the background information and other evidence documents that have informed the preparation of the plan, are available online at [www.warkworthnp.org](http://www.warkworthnp.org)

### Next steps

- 1.14 The plan must be subject to independent examination to ensure the legal requirements of plan preparation have been met. NCC will arrange the appointment of an independent examiner and for this submission draft plan to be available for consultation for a period of at least six weeks. It is expected that the examination will be conducted by way of written representations. The examiner may choose to include a public session to inform their report, but this is not a requirement.
- 1.15 Once completed, the examiners report will be published by NCC. The report must contain one of three recommendations:
- Proceed to referendum without modifications;
  - Proceed to referendum with minor modifications; or
  - Not proceed to referendum.



## 2. Background to Warkworth Parish

### A brief history of the parish

- 2.1 Warkworth Parish is situated on the Northumberland coast, approximately 30 miles north of Newcastle. The historic centre of Warkworth village occupies a promontory formed by a meander in the River Coquet a mile inland from where the tidal river flows into the North Sea.
- 2.2 Warkworth has a long history, with archaeological evidence within the parish dating back to Neolithic, Bronze Age and Roman times. Warkworth enters recorded history in 737 when the Anglo Saxon church and surrounding estates of Wireworker, as it was then called, was given to the monastery in Lindisfarne.
- 2.3 The key buildings which can be seen in Warkworth today include the 12<sup>th</sup> century Church of St Lawrence with its Norman origins; the castle, probably created between 1199 and 1214; and the defensive bridge and gatehouse built around 1380. An elaborate cave hermitage across the river and upstream from the castle is one of the best-preserved examples in Britain.
- 2.4 Warkworth flourished in the medieval period as a harbour and market town and the street pattern and layout on the promontory still reflects its medieval origins. Burgage plots, comprising long narrow strips of land behind the houses, run at right angles down to the river from the main streets of Bridge Street and Castle Street; most of the buildings on these streets are no longer medieval but date to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. The approach from the north by the old bridge and then ascending the main street, dominated by the massive keep, presents one of the finest sequence of views in England.
- 2.5 In the 18<sup>th</sup> century many fine farmhouses and buildings were built in the vicinity of Warkworth village and in the 19th century the Newcastle and Berwick railway was built, with a station just outside Warkworth opening in 1847 (and closing in 1958). Several villas were constructed on Station Road north of the river at this time. Building continued to the south of the castle in the early 20th century, with further development along and adjacent to Morwick Road since that time. In the last 10 years residential development to the south and west of the village has accelerated including two housing estates comprising approximately 100 new homes.



### Population, households and housing

- 2.6 According to the 2011 census the parish had a population of 1,574 residents and the 2020 Office for National Statistics (ONS) population estimates suggest an increase to 1,789. Early parish figures from the 2021 census suggest that the population was 1,800. It should be noted that this initial census data is based on aggregations of data from output areas, therefore may not be accurate. It does however provide an indication of change in the parish. Figure 2 illustrates that, in 2011 the parish had a significantly higher percentage of the population who were 45



and over compared to Northumberland and England and had a correspondingly lower percentage of those of a younger age.



Figure 2: Age structure - 2011 census

- 2.7 According to the 2011 census the parish has a higher percentage of family households and a lower proportion of one person households when compared to Northumberland and England (see table 1). Initial results from the 2021 census suggest that the number of one person households has increased to 29.7%. Notably, in 2011 there were more households aged all over 65, and fewer families with dependent children. This suggests that families with children are either less able to live in the parish or are choosing not to do so. Between 2001 and 2011 family households with dependent children decreased by 25%.

Table 1: Household composition (2011 census)

Household composition		Warkworth	Northumberland	England
One person household	Total	28.1%	29.9%	30.2%
	Aged 65 and over	15.0%	14.0%	12.4%
	Other	13.1%	15.9%	17.9%
One family only	Total	68.8%	66.3%	61.8%
	All aged 65 and over	17.5%	10.3%	8.1%
	With no children	29.6%	21.0%	17.6%
	With dependent children	13.1%	24.9%	26.5%
	All children Non-Dependent <sup>17</sup>	8.6%	10.1%	9.6%
Other household types	Total	3.1%	3.8%	8.0%

Source: ONS 2011, AECOM Calculations

- 2.8 The mix of dwelling types in the parish is shown in table 2. It includes housing completions data (houses that have been built) to provide an understanding of the type of housing that has been developed between 2011 and 2021. The table shows that, whilst there is a varied mix of dwellings in Warkworth, approximately two thirds of recent completions have been of detached houses. There is a much higher percentage of detached dwellings (43% in 2021) than Northumberland (18.4%) and England (15.9%). There is a relatively even split between semi-detached and terraced housing, which follows Northumberland trends. Of all the properties

completed in the 10 years to 2021, 41 (24.7%) were affordable homes, which accords with the Northumberland target of 25%.

Table 2: Accommodation type

Dwelling type	Number of dwellings identified in 2011 (census) (% of dwelling total in brackets)	Number of dwelling completions 2011-2021 (NCC) (% of completions in brackets)	2021 – number of dwellings (2011 census + NCC completions) (% in brackets)
Flat	63 (7%)	5 (3%)	68 (6%)
Terrace	208 (23%)	3 (2%)	211 (20%)
Semi-detached	264 (30%)	48 (29%)	312 (30%)
Detached	358 (40%)	99 (60%)	457 (43%)
Unknown / other	-	11 (6%)	11 (1%)
Total	893	166	1,059

- 2.9 With regard to the size of properties, table 3 illustrates that the parish has very few small homes with one bedroom and a higher proportion of larger dwellings with three or more bedrooms. The housing completion data illustrates that recent development has continued to follow this pattern of delivering larger homes. Initial results from the 2021 census suggest that three bedroom homes remain the largest percentage of properties at 39.5%, with four or more at 33.3%, two bedroom at 21.1% and one bedroom at 6.2%.

Table 3: Dwelling size (bedrooms)

Number of bedrooms	2011 (Census)	Completions 2011-2021 (NCC)	2021 total (Census + completions)	
Studio	1	0	1	0.1%
1	50	4	54	6%
2	169	29	198	22%
3	314	58	372	41%
4+	213	62	275	30%
Unknown	0	13	13	1%
Total	747	166	913	100%

Source: ONS 2011, VOA 2021, AECOM Calculations

- 2.10 The population of Warkworth has been increasing over the last 20 years, with census and recent ONS estimated data showing an increase from 2001 to 2011 of 5.4% and from 2011 to 2020 of 13.7 %, with all the pressures on facilities and services that this implies. At the same time, the number of properties has increased by 14.2% and 18.3% respectively. The Warkworth Housing Needs Assessment also identifies that properties with non-permanent residences has increased from 92 in 2001 to 157 in 2011; the housing needs assessment estimates that there could be 230 (21.4%) in 2021.

### Access to employment, services and facilities

- 2.11 The majority of respondents to the residents' survey (62%) were over 65 years old and the least represented were aged 16-24 (only two respondents). In accordance with the age demographic, 70% of respondents were retired and just over 25% were in work of some sort. Of those who were employed, 20% identified that they work within the parish. The 2011 census illustrated that 58.6% of the population of the parish was economically active, of which 28% employed full time, 14.2% self-employed, and 11% employed part time. Some of the 41.4% of the parish were economically inactive, with 31.5% retired.

- 2.12 Warkworth is a rural parish situated on the coast. The economy of the parish was traditionally based on agriculture and fishing, but only 3% of the population in 2011 worked in these industries. 7% worked in hospitality in 2011, with 13% in the wholesale and retail trade, and another 13% in education. The business survey carried out as part of the early engagement activities had responses from 40% of the businesses in the parish. The businesses that employed the most people were hospitality, retail and farming, although less than 30% of these employees actually lived in the parish. Interestingly, the markets for most businesses in the parish were nationwide, and some were international. Over half of the businesses felt that tourism in Warkworth and the surrounding area was an advantage to their trade, although the parking issues were a detrimental factor.
- 2.13 Warkworth has both a primary school and a Post Office/general store together with four pubs/hotels, four retail establishments and several cafes. There are three static caravan parks and also many holiday lets in the parish; 72 holiday lets were counted in the centre of the village in January 2023.
- 2.14 There are several important services and facilities within the parish, figure 3 provides an extract from the results of the resident's survey.

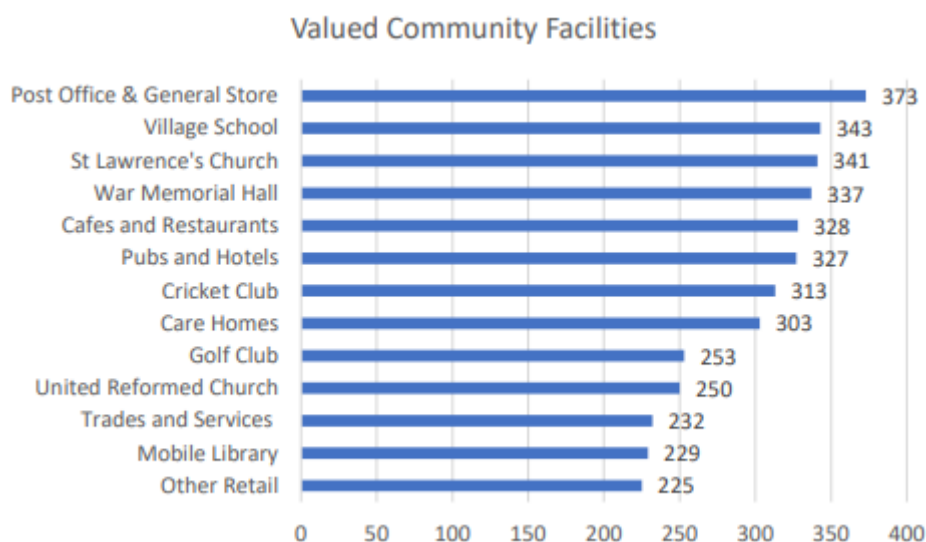


Figure 3: Valued facilities - feedback from residents

- 2.15 Feedback from the residents' survey showed that people were very concerned about access to health facilities, partly because there is no longer a doctor's surgery in the village but also because of the perception that it is more difficult to get appointments at the Amble Health Centre. Increased development both in Warkworth and neighbouring Amble, was seen as a contributing factor towards this. There were also comments about the general loss of retail facilities for residents over the last 50 years. In the 1960s the village had two butchers, two grocers, a greengrocer, a baker, a hairdresser, two boutiques, a bank, a book shop, two garages and a haberdashery. In common with many villages of this size, these have disappeared as a result of the social and economic changes over the years.
- 2.16 Warkworth lies on the A1068 which leads towards Amble in the south east and Alnwick in the north west. This road has become busier as development, tourism and car ownership has increased, and there is concern about the safety of pedestrians and cyclists using it. These issues lie outside the remit of the neighbourhood plan but have been identified in the community actions.

- 2.17 Public transportation links are via local buses to Alnwick and Newcastle together with links to the rail services at Alnmouth which is on the east coast main line service from London, Kings Cross to Edinburgh. Public transport to other areas of Northumberland, however, is not straightforward and the 2011 census showed that 10% of the households in the parish had no car. The nearest main hospital and A&E is in Ashington which is 14 miles away and has a bus service once an hour, although there is a community hospital in Alnwick.
- 2.18 The National Cycle Network passes through Warkworth on the Coast and Castles Route, and there are also many footpaths.

### **Natural, historic and built environment**

- 2.19 The environment of the parish is strongly valued by the local community. The parish includes a significant number of international and national natural environment designations, including part of the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a Ramsar Conservation Wetland, two special protection areas, a special area of conservation, three sites of special scientific interest, a marine conservation zone, three local wildlife and geological sites, as well as areas of ancient woodland.
- 2.20 The historic assets are an important part of the character of the area. There are 128 entries on the National Heritage List for England in Warkworth Parish. This includes 122 listed buildings/structures (four of which are grade I listed and two are grade II\*) and six scheduled monuments<sup>1</sup>. Warkworth also has a conservation area. In addition, there are over 150 additional sites, monuments and findspots in the Northumberland Historic Environment Record listed for Warkworth Parish, which are not designated.

### **Key issues for our plan**

- 2.21 Early engagement and evidence work has identified the following key issues for the plan:
- Protection and enhancement of green spaces both for recreational purposes but also for their beauty, tranquillity, and wildlife;
  - Protection of wildlife and conservation of their habitats;
  - Concerns over the impact of new development on the environment;
  - Negative impact of tourism on the village particularly in terms of an increase in holiday and second homes, as well as parking and traffic;
  - The need to prevent the further decline in services and facilities;
  - Support for new businesses;
  - Lack of affordable homes preventing young family's ability to stay in the village;
  - Any new housing should be for permanent residency only (not second or holiday homes).
- 2.22 These issues have informed the vision and aims for the plan.

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<sup>1</sup> Three of the scheduled monuments are also listed buildings



### 3. Vision and aims

#### Vision

- 3.1 The vision sets out what the Warkworth Neighbourhood Plan intends to achieve over the plan period to 2036. It informs all the plan aims, draft planning policies and community actions:

Vision
<p>In 2036 the Parish of Warkworth will continue to be an attractive place to live and grow with a community that is sustainable, cohesive and thriving. We will have retained and improved our community facilities; protected and enhanced our valued green spaces and special landscapes; and conserved our unique historic environment. Warkworth will aspire to be a carbon neutral parish.</p> <p>New development will minimise environmental harm by employing high quality design and sustainable building technology. Developments will be designed to be resilient to the effects of climate change.</p> <p>The diverse needs and wellbeing of the existing and future residents will be provided for, and the community will be sustainable in relation to the facilities and infrastructure available to residents. Residents will have good access to facilities and be well connected by safe roads, cycle ways and footpaths.</p> <p>All people who live in the parish will have the opportunity to participate in shaping their surroundings and feel proud of where they live.</p>



## Aims

- 3.2 The vision is supported by six aims. These clearly relate to the issues identified through early engagement with the local community and other stakeholders, as well as the evidence base supporting the plan. The draft planning policies and community actions contained within the plan, should deliver the aims.



Aims
<p><b>Aim 1 – Sustainability</b> The special characteristics of our Parish and the vibrancy of our community will be conserved and enhanced by seeking high quality sustainable design in new development, which will make a positive contribution to social, environmental or economic needs and will mitigate any negative impacts.</p> <p><b>Aim 2 – Housing</b> The location, quantity and type of housing built in the Parish will meet locally identified needs. Housing will reflect the distinct character and built heritage of Warkworth.</p> <p><b>Aim 3 – Environment</b> The natural environment, including the Northumberland Coast AONB, will be conserved and enhanced, including biodiversity and green infrastructure networks and local green spaces which are valued by the community. New development will make a positive contribution to the historic and built environment.</p> <p><b>Aim 4 – Community</b> Key community facilities and infrastructure will be protected and developed to ensure that the community is inclusive and sustainable.</p> <p><b>Aim 5 – Economy</b> Appropriate and sustainable levels of commerce in a variety of sectors across the Parish will be encouraged, and key services and facilities that contribute to a thriving community will be protected. Tourism will be managed so that it enhances the charm of the village and does not detract from the needs of permanent residents</p> <p><b>Aim 6 – Transport and access</b> Access to facilities and services will be facilitated for all residents, and visitors, by the creation of safe and high- quality roads, parking areas, pavements and green routes including footpaths, cycle routes and bridleways. The use of public transport will be encouraged.</p>

## 4. Sustainable development and climate change

### Introduction

- 4.1 The NPPF explains that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development<sup>2</sup>. It highlights three overarching objectives, economic, social and environmental, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways<sup>3</sup>. The NPPF therefore includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development<sup>4</sup>. This presumption is repeated within the Northumberland Local Plan (policy STP2).
- 4.2 The requirement for the planning system to meet the challenges of climate change is also clearly explained within the NPPF<sup>5</sup>. It stresses the need to shape places in ways which contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources; and support renewable and low carbon energy. Planning policies are therefore required to take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, including considering the long-term implications of flood risk.
- 4.3 Feedback from the residents' survey illustrated that climate change was an issue that concerned many residents. In the survey, residents were asked about their concerns for the future in Warkworth, and the results are shown in figure 4. There were 380 responses, with over a quarter concerned about our carbon footprint and renewable energy. Residents were also in favour of a variety of carbon reduction projects such as electric vehicle charging points, solar energy, improved housing insulation, and other ways of generating electricity. Much of this is outside the scope of a neighbourhood plan, therefore is addressed within the community actions. In addition, the parish council is also drawing up a climate change policy in line with requirements from Northumberland County Council and the plan includes three community actions regarding climate change and sustainability (see annex 1).

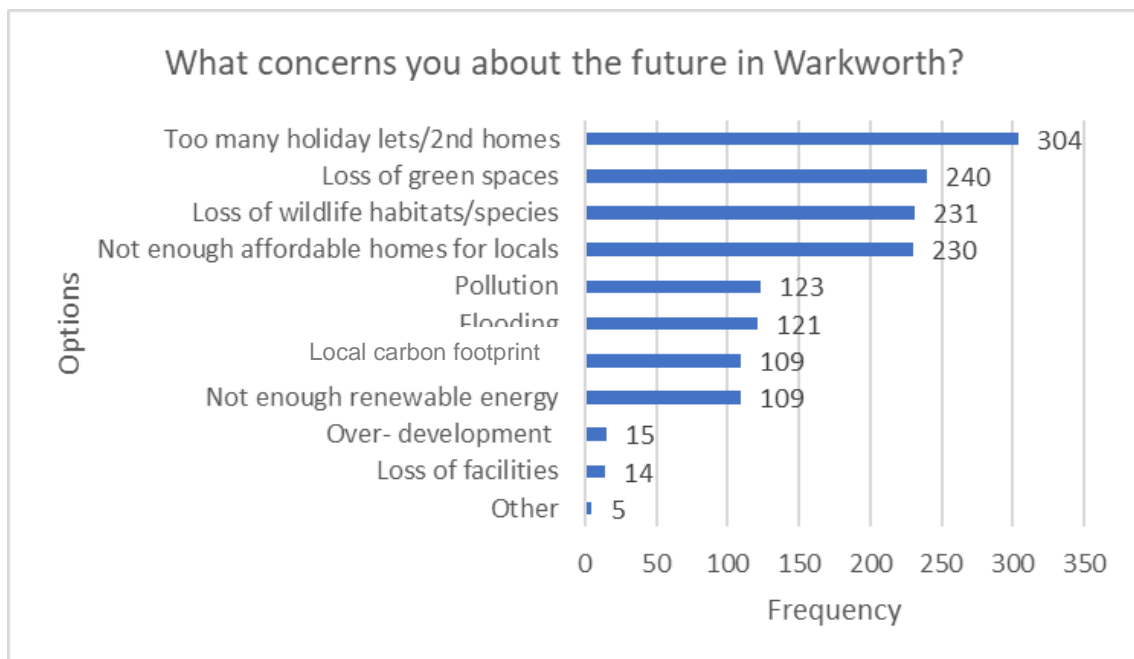


Figure 4: Feedback from the residents survey - concerns for the future

<sup>2</sup> Paragraph 7

<sup>3</sup> Paragraph 8

<sup>4</sup> Paragraph 11

<sup>5</sup> Section 14

- 4.4 Local plan policy STP4 requires new development to mitigate climate change and contribute to meeting nationally binding targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It includes several criteria that must be considered as part of the assessment of planning applications, such as:
- Through the location, layout, and pattern of development, reducing the need to travel for both people and goods and encouraging sustainable modes of transport;
  - Ensuring that development is designed to reduce energy consumption;
  - The incorporation of decentralised, renewable, and low carbon energy;
  - The re-use of existing buildings and materials;
  - The incorporation of multi-functional green infrastructure which can provide carbon storage and environments that encourage walking and cycling;
  - Protecting and enhancing habitats that provide important carbon sinks; and
  - The incorporation of electric vehicle charging facilities.
- 4.5 Furthermore, local plan policy STP4 requires new development to support adaptation to climate change, be resilient to it and not make neighbouring areas more susceptible to its negative impacts. The policy includes the following requirements for new developments:
- Incorporation of design features to provide resilience to climate change;
  - Designed to reduce demand on water resources;
  - Take into account the risk of flooding and coastal change;
  - Incorporation of sustainable drainage systems, to minimise and control surface water run-off;
  - Incorporation of multi-functional green infrastructure, where feasible.
- 4.6 As a result of the detail contained within both the local plan and national policy, the parish council consider that the neighbourhood plan could not add to this.

#### **Sustainable location of new development**

- 4.7 The NPPF identifies that planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the open countryside, unless specific criteria are met<sup>6</sup>, which is also reflected within local plan policy STP1. The local plan seeks to focus new development within sustainable locations. It includes a settlement hierarchy (policy STP1), which identifies that most development across the county will take place within main towns and service centres.
- 4.8 Warkworth is classified as a service village, which is expected to provide a proportionate level of housing and be a focus for investment in the wider rural area. This level of development is intended to support the provision and retention of local retail, services, and facilities. The local plan defines a settlement boundary for Warkworth and supports sustainable development within the settlement boundary (figure 5). The southern part of the parish also includes land that falls within the Amble settlement boundary (see figure 6). Amble is identified as a main town, which should be the main focus for employment, housing, retail and services.
- 4.9 The local plan sets a requirement for Warkworth Parish to provide for a minimum of 70 net additional dwellings over the period 2016-2036. The neighbourhood plan can only consider needs within the parish boundary; it is the role of the local plan to consider needs across a wider area. Monitoring undertaken by Northumberland County Council illustrates that there have been 127 completions in the first six years of the plan period. As a result, there is no residual need for the neighbourhood plan to seek to allocate any additional sites for housing.
- 4.10 As part of the early engagement which took place in May 2022 the local community were asked for their views on whether the settlement boundary should be amended to accommodate

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<sup>6</sup> Paragraph 80



additional development, particularly given the results of the housing needs assessment (see section 5). The clear feedback that was that the neighbourhood plan should not review the settlement boundary. Development outside the settlement boundary will therefore be determined in accordance with local plan policy STP1.

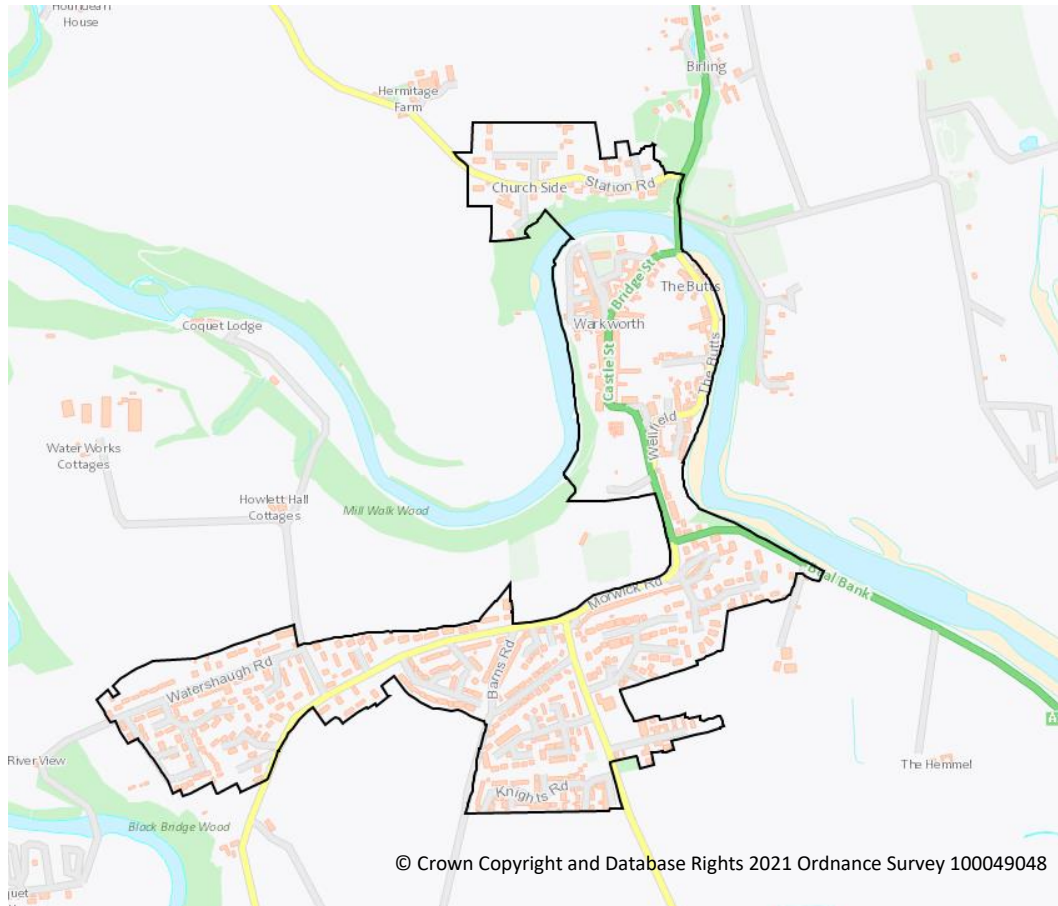


Figure 5: Warkworth Settlement Boundary

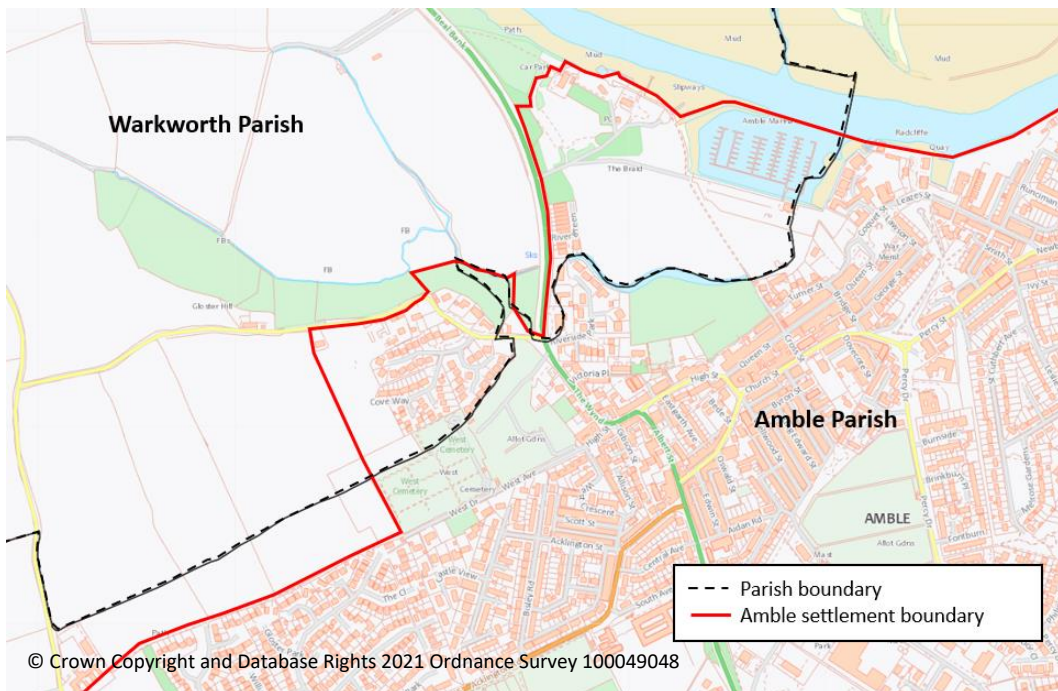


Figure 6: Amble settlement boundary

## Design

- 4.11 Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. It creates better places in which people live and work. It is fundamental to what the planning and development process should deliver and ensures that new development contributes positively to the local environment and therefore, enhances the quality of life for residents.
- 4.12 The NPPF highlights the importance the government attaches to good design and the key role that neighbourhood plans<sup>7</sup> can play in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in new development. In addition, the national design guide<sup>8</sup>, which forms part of national planning practice guidance, sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice. The national model design code provides further detailed guidance to promote successful design. There are several good practice guidance documents that can help inform the design of development, such as Building for a Healthy Life<sup>9</sup>, which is a government endorsed industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. Local communities, local authorities and developers are encouraged to use it to guide discussions about creating good places to live.
- 4.13 As part of the preparation of the plan, the steering group identified what good design means in the parish and this approach was supported by the local community through early engagement. This is captured within policy W1 which requires high quality and sustainable design and defines the key elements that should be addressed as part of development proposals.

### Policy W1: Design

1. Development should demonstrate high quality design, where appropriate and relevant to the development, by:
  - a. Reflecting the incremental and phased development of the neighbourhood area;
  - b. Understanding and reflecting the scale and character of the locality;
  - c. Conserving and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, including the integrity of the Warkworth Conservation Area. The assessment of significance should include that generated by the relationship of the asset with its setting;
  - d. Using good quality materials that complement those of adjoining and surrounding buildings;
  - e. Taking account of topography and natural features;
  - f. Respecting established building lines and introducing boundary treatments and rooflines that are in keeping with the street scene;
  - g. Demonstrating a commitment to sustainable design and construction, including embedding renewable energy technology;
  - h. Providing sufficient external amenity space, refuse and recycling storage and car and bicycle parking to ensure a high quality and well managed streetscape. Parking should be provided to meet the requirements of Northumberland Local Plan policy TRA4, including the provision of electric vehicle charging points where appropriate;
  - i. Adopting the principles of sustainable drainage;
  - j. Ensuring the development would not prejudice the amenity of its future occupiers or that of adjacent properties in terms of overshadowing, loss of light, dominance, loss of privacy, noise or general disturbance;

<sup>7</sup> Paragraph 127

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/assets/Resources/Housing/OtherOrganisation/Building-for-a-Healthy-Life-July-2020.pdf>

- k. Minimising both the likelihood of and fear of crime;
  - l. Creating a safe, accessible and well-connected environment that meets the needs of its users – encouraging cycling, walking and other forms of sustainable travel;
  - m. Ensuring that lighting associated with the development would not have a significant effect on residential amenity, wildlife or the important dark skies and tranquillity of the area;
  - n. Incorporating measures to support species and habitats;
  - o. Retaining views that contribute to the settlement and landscape character;
  - p. Ensuring the development would not result in unacceptable levels of noise, air or water pollution.
2. Where the application site lies within the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Beauty proposals should be informed by the Northumberland Coast AONB Design Guide for the Built Environment.
3. Where a design and access statement is required as part of a planning application, this should demonstrate how the proposal has responded to the above as an integral part of the design process.

## 5. Meeting housing needs

### Introduction

- 5.1 The NPPF highlights the government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes<sup>10</sup>. Neighbourhood plans have an important role in supporting the delivery of the number, type and mix of homes that are required in the area. They must support the strategic development needs that are set out in local plans and not promote less development. The NPPF also highlights that neighbourhood planning groups should consider opportunities for allocating sites for housing in their area<sup>11</sup>.
- 5.2 Local plan policy HOU3 includes housing requirements for neighbourhood areas, for Warkworth the requirement has been identified as 70 units, to be delivered over the period 2016-2036. As a result of recent developments, this figure has already been significantly exceeded, with approximately 127 new homes delivered in the parish since 2016, to the end of March 2022.

### Affordable housing and housing mix

- 5.3 To inform the approach to housing within the neighbourhood plan, two important studies were commissioned: a housing needs survey and housing needs assessment. The Warkworth Housing Needs Survey (2021) was prepared by Community Action Northumberland<sup>12</sup>. A questionnaire was distributed to all households within the parish, there was a response rate of 45% (428). The full survey results are available on the neighbourhood plan website; the key results were:
- 42 households expressed some form of housing need;
  - Most respondents were not in favour of new housing development, with only 6% (25) supportive of large-scale development (sites greater than 10 homes) and 44% (178) were supportive of small-scale development (sites less than 10 homes);
  - In contrast, 71% (290) of respondents were in favour of small developments of affordable homes with a priority for people with a local connection to Warkworth Parish;
  - Many comments referred to the need to limit the growth in second and holiday homes in the Parish;
  - Feedback identified that there was a need to adjust housing accommodation as people grow older, often associated with downsizing. Some evidence of need to accommodate growing families was also present;
  - Most households who identified a housing need preferred to buy on the open market, with or without a mortgage (93% of respondents to this specific question). Only 7% were interested in renting from a Housing Association (less than 5 households);
  - The largest demand identified was for three-bedroom houses (11 preferences in total) followed by two-bedroom bungalows (8 preferences); and
  - Of those respondents (31 in total), who indicated their household income and expressed a housing need, 32% (10) indicated an annual household income of less than £20,000 and 26% could not afford more than £400 per month to pay for their housing costs.
- 5.4 The Warkworth Housing Needs Assessment (2022) was prepared by AECOM, through the government's neighbourhood planning technical support programme. The assessment considered the needs for different housing sizes and tenures, affordability issues, whether there was a need for the provision of specialist housing for older people and issues around second and holiday homes. The full housing needs assessment is available on the neighbourhood plan website; key issues identified in the assessment were:

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<sup>10</sup> Paragraph 60

<sup>11</sup> Paragraph 70

<sup>12</sup> Community Action Northumberland was funded through the government's Community Housing Fund.



*5.4a Tenure and affordability:*

- The majority of homes in Warkworth are owned, at a far higher rate than both Northumberland and England;
- Since 2011 there have been 166 dwellings built in the parish, of these 41 (or 24%) have been developed as affordable housing;
- House prices have been increasing – over the last ten years both the mean and median house prices have seen high increases of 53% and 39% respectively;
- Local households on average incomes are unable to access entry-level homes unless they have access to a very large deposit. Market housing, even with the benefit of a higher-than-average income, is likely to remain out of reach to most – the median house price would require an annual income 136% higher than the current average;
- Shared ownership at 10% or rent to buy would be accessible to parts of the local population;
- The most significant finding was the need for affordable home ownership in Warkworth, with potential demand for an additional 42 affordable home ownership dwellings over the next 14 years;
- The assessment explained that if the parish council wishes to boost the supply of affordable housing it could consider using community development orders, identifying and/ or supporting exceptions sites or developing community land trusts;

*5.4b Type and size:*

- The assessment highlights that there is a varied mix of dwellings in Warkworth, although there is a relatively low proportion of flats and a higher proportion of detached dwellings;
- There is a higher proportion of larger dwellings (with three or more bedrooms) and very few small homes with one bedroom. Housing completions data illustrate that recent building has continued to follow this pattern of delivering larger homes;
- The parish has a significantly higher percentage of the population aged 45 and over compared to Northumberland and England and correspondingly a lower percentage of younger people. This may be a reflection of the increasing affordability challenges in the area and the inability of younger people and families to buy homes in Warkworth, as well as attracting those older generations;
- There is a general trend in underoccupancy – over half of the dwellings have at least two surplus bedrooms, which is most prevalent in family households who are over 65;
- Priority should be given to the supply of smaller to mid-sized dwellings with one, two or three bedrooms, with a far smaller number of larger homes with four or more bedrooms;
- New affordable housing should be well balanced in terms of size and cater for all circumstances, however, the provision of smaller and mid-sized homes for sale and rent should make an important contribution to improving affordability;

*5.4c Specialist housing for older people:*

- The parish has 71 units of specialist accommodation, the majority of which are for social rent for those in financial need, with one option, of 23 units, available for private renting;
- Population forecasts estimate that the parish is to have significant growth in the population aged 75 and over;
- There are currently 235 units per 1,000 population aged 75+, but without any additional provision, this would fall significantly to 154 units per 1,000 population;
- The assessment estimates that there is a need for between 56 and 73 specialist accommodation units over the plan period;
- The position of Warkworth within the settlement hierarchy results in it being a less suitable location for specialist accommodation. In accordance with the requirements within the local plan, Amble is considered to have the potential to accommodate the specialist housing requirements from the plan area;

5.4d *Second and holiday homes:*

- There is a fairly substantial quantity of second and holiday homes in the plan area (2011 census identified 159). The growth in commercial holiday lets from 2011 to 2021 suggests a current total of around 230 units, which is approximately 21.4% of all properties;
- The local plan includes a policy (HOU 10) which requires any new dwellings to only be occupied as a principal residence, so they could not be used as a second or holiday home. This applies in parishes where over 20% of dwellings have no usual residents – it may therefore be appropriate to rely on the local plan policy.

5.5 The residents survey identified that the local community had concerns that housing is too expensive for local families and that more affordable homes are needed to enable young families to stay in the village. There was also a strong feeling that new homes should be for primary residence only. When asked about concerns, 60% of respondents (276 people) identified the impact of properties without permanent residents.

5.6 During early engagement on the possible policy approaches regarding the provision of housing, the local community were provided with a summary of the feedback from both the housing needs survey and housing needs assessment. The majority of those who responded (80%) concluded that the neighbourhood plan should not seek to allocate land for new housing development, however concern remained regarding the need for affordable housing.

5.7 The local plan includes detailed policies on delivering affordable and market housing. Policy HOU5 requires a range of types and tenures of homes to be provided and states that proposals will be assessed according to how well they contribute to meeting local needs, informed by local housing needs assessment and other evidence. Policy HOU6 specifies how new affordable homes for sale or rent, to meet identified needs will be provided and policy HOU7 supports the delivery of housing on rural exceptions sites. These are sites which are not allocated for housing and are adjacent or well-related to existing settlements. Some market housing may be allowed on rural exception sites where it is clearly shown to be essential to support and facilitate the delivery of the predominant affordable element.

5.8 Evidence at both county and parish levels identifies the need to support the provision of smaller homes to support young families and meet the needs of an ageing population, in particular older households looking to downsize. As local plan policy HOU5 includes a requirement for new market homes to meet identified local need, informed by local housing needs information, it is not necessary to repeat this within the neighbourhood plan. With regard to the specific needs for affordable housing identified in the housing needs assessment, as well as reflecting the feedback from the local community through both the housing needs survey and early engagement, the parish council considers it is essential that the neighbourhood plan provides additional detail to that contained within the local plan. Policy W2 supports the limited development of rural exception sites where they would deliver housing that meets locally identified needs. This provides additional detail to supplement local plan policy HOU7. Policy W2 would support the delivery of plan aim 2 by providing the types of homes that meet locally identified needs.

**Policy W2: Small scale rural exception sites**

1. The development of affordable housing will only be permitted outside the Warkworth settlement boundary as an exception to meet locally identified housing need, subject to all the following criteria being met:

- a. It should be demonstrated, through the submission of a detailed site options appraisal, that the site is the most suitable site and that no other suitable and available sites exist within the Warkworth settlement boundary;
  - b. The site should adjoin the Warkworth settlement boundary;
  - c. The development should be small scale (less than 0.5 hectares in size or comprise less than 10 dwellings) and be appropriate in scale, design and character to the immediate surrounding area;
  - d. There must be a proven and unmet local need within the parish for affordable housing. All proposals are required to be supported by an up-to-date housing needs survey which takes account of the findings of the Warkworth Housing Needs Survey (2021), Warkworth Housing Needs Assessment (2022) and the Northumberland Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2018) and any subsequent updates;
  - e. Occupancy will, in perpetuity, be restricted to a person in housing need who is a resident of the parish, who works in the parish, or who has other strong links with the parish in accordance with the rural allocations criteria as set out by the Northumberland Homefinder Common Allocation Policy; and
  - f. Proposals must comprise 100% affordable housing, that will be retained in perpetuity. The type and tenure must reflect the local and affordable needs of the community, particularly through the provision of one, two and three bedroom affordable homes to buy;
  - g. Where viability for a development providing 100% affordable housing cannot be achieved, an element of market housing which meets the identified needs within Warkworth Parish, may be included within a rural exception scheme to provide sufficient cross-subsidy to facilitate the delivery of affordable homes. In such cases, a viability assessment will be required to be submitted to demonstrate that cross-subsidy is necessary. This assessment will be independently verified.
2. For the avoidance of doubt, should planning permission be granted for a small scale rural exception site any future planning applications in the parish would also need to meet the criteria defined in 1a-1g above.

### **Second and holiday homes**

- 5.9 Early engagement has identified significant concerns from the local community on the rising numbers of second and holiday homes. As planning permission is not required to use an existing dwelling as a second or holiday home, the only means of restricting the use is when new dwellings are granted planning permission. For clarity, planning permission is also required for the construction of new build holiday lets/ tourism accommodation.
- 5.10 Local plan policy HOU10 requires that within parishes where 20% or more homes have been identified through the most up to date census, as having no usual (permanent) residents, new dwellings will only be supported where they are occupied as a principal residence. The 2011 census identified that 17.5% of households had no usual residents. The housing needs assessment estimates that 21% of the dwellings in the parish could be now second or holiday homes, although current figures from council tax records are lower than this at 15.9%, potentially as a result of incorrect property registrations. The greatest number of second and holiday homes within the parish are located within the conservation area. The 2021 census figures have not yet been released.
- 5.11 During the preparation of the neighbourhood plan consideration was given to whether it could add any further protection against the loss of dwellings to second and holiday homes to that already contained within the local plan. As local plan policies only support the development of new market housing within settlement boundaries and because the Warkworth settlement

boundary is drawn tightly, there is very limited potential for new residential development in the parish. Any future residential development outside the settlement boundary would therefore be required to meet tight policy requirements e.g. policy W2 on rural exception sites. This would require future occupation of new dwellings to be as a permanent residence. It was therefore considered that the level of protection contained within the local plan alongside policy W2 was appropriate.



## 6. Distinctive natural, built and historic environment

### Introduction

- 6.1 The natural, built and historic environment is highly valued by the local community. The residents survey results illustrate the importance that is placed on the ability to access the countryside and coast, the setting and views, history and heritage, as well as access to wildlife.

### Natural environment

- 6.2 The parish has a significant level of natural environment designations which include internationally and nationally important sites along the coast as well as local designations (see figure 7). Designations include: the Northumbria Coast Ramsar Conservation Wetland, the Northumberland Marine and Northumbria Coast Special Protection Areas, North Northumberland Dunes Special Areas of Conservation, three sites of special scientific interest (Northumberland Shore, Warkworth Dunes and Saltmarsh, River Coquet and Coquet Valley), Berwick to St Mary's Marine Conservation Zone, three local wildlife and geological sites (Amble to Almouth Coast, Hound Dene – Mill Wood, Coquet River – Acklington Park), as well as areas of ancient woodland. The parish also includes part of the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) - the primary purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty.

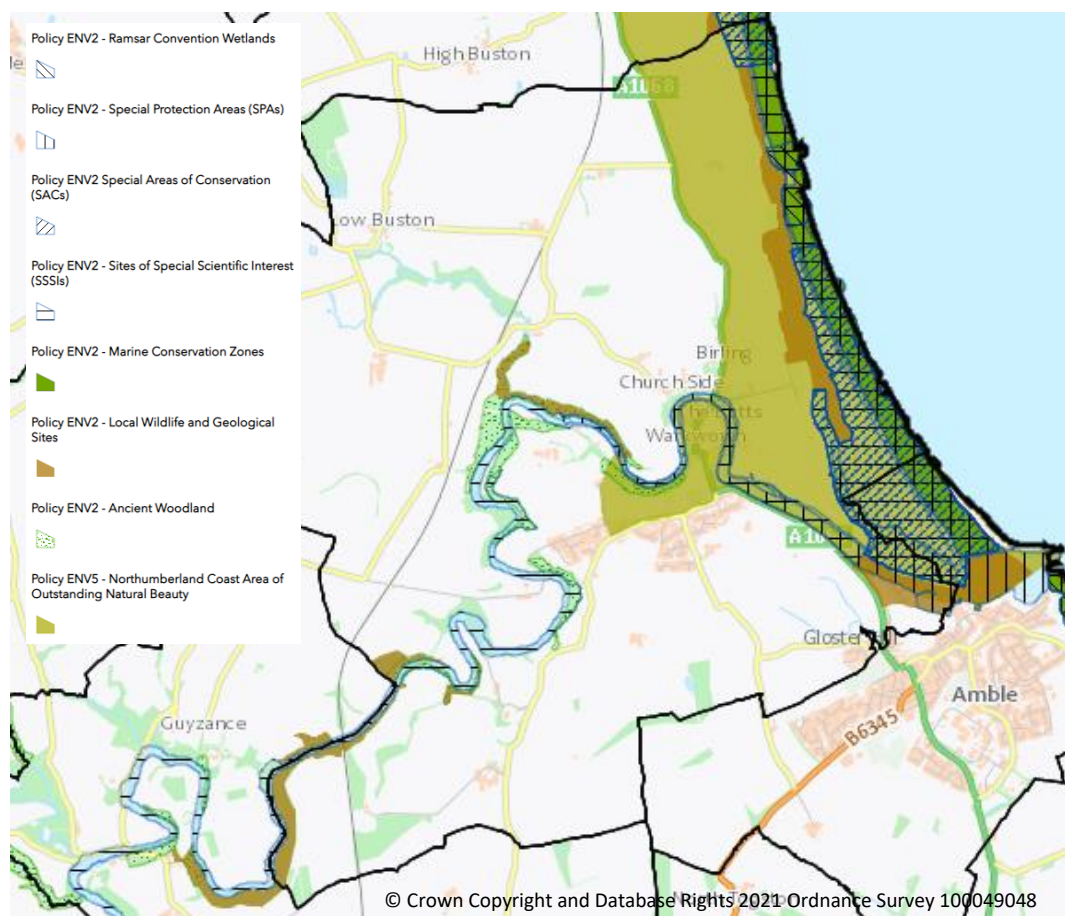


Figure 7: Natural environment designations

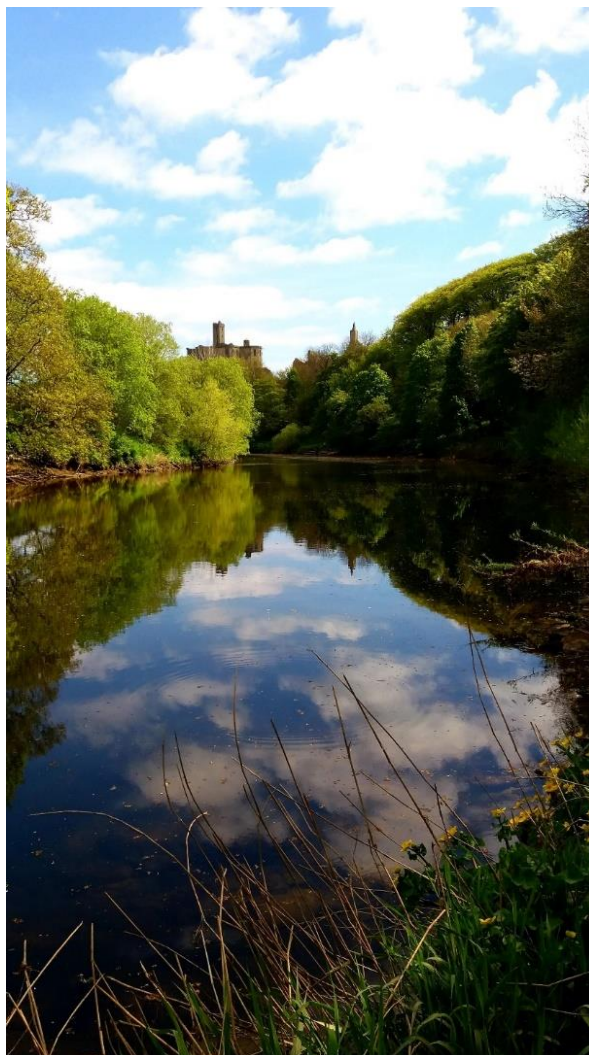
- 6.3 The local plan includes policies to ensure the protection and enhancement of the natural environment, particularly policies ENV1, ENV2, ENV3, ENV4 and ENV5. Policy ENV1 requires the character and significance of the distinctive and valued natural environment to be conserved, protected, and enhanced. Policy ENV2 defines criteria against which planning applications will

be considered to ensure they minimise their impact and secure a net gain for biodiversity. It also requires developer contributions to the coastal mitigation service relating to potential impacts on internationally designated sites from new housing and tourism development.

- 6.4 Policy ENV3 requires the conservation and enhancement of the landscape of the county. Policy ENV4 seeks to protect tranquillity, dark skies and a sense of rurality. Policy ENV5 contains specific requirements for development within the Northumberland Coast AONB to ensure its special qualities are conserved and enhanced. Given the level of protection for the natural environment within the local plan, it is not considered necessary to include further policies within the neighbourhood plan.

### Local green space

- 6.5 Green spaces are a vital part of a vibrant and healthy community and are of great importance to the character and identity of a place. They are valued for a wide range of reasons including visual amenity; historic significance; recreational value; tranquillity; and richness of wildlife. Uncontrolled changes to green spaces can irrevocably alter their special character or intrinsic value. Through early engagement on the plan the local community identified several valued spaces across the parish.
- 6.6 The NPPF enables neighbourhood plans to designate areas of local green space for special protection, thereby preventing development on these sites other than in very special circumstances<sup>13</sup>. These spaces do not need to be publicly accessible but must be in reasonably close proximity to the community they serve as well as being demonstrably special to them, holding a particular local significance. The designation cannot be applied to an extensive tract of land.
- 6.7 The sites listed in policy W3 and shown on the policies map are proposed to be designated as local green spaces as they meet the criteria set out within national policy and guidance. A **local green space background paper**<sup>14</sup> has been prepared to outline the reasons why the sites are of particular importance to the local community and to explain the process that led to their proposed designation.



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<sup>13</sup> Paragraphs 101-102

<sup>14</sup> Available on the Warkworth Neighbourhood Plan website <https://www.warkworthnp.org/>

### Policy W3: Local green space

The following areas, as defined on the policies map, are designated as local green space which will be protected from development in a manner consistent with the protection of land within the Green Belt:

- LGS01 Playing field between Morwick Road and Warkworth Castle
- LGS02 The Stanners Riverside Area
- LGS03 The Butts Riverside Area
- LGS04 Play area near school
- LGS05 Warkworth Castle Grounds
- LGS06 Warkworth Cricket Pitch
- LGS07 The Burgage plots including allotments/ community garden
- LGS08 Millennium garden
- LGS09 Football pitch, Beach Road
- LGS10 The Braid, near Amble
- LGS11 Warkworth School playing fields
- LGS12 St Lawrence Church grounds
- LGS13 Black Bridge area
- LGS14 Corner of the field between back of Morwick Road and Mill Walk Woods
- LGS15 Land surrounding the playing field, castle and cricket pitch
- LGS16 Rigg and furrow field, west of Warkworth Castle

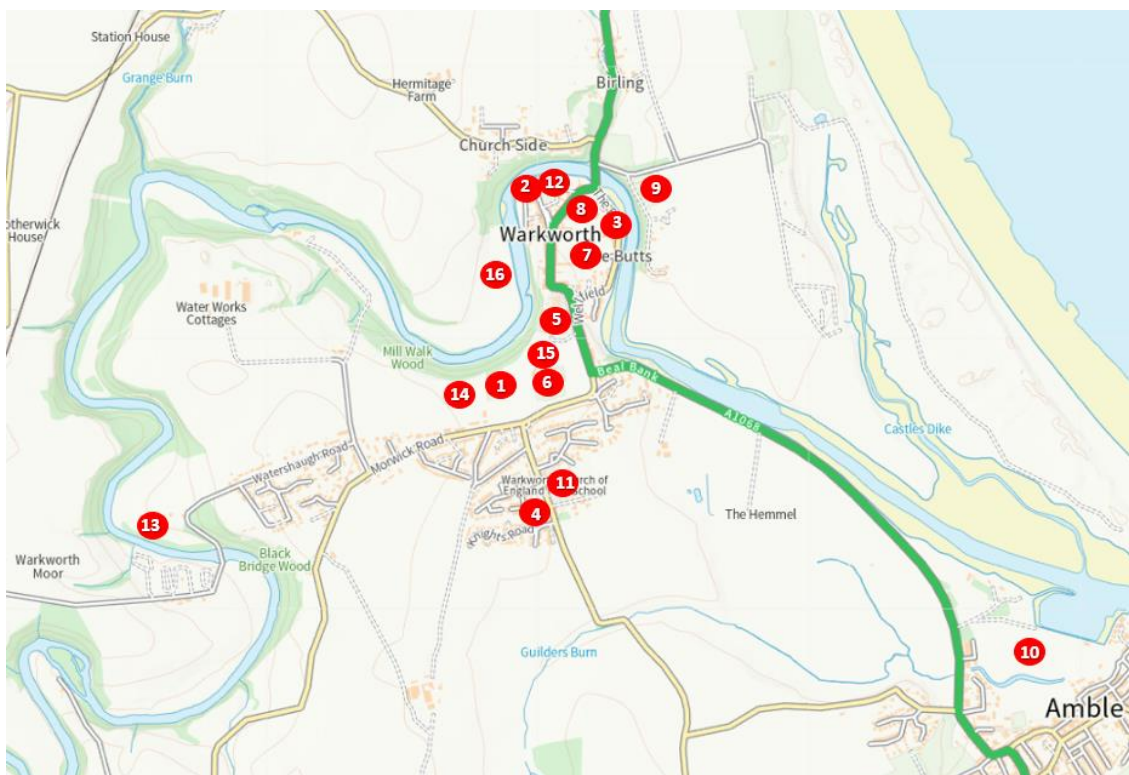


Figure 8: Broad location of LGS sites - see policies map for detailed boundaries

### Protected open space

- 6.8 In addition to local green space designation, neighbourhood plans can also protect other areas which are valued for their local amenity value and for formal and informal recreational purposes, but which do not meet the detailed allocation criteria for designation as local green space. Following the assessment of the green spaces within the parish it was concluded that



there was not a need to identify further protected open space in addition to those allocated and protected within the local plan (see figure 9).

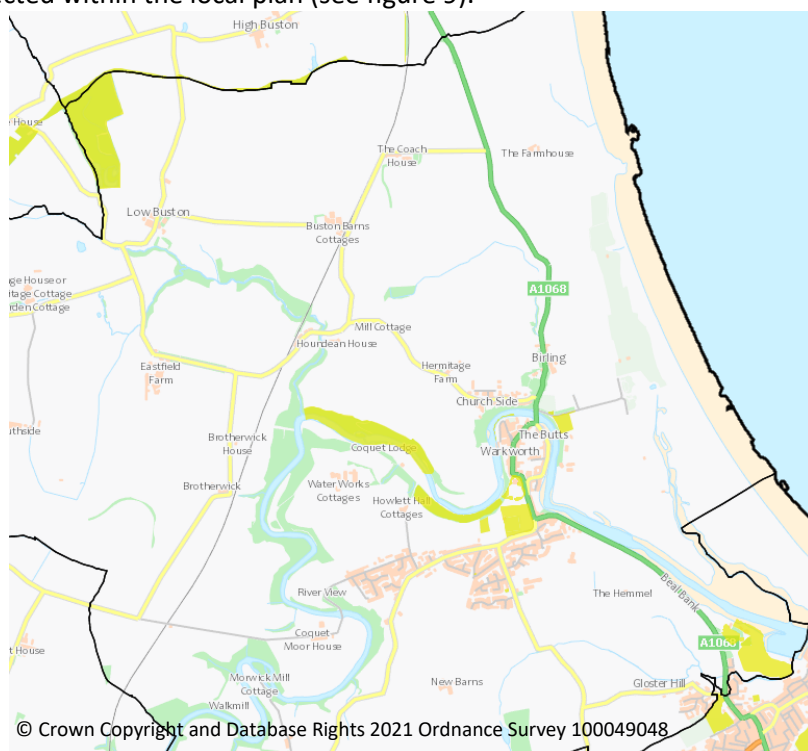


Figure 9: Extract from the local plan policies map showing areas of protected open space

## Heritage assets

6.9 Heritage assets can either be designated or non-designated. Designated assets have statutory status and include listed buildings and conservation areas. A non-designated asset is a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which does not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.



6.10 The historic assets of Warkworth Parish are a vital part of its identity. There are 128 nationally protected buildings, structures and sites on the National Heritage List for England in Warkworth Parish. This includes 122 listed buildings/ structures, four of which are grade I listed (Warkworth Hermitage, Warkworth Castle Walls with gateway tower and attached buildings, the Donjon Warkworth Castle and the Church of St Lawrence) and two are grade II\* (Warkworth House Hotel and the forecourt wall, railings and gates to Bridge End House). There are also six scheduled monuments<sup>15</sup> (Low Buston Medieval Settlement, Warkworth Castle Hermitage, Warkworth Castle Motte and Bailey Castle, Cup and Ring marked rock – 430m north of Morwick Hall, St Mary Magdalene's medieval chapel and associated earthworks, and Warkworth Bridge and defensive gateway). Warkworth also includes a conservation area. In addition to the designated heritage assets, there are currently over 150 additional sites, monuments and findspots in the Northumberland Historic Environment Record listed for Warkworth Parish, which are not designated.

<sup>15</sup> Three of the scheduled monuments are also listed buildings

- 6.11 Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and the NPPF requires them to be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance<sup>16</sup>. Also, that planning decisions affecting a heritage asset are required to be based on a sound understanding of the significance of the asset and the impact of the proposal on that significance. Local plan policies ENV7 and ENV9 provide protection to designated and non-designated assets across Northumberland, the significance of which could be affected by new development. It is not necessary to repeat this protection within the neighbourhood plan. As part of the preparation of the plan consideration was given to the identification on non-designated heritage assets. The conclusion was that the assets that are non-designated will be protected through other policies in the plan, particularly policies W1 (design), W3 (local green space) and W4 (Warkworth Conservation Area). Further information is contained within the **non-designated heritage assets background paper**<sup>17</sup>.



#### Warkworth Conservation area

- 6.12 The Warkworth Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2006) summaries the special character and significance of the area. An update of the appraisal was prepared in 2022, but this is yet to be adopted. The draft appraisal highlights:
- The importance of the medieval form, layout and surviving buildings, dating from the founding of the town, as well as the relationship between the castle, marketplace, church and bridge and the network of streets that link them. This is described as the foundation of the town as it appears today;
  - The conservation area consists mainly of two-storey buildings, with occasional three-storey, but that they are all domestic in scale;
  - Bridge Street and Castle Street buildings are all eaves fronting and stand to the back of the pavement, forming a virtually unbroken building line between the castle, marketplace and bridge;
  - The importance of the topography of the town and relationship with its setting. The appraisal explains that to the south, the rise of Castle Street from marketplace to the castle creates a stepped roofline, punctuated by chimneys, gable ends and the occasional street-fronting gablet or parapet. To the north, above the heavily wooded banks of the valley side, stand the large villas of Station Road looking out over the town. The

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<sup>16</sup> Section 16

<sup>17</sup> Available on the Warkworth Neighbourhood Plan website <https://www.warkworthnp.org/>

connection of the castle to the river, sea and landscape within the setting of the conservation area is also important;

- Buildings adopt a restrained, classical language, incorporating a polite but well finished level of ornamentation. Aside from the castle and church, the style and scale of buildings are overwhelmingly domestic, regardless of use. Distinguishing details are subtle, such as slightly enlarged window openings to incorporate a shop display. There is a high level of surviving timber sash windows and panelled doors. The overriding building material is honey-toned sandstone, with fine ashlar finishes to principal elevations and squared random rubble to the rear and to boundary walls, usually paired with a slate roof;
- Street trees and planting are not characteristic of the area. The greenery of private gardens, the churchyard and recreational space around the castle and riverside provides contrasting softness, texture and movement;
- Important views, areas and several non-designated buildings of local interest including: Station Road, Beal Bank, The Butts and Elm Grove, Castle Terrace, Ember path and Dial Place (see appendix 3 of the non-designated heritage assets background paper).



6.13 Policy W4, informed by the character appraisal and the non-designated heritage assets background paper, seeks to ensure that new development in or affecting the Warkworth Conservation Area will preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area and its setting. In addition to policy W4, the plan includes a community action to work with NCC to put in place an Article 4 Direction within the conservation area. This would require planning applications to be submitted for development that could impact on the character or appearance of the conservation area – these changes are normally permitted development.

#### Policy W4: Warkworth Conservation Area

1. Development within or affecting the setting of the Warkworth Conservation Area, will only be supported where it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the conservation area and its setting.
2. The following are key considerations when paying special attention to the impact of development on the character or appearance of the conservation area and its setting:
  - a. Retaining the medieval form and layout of the town, particularly the relationship between the castle, marketplace, church and bridge and the network of streets which link them, as well as the burgage plots;
  - b. Maintaining the mainly two-storey domestic building form and scale, with stone and slate as the principal construction material;
  - c. The importance of the topography of the town and relationship with its setting, particularly the connection of the castle to the river, sea and landscape;
  - d. The impact on significant views that are important to the character and appearance of the area, including the views: of and from Warkworth Castle, from Ember Path to The Butts, from the old and new bridges, approach to Warkworth from Morwick Road,



- towards the church from the marketplace, the war memorial and the front elevation of Bridge End House; views from open spaces and riverside walks; and
- e. The impact on the setting of the conservation area, particularly that related to residential dwellings on Morwick Road, Magdelene Fields, Birling, Old Cemetery and Old Helsay.
3. Special attention should be paid to the impact of development on key buildings and structures, which are identified in the Warkworth Conservation Area Character Appraisal and their role in contributing to the significance of the conservation area.



## 7. Inclusive and sustainable community

### Introduction

- 7.1 The planning system has an important role to play in creating and supporting inclusive and sustainable communities. The sense of community and range of shops and services are highly valued by the local community. Concern however has been expressed through early engagement on the growing dependence on tourism and the impact of this on the long-term sustainability of the parish.



### Community facilities

- 7.2 Community facilities are identified in the NPPF as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship. These facilities enhance the sustainability of local communities and residential environments.
- 7.3 The NPPF is clear that the planning system should support the development of new community facilities and that valued community facilities should be retained where appropriate<sup>18</sup>. Policy INF3 of the local plan provides protection against the loss of local village convenience shops and public houses. It is acknowledged that planning permission is not always required to change the use of a building or land, and this restricts the ability to secure the continued use of an important facility. The availability of the current level of facilities within the plan area are essential to support the strong sense of community that exists.
- 7.4 Section 2 of this plan highlights that Warkworth has a number of important community facilities. However, the local community are very concerned about access to health facilities, partly because there is no longer a doctor's surgery in the village but also because of the perception that it is more difficult to get appointments at the health centre in Amble, particularly as a result of the level of recent housing development. Feedback also expressed concern about the loss of village facilities since the 1960s when it had a wide variety of local shops.
- 7.5 It is however acknowledged that planning permission is not always required to change the use of a building or land, and this restricts the opportunity to examine the possibility of securing the continued use of a facility threatened with closure. Notwithstanding this there is the opportunity through a neighbourhood plan to identify facilities which are of importance to the local community. The facilities identified in policy W5 have been informed by early engagement.



<sup>18</sup> Paragraph 93

### Policy W5: Community facilities

1. The following facilities are identified as having great importance to the local community and are identified on the policies map.
  - CF1 Post Office and general store;
  - CF2 Warkworth Church of England Primary School NCEAT;
  - CF3 St Lawrence's Church;
  - CF4 Warkworth United Reformed Church;
  - CF5 War Memorial Hall
  - CF6 Warkworth Cricket Ground.
2. Where planning permission is required development proposals will be supported which sustain or protect existing shops, facilities and services.
3. Development that would result in the loss of the valued community services and facilities identified above will not be supported unless:
  - a. It is no longer needed in its current form;
  - b. A replacement service or facility of sufficient size, layout and quality is to be provided in an alternative suitable location; or
  - c. It would not be economically viable or feasible to retain the facility and there is no reasonable prospect of securing an alternative community use of the land or building.

### Local economy

- 7.6 Early engagement was clear that existing businesses must be supported, as well as maintaining the conditions necessary to support new businesses. Many of these support mechanisms lie outside the planning process. The local plan includes several policies which recognise the need to deliver economic growth whilst safeguarding the environment and community wellbeing (policy ECN1), support for home working (policy ECN11), support for employment uses within built-up areas (policy ECN11), as well as providing support for the rural economy, including diversification, tourism and visitor development (policies ECN12, ECN13, ECN14, ECN15). A critical requirement for those residents working from home is the information technology infrastructure. The local plan promotes the importance of access to high quality communications including full fibre broadband (ICT1 and ICT2). As a result, it is considered that the neighbourhood plan could not add any further detail to that contained within the local plan.



## 8. Transport and accessibility

### Introduction

- 8.1 The NPPF encourages a reduction in congestion and greenhouse gas emissions through the introduction of measures which promote a decrease in the number of journeys made by car.

### Sustainable transport

- 8.2 As Warkworth has grown in size, there has been more traffic and this has caused problems with congestion and parking. Volume of traffic and the availability of parking were cited as strong concerns in the residents' survey with 307 (80%) and 240 (63%) responses respectively. There have also been concerns expressed regarding public transport provision. Not all sustainable transport issues can be addressed through planning policies, therefore the plan includes a number of community actions (annex 1) informed by the feedback from the residents' survey.
- 8.3 The parish of Warkworth contains 46 public rights of way with a total length of some 20 miles. These provide access to coast and country and almost traffic free routes from Warkworth to Acklington and Alnmouth. Some are incorporated into the England Coastal Path and into St. Oswald's Way. There is a well used footpath alongside the river Coquet and the A1068 to Amble. In addition, National Cycle Route 1 passes through the Parish and, apart from in the village itself, provides off road links to Alnmouth, Amble and beyond. Early engagement suggested some improvements to the public rights of way, and these have been included in the community actions.
- 8.4 In accordance with national policy, policy W6 supports development that will improve and extend the existing rights of way network.



#### Policy W6: Sustainable transport network

Support will be given to development that will improve and extend the existing public rights of way network, including cycle routes, identified on the policies map, allowing greater access to services and facilities for residents and visitors.

The public rights of way network identified on the policies map will be protected from development, unless:

- a. There is a clear and demonstrable justification for the loss of the route; and
- b. A suitable alternative route will be provided within an agreed timescale.

## Annex 1 Community actions

### Introduction

As part of the process of developing the neighbourhood plan, the steering group identified aspirations and issues that cannot be addressed through the planning system. These have been listed as 'community actions' all of which related to the policy areas of the neighbourhood plan and are supported by Warkworth Parish Council. **Community actions are not planning policies and cannot be used to assess planning applications. They are matters for ongoing discussion with the parish council and other interested bodies.** Whilst it may be possible for the parish council to take forward some of these on its own initiative, others will require collaboration with other bodies and, in some cases, funding will be required. These actions are only likely to happen, however, if there is sufficient community support and the parish council would welcome offers from residents willing to assist in delivering these actions.

### Sustainability

<b>Community action 1: Energy efficiency</b>
Provide advice and support for homeowners to encourage the insulation of their properties.
<b>Community action 2: Embedding renewable energy</b>
Work with other stakeholders, including the AONB Partnership, to provide encouragement and support for individual household initiatives to move from carbon to renewable energy heating and power, such as the installation of solar panels and ground, air source heat pumps and rainwater tanks.
<b>Community action 3: Street lighting and dark skies</b>
Discuss with Northumberland County Council and the AONB Partnership opportunities to reduce the impact of street lighting on dark skies, such as turning off street lighting between 1am and 6am, dimming of streetlights, movement activated lights and installation of lighting with a lower output.

### Distinctive natural, built and historic environment

<b>Community action 4: Natural environment projects</b>
Working with others, such as the AONB Partnership and the CAN biodiversity group, develop projects to enhance the natural environment such as: the creation and maintenance of community outdoor areas such as woodland/ orchard/ wildflower meadow/ nature reserve; work with Northumberland County Council to leave roadside verges uncut and plant wildflowers; aim to achieve recognition as a wildlife friendly parish (or similar); encourage residents to volunteer as tree wardens; look to achieve clean river status.

<b>Community action 5: Bridge Gatehouse</b>
Working with building owners and other stakeholders, such as the AONB Partnership, support initial feasibility work to establish if the Bridge Gatehouse can be repaired and used for the benefit of the residents and visitors.
<b>Community action 6: Article 4 Directions to manage inappropriate development</b>
Work with Northumberland County Council and the AONB partnership to put in place appropriate Article 4 Direction(s) relating to specific properties within the Warkworth Conservation Area to ensure development preserves or enhances its character and appearance.
<b>Community action 7: Warkworth Conservation Area Character Appraisal</b>
Work with the Conservation Team within Northumberland County Council and the AONB Partnership to support the adoption of the update to the Warkworth Conservation Area Character Appraisal. This update should include a section which details the type of development that would be supported within the conservation area, as there is no wish to inhibit improvements that aim to improve the sustainability of properties.
<b>Community action 8: Beach Road Recreation Field</b>
Investigate funding opportunities for developing the recreation field on Beach Road as a resource for the parish, either as a football pitch or other recreational purpose.

### **Inclusive and sustainable community**

<b>Community action 9: Community centre</b>
Working with land and building owners, explore opportunities to develop a new Community Centre with parking and easy access.
<b>Community action 10: Sport and recreation facilities</b>
Working with Active Northumberland and other stakeholders, explore options to develop sports and recreation facilities, particularly for young people, perhaps within a community centre and improve communication about existing facilities in nearby towns.
<b>Community action 11: Children's play provision</b>
Continue with projects to improve existing play areas and develop facilities for older children.
<b>Community action 12: Public seating</b>
Provide additional picnic benches and seating areas in community green spaces in the village and by the river. Liaise with Amble Town Council to discuss the possibility of providing additional seating on the Braid.



<b>Community action 13: Outdoor trim trails/ gym</b>
Working with key stakeholders, including Northumberland County Council, explore opportunities to develop outdoor trim trails <sup>19</sup> / gyms in appropriate locations.
<b>Community action 14: Business hub</b>
Working with Advance Northumberland, property owners and other stakeholders, explore options to develop a business hub/ occasional office facility, perhaps within a community centre. Such a facility could include warm spaces for working.
<b>Community action 15: Tourist facilities</b>
Working with key stakeholders, explore opportunities to develop some tourist facilities at Beach Rd car park to attract visitors to park there.
<b>Community action 16: Community led housing</b>
Work with Northumberland Estates and Northumberland County Council to explore opportunities for the delivery of small scale community-led housing.

## Transport and accessibility

<b>Community action 17: Accessibility improvements</b>
<p>Work with Northumberland County Council, Sustrans and other stakeholders such as landowners, public transport providers, the AONB Partnership and adjacent parish councils, to develop projects which enhance accessibility across the parish, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better signage to Cycle Route 1 in both directions in Warkworth Village;</li> <li>Provision of cycle parking in Warkworth Village and at Beach Road car park;</li> <li>Develop safer and more attractive walking and cycle routes, including between Warkworth and Amble, Rotary Way and Cemetery Bank. Also consider opportunities to improve safety on the shared use path on Beal Bank;</li> <li>Improving wheelchair and pushchair access to footpaths;</li> <li>Develop more footpath linkages between and enhancement of existing rights of way (where possible), including improvements to roadside footpaths/ pavements;</li> <li>Seeking to enhance public transport accessibility and integration.</li> </ol>
<b>Community action 18: Parking</b>
<p>Work with Northumberland County Council, landowners and other stakeholders, such as the AONB Partnership and English Heritage, to investigate the possibilities of implementing parking enhancements, which might include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve signage to Beach Road and beach car parks. Advertise as free long stay;</li> <li>Improve parking facilities at Beach Road car park;</li> <li>Introduce charging or have a 3 hour maximum stay on The Stanners;</li> </ol>

<sup>19</sup> Trim trails are simple pieces of exercise equipment placed around parks that can be used to do various exercises to develop balance, strength and coordination. Free to use.

- d. Consider options to introduce residents parking schemes e.g. Castle Street, The Butts and Dial Place;
- e. Develop EV charging points at Beach Road Car Park and in Warkworth Village and consider opportunities for the installation of E-bike charging points;
- f. Enforcement of no parking on pavements;
- g. Create parking bays on Castle Street to regularise pavement parking.

**Community action 19: Pedestrian safety**

Working with Northumberland County Council assess options to introduce measures to improve pedestrian safety, including: creation of pedestrian crossings, or islands, on Castle St, The Wynd in Amble, and opposite Warkworth Church of England Primary School, the designation of a 20mph zone through Warkworth and on Cemetery Bank.

**Community action 20: Warkworth Bypass**

Discuss with Northumberland County Council the feasibility of the creation of a Warkworth Bypass.

## Bibliography

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- Warkworth Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2006)  
<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planning-and-Building/Conservation/Warkworth-CAA.pdf>

### WNP Supporting Documents

available on the neighbourhood plan website <https://www.warkworthnp.org/>

- Consultation statement (2023)
- Basic conditions statement (2023)
- Strategic environmental assessment screening opinion (2023)
- Habitats regulations assessment screening opinion (2023)
- Parish residents survey (2021)
- Business survey (2021)
- Housing needs survey (2021)
- Housing needs assessment (2022)
- Local green space background paper (2023)
- Non-designated heritage assets background paper (2023)
- Warkworth Conservation Area Character Appraisal Draft Update (2022)